

## **Comments of Support**

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RETIRED  
MICHAEL SCOTT GATZKE

May 17, 2012

*Via E-Mail*

Robert F. Epstein  
Epstein Law Firm  
369-B 3rd Street #182  
San Rafael, California 94901

*Re: Proposed San Rafael Airport Recreational Facility Project  
(Case Nos. ZC05-01, UP05-08, ED05-15)*

Dear Mr. Epstein:

This letter is being submitted in connection with the above-referenced project, and is directed to you in your capacity as the City Attorney for the City of San Rafael. By way of introduction, our firm provides legal counsel to the project applicant, San Rafael Airport, LLC, on airport-related matters, and has been asked to address certain issues raised in the March 9, 2012 comment letter that Mr. Tamborini, City of San Rafael Planning Division, received from Mr. Ron Bolyard, an aviation planner with the California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics ("Caltrans"), regarding the referenced project. Our firm is uniquely qualified to address Caltrans' comment letter on the project as it co-authored both the 2002 and 2011 editions of the *California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook* ("*Handbook*"), which is referenced by Caltrans as a source of relevant information in its letter. Further, our firm regularly provides legal counsel on airport land use compatibility planning efforts arising from the State Aeronautics Act (Pub. Util. Code, §21670 et seq.).

As you know, in its March 9 letter, Caltrans asked the City to "consider" information presented in the 2011 edition of the *Handbook* regarding potential safety risks associated with the project's location and proposed uses relative to San Rafael Airport, a private use airport. The objective of this letter is to clarify the role of the *Handbook* relative to the State Aeronautics Act, and private use airports, like San Rafael Airport.

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Mr. Epstein  
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First, it is critical to emphasize that the provisions of the State Aeronautics Act (Pub. Util. Code, §21670 et seq.) that the *Handbook* seeks to further are *not* applicable to private use airports, such as San Rafael Airport. Rather, the legislative intent associated with the operative statutes is narrowly and expressly extended *only* to public use airports. (See, e.g., Pub. Util. Code, §§21670(a)(1) ["It is in the public interest to provide for the orderly development of each public use airport in this state and the area surrounding these airports so as to promote the overall goals and objectives of the California airport noise standards adopted pursuant to Section 21669 and to prevent the creation of new noise and safety problems."], 21675 [authorizing preparation of airport land use compatibility plans for public use and military airports only].) In other words, the *Handbook* is to be utilized by airport land use commissions and local land use jurisdictions to plan for development in areas surrounding public, not private, use airports.

The inapplicability of the State Aeronautics Act's airport land use planning construct to private use airports, such as San Rafael Airport, is also reflected in the March 9 letter from Caltrans. In that letter, Caltrans recognizes that, because the San Rafael Airport is not a public use airport, the City is not subject to the same parameters established for airport land use commissions with jurisdiction over public use airports. Rather, the March 9 letter simply requests that the City use the *Handbook's* safety recommendations as "guidance" and that the City "consider" the information provided.

The tailored field of interest established in the State Aeronautics Act also is expressly recognized by the *Handbook*: "personal use airports [such like San Rafael Airport] are *not* subject to the *Handbook*." (*Handbook*, p. 3-28; italics added.) As such, the *Handbook* notes that airport land use compatibility planning efforts for private use airports fall to local governments, such as the City. (*Ibid.*) Instead of mandating utilization of the criteria presented in the *Handbook* at private use airports, the *Handbook* simply recommends that local government consider the safety guidance provided in Chapter 4 when preparing general or specific plans for areas in the vicinity of such airports. (*Ibid.*)<sup>1</sup>

Here the City has complied with the *Handbook's* recommendation by considering the pertinent safety guidance through the completion of an in-depth, project-specific safety review that is based on project conditions and airport-specific circumstances, including flight patterns, number of operations, and types of aircraft. An entire chapter of the project's Final Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") is dedicated to this analysis. The inclusion of this analysis in the Final EIR exceeds the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, which

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<sup>1</sup> Relatedly, although the *Handbook* can be treated as an advisory and guidance document in this regard (as suggested in the *Handbook* and Caltrans' March 9 letter), the *Handbook* has no regulatory effect in and of itself, as it was not adopted pursuant to California's Administrative Procedures Act (Gov. Code, §11340 et seq.).

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only requires that the *Handbook* be utilized as a "technical resource" when assessing the impacts of projects located within the vicinity of *public use* airports. (See Pub. Resources Code, §21096(a); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15154(a).)

The results of the Final EIR's analysis are summarized at length on pages 24 through 33 of the January 24, 2012 Planning Commission Report for the proposed project. Additionally, those results have been re-enforced in the May 3, 2012 letter report of Mead & Hunt, an established aviation consulting firm that co-authored the 2002 and 2011 editions of the *Handbook*, and is qualified to make project-related safety determinations arising from the site's proximity relative to the airport runway. In short, the record of proceedings before the City contains *substantial evidence* showing that the proposed project is consistent with the *Handbook's* usage intensity limits, and would not result in a people-per-acre total in excess of the *Handbook's* recommendations; as such, the project does not present any airport-related safety concerns.

In closing, I hope this letter has provided information that is responsive to Caltrans' March 9 letter and instructive on the relevance of the State Aeronautics Act's airport land use compatibility planning construct relative to private use airports like San Rafael Airport. Please do not hesitate to call me – at 760.431.9501 – if you have any questions regarding the information presented above. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this letter.

Very truly yours,



Lori D. Ballance  
of  
Gatzke Dillon & Ballance LLP

LDB:rlf

cc: Robert Herbst, Manager, San Rafael Airport  
Kraig Tambornini, Project Planner, City of San Rafael

May 19, 2012

Chair Viktoriya Wise and Commissioners  
City of San Rafael Planning Commission  
1400 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Chair Wise and Planning Commissioners,

All levels of government that serve our youth in California continue to reduce their financial support for the education of our students. Whether in the class room or the playing field, dollars continue to disappear for our children's education and development.

I am writing to the planning commission to urge you to support the development of the San Rafael Sports Center. Sports and the opportunity for our school children to participate in them is part of the educational process. First of all, it provides an outlet for both boys and girls to develop skills, participate in a team environment, as well as exercise. Skills obtained in the process of playing sports, such as developing concentration, are rewarding as one can see the development of their skills with hard work and practice. This same model is applicable in classroom work as well. The participation and team work is a critical part of learning; i.e., respect for others, sharing resources, and the opportunity to develop camaraderie with one's peers. We are all aware of the projections that have been made regarding the growth in childhood obesity and the life time illness than can result from obesity. Obviously participation in sports will provide our youth with the exercise that should mitigate obesity.

On a personal note, I have had the opportunity to get to know and work with Mr. Joe Shekou, the airport owner and project sponsor. He is an honorable man, a man who loves America and is proud to be an American. I have seen firsthand his philanthropy towards the City of San Rafael. Over the years he has made substantial contributions to our police and fire departments which have been used to fund training and purchase equipment. He has been a longtime supporter of local recreation, and made a substantial contribution for the new building at Pickleweed Park Community Center. He fully understood and supported the need for all that the complex offers, such as knowledge from a library, a development of computer skills, classrooms for educational purposes, as well as recreational uses.

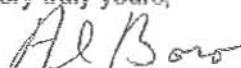
I know that the commission will treat this applicant fairly; I also know you will listen with an open mind to those who may choose to oppose this project. All I ask is that you address reasonable concerns in a reasonable manner.

There is county-wide support for the use at this site. McInnis Park across the creek is a county-wide facility that is overworked with use. Our youth and adults who use this facility deserve the opportunity to have additional playing venues that are sorely needed in Marin County. After all, that is why past planning commissions and past city councils advocated for recreational use on this property and zoned it accordingly.

The San Rafael airport site is one that is zoned for the use before you. There is no question for the need of such a facility. This is a facility that is fully funded by private enterprise. In the foreseeable and long-term future, public funding for such a facility to say the least is highly unlikely.

This is a legacy project and one that will benefit youths and adults for years to come, and I urge you to approve it.

Very truly yours,



Al Boro

San Rafael Mayor 1991-2011

May 3, 2012

Dear Mayor Phillips and Fellow San Rafael Council Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the "San Rafael Airport - Soccer Complex Project". This project is vital to the needs of the community and exactly what we called for in the General Plan to build the recreation we need without one dime of taxpayer funds.

While a member of the San Rafael Planning Commission and later the City Council, recreation facilities and playing fields were always a need that we were unable to address, due to a lack of funding and also available locations. That is one of the reasons we voted to rezone the airport property for airport and recreational use. This is a unique opportunity to, *utilize land already zoned for recreational use combined with private funding* and provide a valuable asset to the community directly adjacent to another valuable recreational asset McInnis Park.

The number of playing fields for all sports has been a problem for decades and continues to be a problem. I have lived in San Rafael for 48 years and my wife and I raised two daughters here. When we first moved to San Rafael I became involved in Little League Baseball as a coach and later as my daughters got old enough I coached Dixie Softball, San Rafael Girls Softball, and Terra Linda High School Softball. Both my daughters played Soccer/Softball and the lack of fields was also a problem then and has only intensified.

In fact, over the years I helped organize the community to build additional playing fields because the need was so great. Prior to 1994 the Terra Linda High School Softball Team did not have a field of their own. They had to use the fields at Bernard Hoffman for daily practice, which they had to share with San Rafael Girls Softball. This was extremely difficult as the girls had to walk from TL to Bernard Hoffman after school, arriving somewhere between 3:45 PM, practice would begin at 4:00 PM and end promptly at 5:00 PM because we had to give the field to San Rafael Girls Softball. Neither entity had a chance to practice properly. TL had to rent a field at McInnis Park to play their Home games. The parents had to transport the players from the school to the games, as the coaches were not allowed to transport the players and the School District did not have enough money to pay for transportation. The end result was that I requested the TL Boosters Club to build a field next to T L High School. The Boosters Club did not have funding and as Mayor Phillips may remember he challenged me to build a field. With the help of the Petaluma National Guard, local businesses and volunteers who provided labor and materials I was able to build the field.

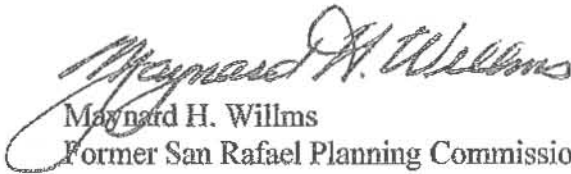
The Soccer complex will be a valuable asset to the youth and younger adults of our community. It will provide them the opportunity to be involved in a sport that has

become extremely popular through out the past decade and involve them in team sports rather than gangs. Sports teaches young people about teamwork, regulations and interactions with others. It will hopefully reduce the amount of time spent on video games, TV, texting etc. and instead provide exercise that will help fight obesity, which is becoming so prevalent in our young people today. These are all concerns that we read or hear about every day.

Please do not listen to the opponents, who object to every project that isn't directly involved with wildlife or its habitat or their own interests. They are spending billions of taxpayer dollars to reestablish wetlands habitat throughout the Bay Area, which I agree with and is commendable, however, how about letting someone provide a worthwhile project for our youth and young adults. Do not let the same thing happen to this project that happened to George Lucas on the Grady Property.

I strongly urge you to approve this project as it will prove to be an asset to our youth and the community as a whole.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maynard H. Willms". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Maynard H. Willms

Former San Rafael Planning Commissioner & City Councilmember

March 1, 2012

Mayor Gary Phillips and City Council  
Chair Victoriya Wise and Planning Commission  
City of San Rafael  
1400 Fifth Avenue  
San Rafael, CA 94915

Re: Proposed Sports Complex in San Rafael

Dear Mayor Phillips, Council Members and Commissioners:

On behalf of the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors we are writing to voice our strong support for the proposed San Rafael Sports Complex. The San Rafael Chamber currently represents more than 550 businesses with over 11,000 employees.

The proposal is extremely beneficial not just to San Rafael but to all of Marin County and its residents. It fills a vast and immediate need for sports fields in extremely high demand by San Rafael and Marin County residents.

San Rafael and Marin County residents benefit from building an indoor recreation building and new sports fields in San Rafael. This project will increase our community's quality of life creating a healthier community, physically and economically. This facility will be a resource for residents of all ages-seniors parents and kids. Our city will benefit from new jobs and local sales tax revenues.

The San Rafael Sports Complex addresses these very concerns of health and fitness for our young children, teenagers and adults, and provides recreation opportunities for the entire family. Recreation facilities are a big part of keeping a community healthy, vibrant and a desirable place to live, and this facility will be a positive influence for the citizens of San Rafael and all of Marin.

The San Rafael Sports Complex will be a community asset to the City of San Rafael and will generate sales tax for the City and increase the pool of local jobs, especially jobs for teenagers and young adults. In addition, local restaurants in the North San Rafael area will likely see an increase in business from all the new families visiting the area, particularly on weekends.

Marin County residents deserve a high quality of life. Providing good quality parks and recreation facilities is one way local government enhances the quality of life for its residents. For soccer alone, there are over 6,000 Marin youth playing on 500+ teams and another 4,000 adults on 300+ teams - ALL fighting for less than 50 fields in the entire county. Marin suffers from a field shortage that this project addresses for our residents.

Both the San Rafael and Marin County General Plans recognize the importance of this issue and have called for the creation of additional cost-effective all-weather fields and indoor recreational facilities to combat these existing shortages and problems.



The San Rafael Sports Complex is the exact kind of project San Rafael's General Plan calls for and will greatly assist the city in meeting its goals:

- PR-4. Provide opportunities for recreational activities for boys and girls, teens, and adults through the creation of additional facilities such as fields for active sports.
- PR-4a. All Weather Fields: Provide cost-effective all-weather fields to optimize year round use of community sports facilities.
- PR-13. Commercial Recreation. Encourage private sector development of commercial recreational facilities open to the general public.
- PR-14. Amateur Multi-Sport Athletic Fields. Strive for the development of publicly or privately funded, large multi-sport athletic field clusters to address the needs of the community.

The San Rafael Sports Complex will allow many different sports groups year round access to indoor and outdoor facilities as well as many great programs, classes and activities.

The San Rafael Sport Complex project also addresses several important Green Attributes:

- Project fully complies with City's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy for new projects
- Building a LEED Gold certified facility
- 100% powered by solar panels
- Includes ample bicycle parking and designated Clean Air Vehicle parking
- includes Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- FieldTurf synthetic turf eliminates need for watering field or applying harmful pesticides/herbicides

In conclusion, the San Rafael Sports Complex project has endorsements that, in total represent over 10,000 Marin families. Please add that list the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce 550 businesses representing over 11,000 employees. The San Rafael Chamber of Commerce believes that a healthy business community is invaluable to the community as a whole. We urge your approval of the San Rafael Sports Complex as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Rick Wells  
President and CEO

cc: Chamber Board of Directors  
City Manager and City Staff, Planning Dept.



12-6-11

To City of San Rafael:

As coaching director of the San Rafael Youth Soccer League, I represent over 1,000 San Rafael youth soccer players and their families. To say that this project is desperately needed is an understatement.

We are appalled at both the lack of available playing fields as well as the dangerous field conditions on which our kids currently play. Our playing fields are shut down for 6+ months out of the year and there is not one single field in the city of San Rafael fields that has lights for soccer play. In the past 20-25 years, only the two new fields at Pickleweed Park have been created to take care of the total overall soccer and others sports field demands and those Pickleweed fields are currently closed for over a year!

This present situation cannot be sustained without a severe deterioration in the quality of our overall league. Under the present situation, our league cannot grow and we cannot continue to provide such poor quality conditions and expect our players to have fun, improve their skills, compete with other leagues and stay with this great sport.

The proposed San Rafael sports facility would be a godsend for our league and our players and families will benefit tremendously from having this facility in our city. It will allow our kids and adults to play year-round on perfect, grass-like playing fields and reduce the tremendous time and financial burdens we currently have to travel around the bay area just to find quality fields and facilities for our kids.

The indoor game is different than outdoor soccer in that the fields are much smaller with fewer players on the field. The ball does not go out of bounds very often so play is continuous. This provides our kids with many more touches on the ball, which quickly increasing their technical skills and the kids don't even realize the incredible amount of fitness they are getting by playing small sided soccer because they are having so much fun doing it.

Also, both the kids and parents who have previously experienced this type of sports center love the overall fantastic soccer and social atmosphere that this kind of facility will provide. Our teams and parents will always have a great meeting place, there will never be rainouts and this facility will become the central hub of our local soccer and sports community. I am also sure that many of our adult parents will also play at the facility.

The outdoor synthetic field with lights is absolutely crucial for us. The will allow our teams to have an all-weather field to train on year-round, especially in the winter/spring early evening hours when all of our fields are closed and it gets dark so early.

The combination of having the indoor fields and this outdoor field with lights is exactly what San Rafael Youth Soccer needs and we wholeheartedly endorse this facility! With the severe field shortage in our city and no other options for us on the horizon, please take advantage of this opportunity to have such a fantastic facility be built in a perfect location at NO COST to the city or taxpayers.

This is truly a gift for our citizens and should be passed quickly. Quite frankly, it should have been passed years ago. If you truly care about our community, its kids and your legacy as policy makers, please do the right thing. Our soccer and sports community is sick and tired of ridiculous and non-existent environmental and other issues that are used by certain individuals and environmental groups that get taken more seriously than the well being of our family's health and happiness.

Sincerely,

Steven Sosa,

Coaching Director, San Rafael Youth Soccer League

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Steven Sosa', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.



San Rafael Planning Commission,

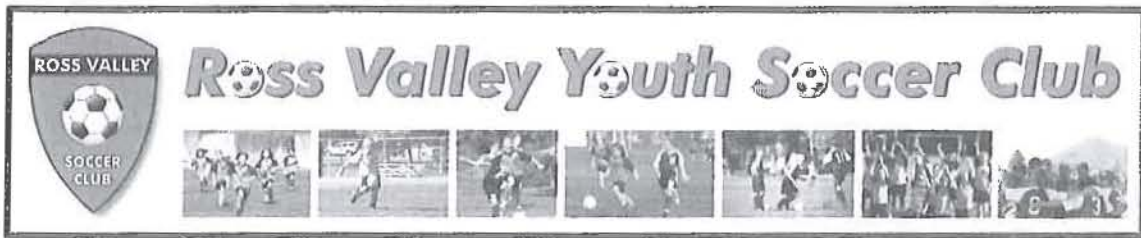
Dixie Soccer Youth Soccer Association is a recreational based program serving primarily the area that comprises the Dixie School district. We have a very robust program for children from ages five to nineteen with an average annual enrollment of 800 to 1,000 players.

As with other local soccer programs, our biggest challenge is providing sufficient safe fields for both practices and games. We currently rely on the various school fields but they are often in poor condition due to weather and over-use and as a result we have to limit our programs.

We are writing to you today to express our support for the proposed Airport Sports Complex. We think this is in the best interest of the community and it will be a great benefit to promoting youth sports. We encourage the planning Commission to approve this project.

Sincerely,

Glenn Cooper  
Vice President  
Dixie Youth Soccer Association.



January 2012

San Rafael Planning Commission,

The Ross Valley Youth Soccer Club is a recreational based program serving the towns of San Anselmo, Ross, Kentfield, Greenbrae and Corte Madera. We have a very robust program for children from ages seven to nineteen with an average annual enrollment of around 400 players. RVYSC is also an important feeder program for the Central Marin and Marin FC competitive soccer programs.

As a board members, parents, former coaches and players, we feel qualified to make a rather blanket statement about the playing fields in Marin.

“When compared to the rest of Northern California, the quality and availability of our current facilities are sorely lacking.”

Although we live in an area that many would consider the ultimate spot to live in Northern California, many of the fields that our children play on are not on par with our neighboring counties and beyond. We currently rely on the various school fields but they are often in poor condition due to weather and over-use and as a result we have to limit our programs. There are obvious geographical, environmental and economic limitations to what we can and cannot create in Marin. Therefore, when an opportunity to build a state-of-the-art facility comes along, *which overcomes these limitations*, we should embrace it.

We are writing to you today to express our support for the proposed San Rafael Sports Complex. We think this is in the best interest of the community and it will be a great benefit to promoting not only soccer, but youth sports in general. We encourage the Planning Commission to approve this project.

Sincerely,

Chris Livermore  
President

Paul Herzog  
Ex-President / Board Member

Ross Valley Youth Soccer Club



## Central Marin Competitive Soccer



November 14, 2011

San Rafael, Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for the Recreation Facility;

The Central Marin Soccer and other youth soccer clubs are very excited about the potential for this facility. When it was last at the Design Review hearings many years ago I spoke as President of SRYSC. Now, as the President of Central Marin Soccer Club I wish to repeat my presentation to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Marin is extremely lacking in quality Sports facilities for its youth, and soccer, as well as other sports in the Central Marin area, continuously struggling to obtain access to fields, particularly during late fall and winter months. We work closely with the San Rafael Recreation Dept. and Pickleweed fields, which unfortunately are over used and need to be replaced with all weather fields, and all of the school districts, which provide us field space. However if you venture outside of Marin you realize that this very wealthy County has a dearth of quality sports facilities in comparison to similar communities. We consistently have to cancel and reschedule games due to inclement weather, to protect our limited fields. Compared to other communities in Northern California, Marin has a great deal of natural open space but extremely limited recreational facilities. Toward the goal of providing more sports facilities for the youth in our County and in San Rafael:

The Three Recreation Programs: Dixie (Terra Linda), San Rafael Youth Soccer and the Ross Valley Youth Soccer Clubs have approximately 2,000 players and Central Marin has 400 players for a total of 2400 soccer players in the Central Marin Area. This does not include other sports.

- The Central Marin Soccer Club, which includes over 400 families, wholeheartedly supports the proposed facility and we hope that it could be even be enlarged and include additional outdoor fields in the future. Our Central Marin Club's Budget for Field rentals this year is approx. \$37,000. We know that all the fields are impacted, overbooked or over-used or both. To this I would like to add these points:

- I understand that residents are concerned over parking and traffic; however as an architect who also proposes developments where parking and traffic are an issue, I typically find that once built, parking and traffic are never as bad as people envision and often adjacent residents find that it is a positive to live nearby a facility which is viewed as an important part of many peoples everyday lives.

- Projects such as this often adds value to a surrounding neighborhood, as new young homeowners often look for these types of recreational activities for their younger children. Just because some residents have grown out of their children's recreational program years, does not mean that we should not continue to provide new opportunities for our youth..

- And as San Rafael and Marin County have limited funds, it is fantastic that a private organization would provide the facility, which I would like the City of San Rafael and the County of Marin to provide. If this applicant cannot provide the facility I would ask the City of San Rafael and the County of Marin to step up and provide the facility for our youth.

- They want nothing to change and that is not the promise of a vacant airstrip or an empty industrial area. This is not a natural area. We have a great deal of beautiful natural areas; and we have a shortage of sporting opportunities.

And please note: that as a resident of San Rafael in the Gerstle Park Neighborhood I understand that neighborhoods are concerned about traffic and noise etc.; However I support baseball at Albert Park, a project in my neighborhood; because I believe that this is for the greater good of my larger San Rafael Community.

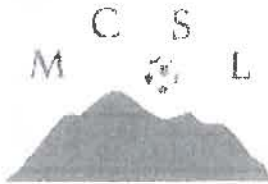
So please do not let concerned neighbors whom feel that if they yell and scream and threaten a lawsuits, they can prevent the Commission from supporting this and many other important community asset projects. It is important to think of the many and not only the few when making such an important decision.

Our Club and myself, as a resident of San Rafael for many years, wholeheartedly support this proposal for the sports facility, and hope that the City and County work with the operators to even expand it further in the future.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Rick Williams, President

Central Marin Soccer Club . 508 D Street, San Rafael, CA.94901



# MARIN COED SOCCER LEAGUE

February 14, 2012

San Rafael Planning Commission,

The Marin Coed Soccer League is a recreational adult soccer league that was established in 1986. We have twelve teams that play in both the Spring and Fall. Some 200 to 300 participants play with us each year. Unfortunately, we routinely have to turn away interested players since we cannot find enough field time to allow us to add additional teams. At the moment, we have still not found all of the field time we will need for our upcoming Spring season. Most of the available fields in the county are over-used, and as a result, they are often in poor condition. This affects the quality of play, but more importantly, can result in dangerous conditions for the players.

The San Rafael Airport Sports Complex will significantly improve this situation for our league and others, due to its inclusion of a lighted, all-weather artificial turf field. This field could support up to about 14 adult matches or 18 to 20 youth matches each weekend throughout the year.

Our league supports the development of the San Rafael Airport Sports Complex, and we ask that you approve this project. We believe it would be of significant benefit to our community.

Sincerely,

Rob Ireson  
Coordinator, Marin Coed Soccer League



## **MARIN SOCCER LEAGUE**

P. O. Box 849  
Larkspur, CA 94977

November 21, 2011

San Rafael Planning Commission  
San Rafael, CA

Ladies and gentlemen:

As the president of the Marin Soccer League, an adult league that has been in existence for over 50 years, I represent approximately 800 adult soccer players. As a Marin resident for over 35 years, I have attempted to improve the playing fields in Marin during that time without success, due largely to the limited funds available to the county and the municipalities. To date the fields at McInnis Park are the only venue where adult soccer players have regular access to playing fields, however, overuse makes these natural grass fields very dangerous to play on. Hence, the San Rafael Airport Sports Complex with their artificial turf fields will greatly enhance our ability to enjoy the sport we love. In addition to the adult leagues, the facility will also be able to host youth activities, as well as having a location to enjoy food and entertainment.

We wholeheartedly endorse this project and encourage the San Rafael Planning Commission to approve its request!

Very truly yours,

Karl Buder  
President  
Marin Soccer League



January 5, 2012

City of San Rafael Planning Commission:

I am writing to you in support of the Marin Indoor Outdoor Soccer Facility that is being proposed at Mc Innis Park.

The league that I manage has 38 teams and over 800 players with several different levels. As president of the league, the league and I fully endorse this soccer facility and the chance to have it here in Marin.

There is such a shortage of soccer fields in Marin especially in the winter time when all of the fields are closed. Pickle Weed is currently closed and will not be open for the entire winter. This facility will allow all of our soccer enthusiasts to stay in shape and play all year round.

Not only will the facility allow us to recreate throughout the year it will help to keep our kids off the streets and will give them a safe place to go and be productive.

Soccer is huge part of our culture and we are very passionate about the game. It's not just the players that enjoy the game but our families enjoy the social atmosphere that goes along with the sport.

A facility like this will provide opportunities for Hispanic kids and families to play and socialize together, and with the greater community as well as provide job opportunities.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.  
(415) 716-9977 or [dadadicadiazcal@yahoo.com](mailto:dadadicadiazcal@yahoo.com)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dagoberto Diaz Calderon', with several stars and decorative flourishes around it.

Dagoberto Diaz Calderon.  
Latin Soccer League President.



Kraig Tambornini  
Senior Planner  
City of San Rafael  
1400 Fifth Avenue  
San Rafael, CA 94901

February 9, 2012

Dear Mr. Tambornini,

Please accept this letter from the Marin Women's Soccer League (MWSL) in support of the development of the indoor soccer complex at the San Rafael airport. The MWSL has been in existence since 1996 and represents over 250 adult women players. Our members are not only players but many are also parents of soccer playing children.

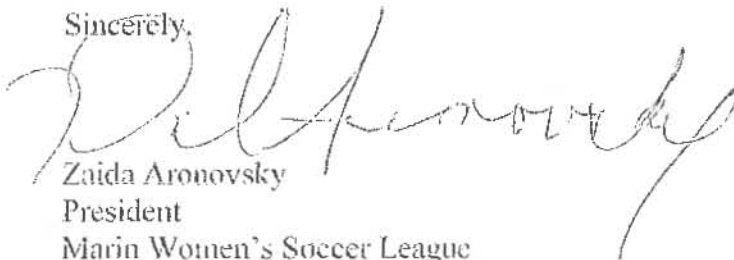
In the past twenty-five years Marin, like everywhere else in America, has been hit by the boom in sports participation by girls and adults, and by the astounding increase in the popularity in soccer. This can be seen in our own league as we grew from six teams in one division to 13 teams in two divisions (all-age and an Over 35 divisions) today.

Although no one doubts the intrinsic value of those societal changes, they've also resulted in acute playing-field shortages in Marin, where most field complexes were built 30 to 50 years ago. The National Recreation and Park Association guideline for per capita soccer fields is one field per 20,000 people. According to the Marin Countywide Plan adopted in 2007, Marin currently has 1 soccer field per 31,000 residents.

The proposed facility will also include indoor fields that are desperately needed in Marin. Currently, our members must travel to Alameda or Santa Rosa to utilize actual indoor soccer fields or must compete with youth volleyball and basketball to get access to local gymnasiums.

With this apparent shortage throughout our community it is imperative to make this complex a reality. With the land situation in Marin, the space to build such a community gathering place is quickly disappearing. Marin Women's Soccer League therefore will support this complex on every level possible. It will be a true injustice to our overall community if this opportunity is thwarted as projects in the past have been.

Sincerely,



Zaida Aronovsky  
President  
Marin Women's Soccer League

CLUB MARIN

1815 BUNNELL ST.  
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903  
TEL: 415.208.0001  
WWW.CLUBMARIN.ORG



To Whom It May Concern:

It is the determination of Football Club Marin, its members, and supporters to fully support with unbridled enthusiasm the creation of the indoor/outdoor soccer complex proposed on the airport property adjacent to McFinnis Park. We represent the families of over 100 kids, 100 individual adult players, and 400 supporters of our organization.



Personally, as President of Club Marin, a consultant for the Marin Athletic Coalition, and member of the 2020 Vision for San Rafael's General Plan, it is clearly understood by our contingency how dire the need is for such a facility in our community. Currently, all kids and adults are traveling on mid-week nights to northern Santa Rosa, Vallejo, and Alameda to be able to play in such a complex as proposed to the city of San Rafael.



The experience of our supporters goes back decades watching the long and unsuccessful opportunities lost with the Marin Athletic Coalition's proposal's on Hamilton AFB, St. Vincent's, and the Silveira's properties. It has been made clear this may be the last opportunity for our county, city, and community to have a much desired and needed facility.



In the past twenty-five years Marin, like everywhere else in America, has been hit by the boom in sports participation by girls and adults (especially women), and by the astounding increase in the popularity in soccer. Although no one doubts the intrinsic value of those societal changes, they've also resulted in acute playing-field shortages in Marin, where most field complexes were built 30 to 50 years ago.



Back then, an athletic complex usually comprised of a football field with a surrounding track, a baseball diamond and probably an extra field where the football team could practice. Soccer teams didn't even exist.

With this apparent shortage throughout our community it is imperative to make this complex a reality. With the land situation in Marin the space to build such a community gathering place is quickly disappearing. Football Club Marin therefore will support this complex on every level possible. It will be a true injustice to our overall community if this opportunity is thwarted as projects in the past have been.



Sincerely,

Tighe O'Sullivan  
President Club Marin  
2020 Vision, San Rafael General Plan





# MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 145, San Rafael, CA 94903

ROBERT T. DOYLE  
Sheriff - Coroner  
TIMOTHY J. LITTLE  
Undersheriff

March 21, 2012

The Honorable Gary Phillips  
1400 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Mayor Phillips *Gary*

I am writing to urge your support for the Sports Complex proposed at the Smith Ranch Road Airport.

In the 1990's I was a Board member for Novato Youth Soccer for several years. At that time adequate fields did not exist for adult and youth soccer in Marin County and I still believe that to be the case. The Sports Complex would add to the existing inventory of fields and it would be a wonderful opportunity to have this facility.

The Sports Complex will provide indoor and outdoor soccer fields along with field areas for baseball and gymnastics training. What a gift, a privately funded athletic facility not at the taxpayers' expense.

I understand people have expressed their concerns about the service of alcohol at the Sports Complex. I know of both the people who will be managing the sale of beer and wine. This will take place at the Café located on the second floor, in a different location than the fields. They manage other facilities that serve alcohol and to my knowledge they have never received any alcohol-related complaints.

Additionally, as an Advisory Board Member to Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California; we know that providing opportunities for youth outside normal school hours reduces the likelihood of anti-social behavior. The Sports Complex would contribute to future successes.

On a personal note for 30 years I lived in Novato adjacent to the soccer fields at Novato High School. The field was used year round by adult and youth soccer. To me it seemed that the traffic and noise level were in the normal range when less than one field was being used by the High School.

AREA CODE 415

24-HOUR NUMBER  
473-7233

FAX  
473-4126

ADMINISTRATION  
473-7250

CIVIL  
473-7282

COMMUNICATION  
SERVICES  
473-7243

CORONER  
473-6043

COURTS  
473-7393

EMERGENCY  
SERVICES  
473-6584

INVESTIGATION  
473-7265

JAIL  
473-6655

MAJOR CRIME  
TASK FORCE  
884-4878

PATROL  
473-7233

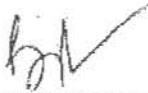
RECORDS  
473-7284

WARRANTS  
473-7297

*"In Partnership with our Communities"*  
www.marinsheriff.org      www.co.marin.ca.us

I cannot stress enough the importance of providing adequate opportunities for adults and youth to engage in productive and positive activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Doyle', written over a horizontal line.

ROBERT T. DOYLE  
SHERIFF-CORONER

RTD:sjb



P.O. Box 4423, San Rafael, CA 94913 (415) 721-9686 info@hccmarin.com  
www.hccmarin.com

March 5, 2012

Gary Phillips, Mayor  
San Rafael City Council Members  
City of San Rafael  
1400 Fifth Ave.  
San Rafael, CA 94930

RE: Support for San Rafael Sports Complex

Dear Mayor Phillips and City Council Members:

The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Marin is sending you this letter in support of the proposed San Rafael Sports Complex. The Hispanic Chamber has nearly 200 business members and represents several thousands of their employees, many of whom are Marin residents.

According to the City of San Rafael and the County of Marin general plans, there is a 50% shortage of playing fields in Marin. This complex, at no cost to the taxpayer, would be providing a much-needed resource to families and youth in San Rafael and Marin. With the increasing number of soccer teams in Marin (500+ youth teams, 300+ adult teams), the need for this type of facility speaks for itself.

Sports City is a family-owned business with a great community track record. They established their first facility in Santa Rosa in 1996 and another one in Cotati in 2001. We think that by building this "family-friendly" complex, with indoor and outdoor playing fields, Sports City is showing their commitment to our community at large, but also to the Hispanic/Latino residents of Marin who have special ties to this sport. In Santa Rosa, Sports City has noted that about 40% of their clients are Latino youth and adults. They expect this to be the same or more in Marin.

As you know, soccer is a popular international sport and, as such, it is a multicultural bridge builder. Having this facility would not only add to the physical and economic health and well-being of our community, it can also be a place where cultural exchange can happen. We like that idea.

In addition, this complex would generate jobs for youth and adults, and has been strongly endorsed by all the Marin adult and youth soccer leagues. We would like to add our name to the growing list of supporters for the San Rafael Sports Complex, and urge the City Council to move forward with approving this facility.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Zamora  
President

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** Robert Herbst [rherbst@jhsproperties.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2012 9:25 AM  
**To:** Kraig Tambornini  
**Subject:** FW: Central Marin Youth Soccer game this Sunday 3 pm at Wiseman Airport Park in Petaluma

**Attachments:** Wiseman Airport Park photos.pdf; Airport Aerial Diagrams.pdf

Fyi on email invite I sent to PC and Council Friday afternoon. Gary Phillips and Damon Connolly went to check it out. Not sure if anyone else did.

I'm compiling safety zone diagrams for additional airports, to include in our official response to the Caltrans letter. Meanwhile our attorney will have a legal letter over to you and Rob Epstein in the next day or two. It will be very strong stating that Caltrans has absolutely no legal authority over land use at San Rafael Airport, and that its guidelines are discretionary without backing of law, and even public use airports are free to ignore them without risk of liability.

---

**From:** Robert Herbst  
**Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2012 5:25 PM  
**To:** Kbcolin@gmail.com; mab@cpuc.ca.gov; cpick@basisarch.com;  
jack.robertson@fennar.com; viktoriya.mass@gmail.com; l.a.paul@prodigy.net;  
dansonnet@yahoo.com  
**Cc:** barbara.hellar@cityofsanrafael.org; damon@damonconnollylaw.com;  
andrew\_mccullough@150Pelican.com; marcblevine@gmail.com; Gary Phillips  
**Subject:** Central Marin Youth Soccer game this Sunday 3 pm at Wiseman Airport Park in Petaluma

Dear Planning Commissioner and City Councilmembers,

The safety of the proposed San Rafael Sports Center has been called into question by a recent Caltrans letter to the City. We intend to soon provide a thorough written response about why this is legally and factually incorrect.

Meanwhile we invite you to go see for your own eyes this Sunday at 3 pm at Wiseman Airport Park at Petaluma Municipal Airport. The under 13 girls team from Central Marin Youth Soccer League will be playing. As you may know, Marin teams commonly travel to play at Wiseman due to our field shortage here in Marin.

Wiseman Airport Park is located in Safety Zone 3 at Petaluma Airport (see attached diagram). This is the same Safety Zone as the proposed sports center at San Rafael Airport. Attached are photos of kids and families next to aircraft at Wiseman Park.

Nor is this situation unique within California. Attached are diagrams of Reid Hillview Airport and Santa Monica Airport, both showing family recreation facilities in Safety Zones 3 & 5. There are many others. By the way, all of these airports are public use airports (we are private use only) with larger planes and massively greater flight activity than San Rafael Airport. Petaluma is the least busy of these 3 with 146 daily flights. We have less than 5 daily flights here. Frankly our kids are at much more risk driving on the highway to Petaluma than they are playing soccer at San Rafael Airport.

Wiseman Airport Park is located at 2175 Augustine Circle in Petaluma.

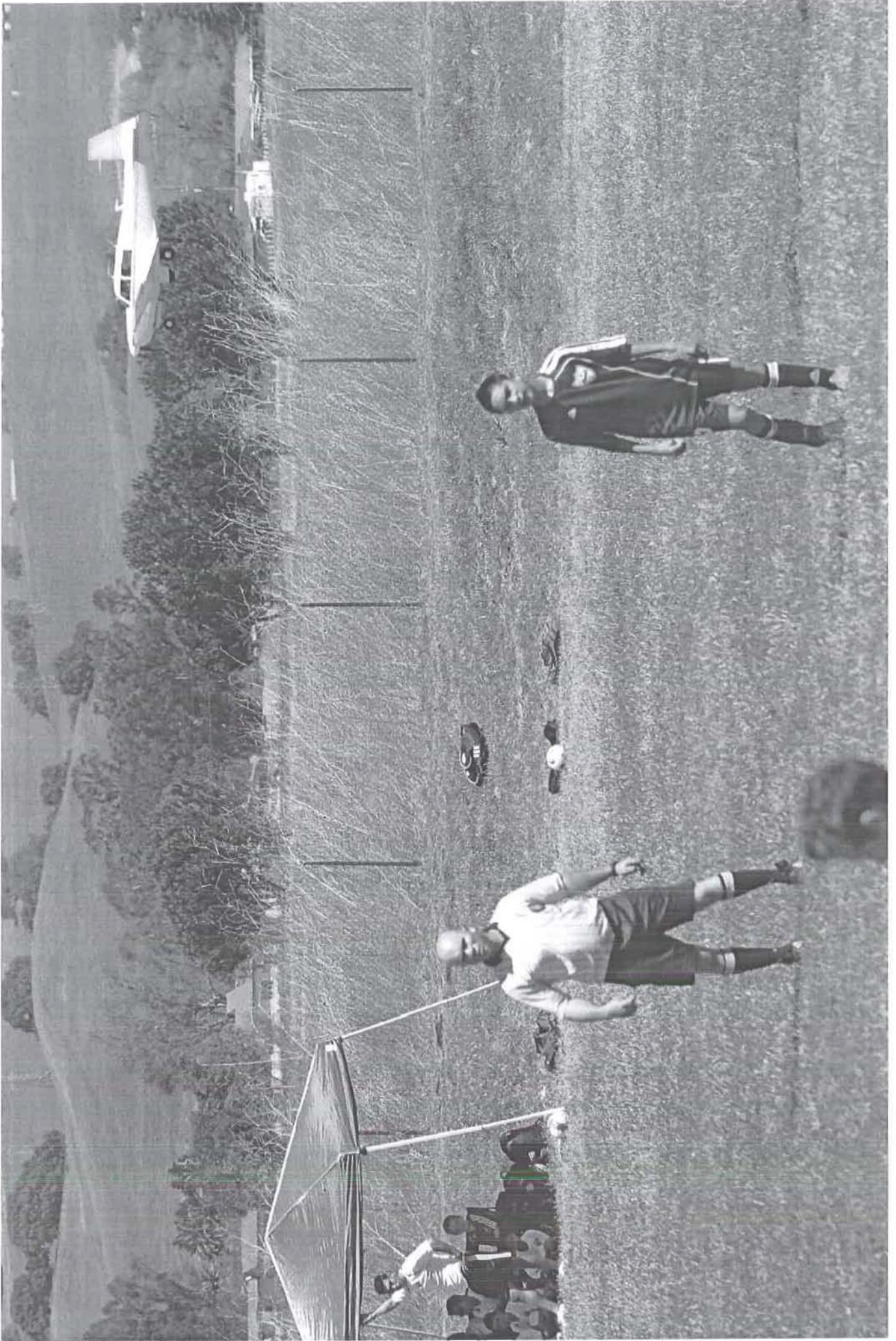
Best regards,  
Bob Herbst

----- End of Forwarded Message

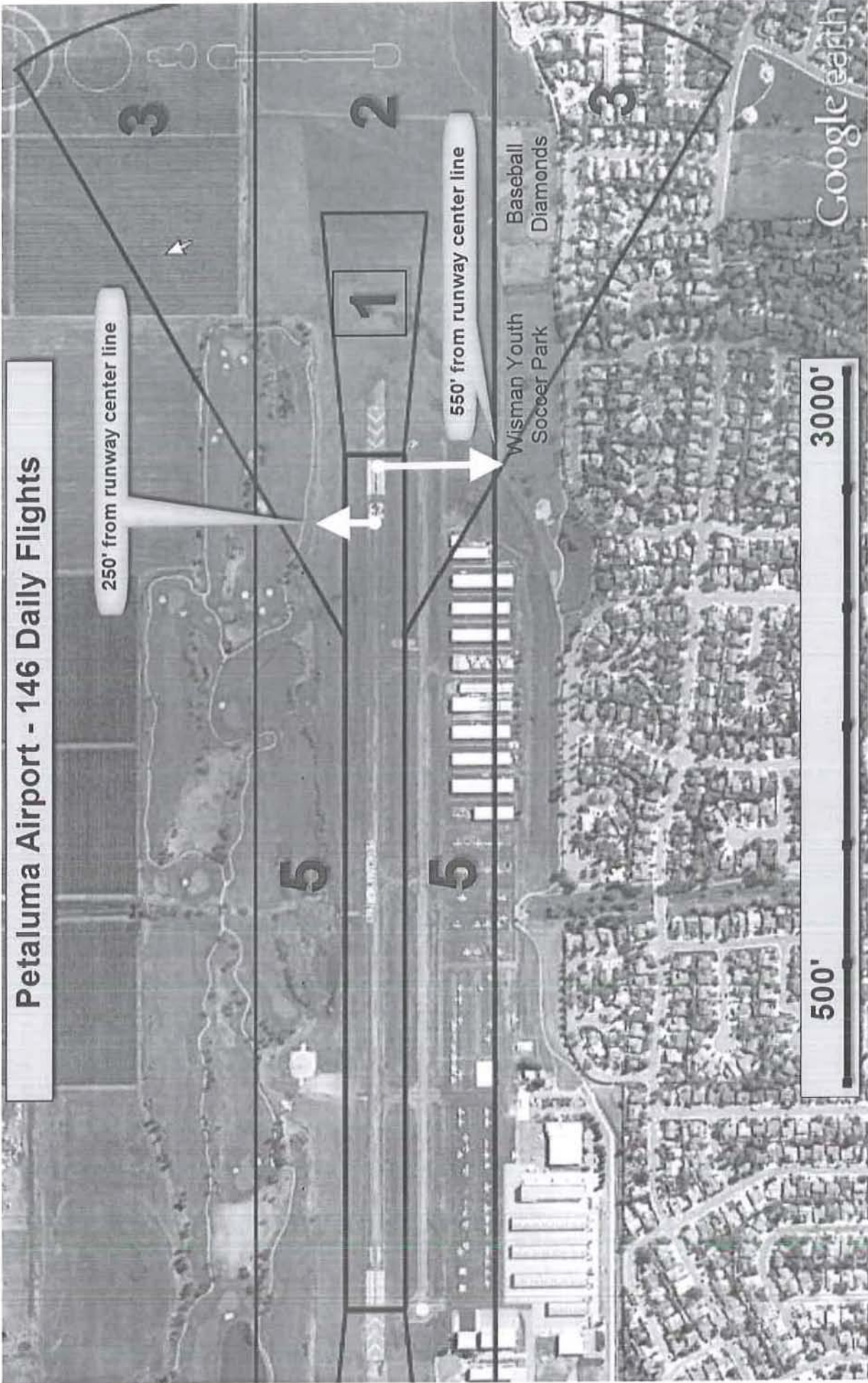
5/7/2012







# Petaluma Airport - 146 Daily Flights



250' from runway center line

550' from runway center line

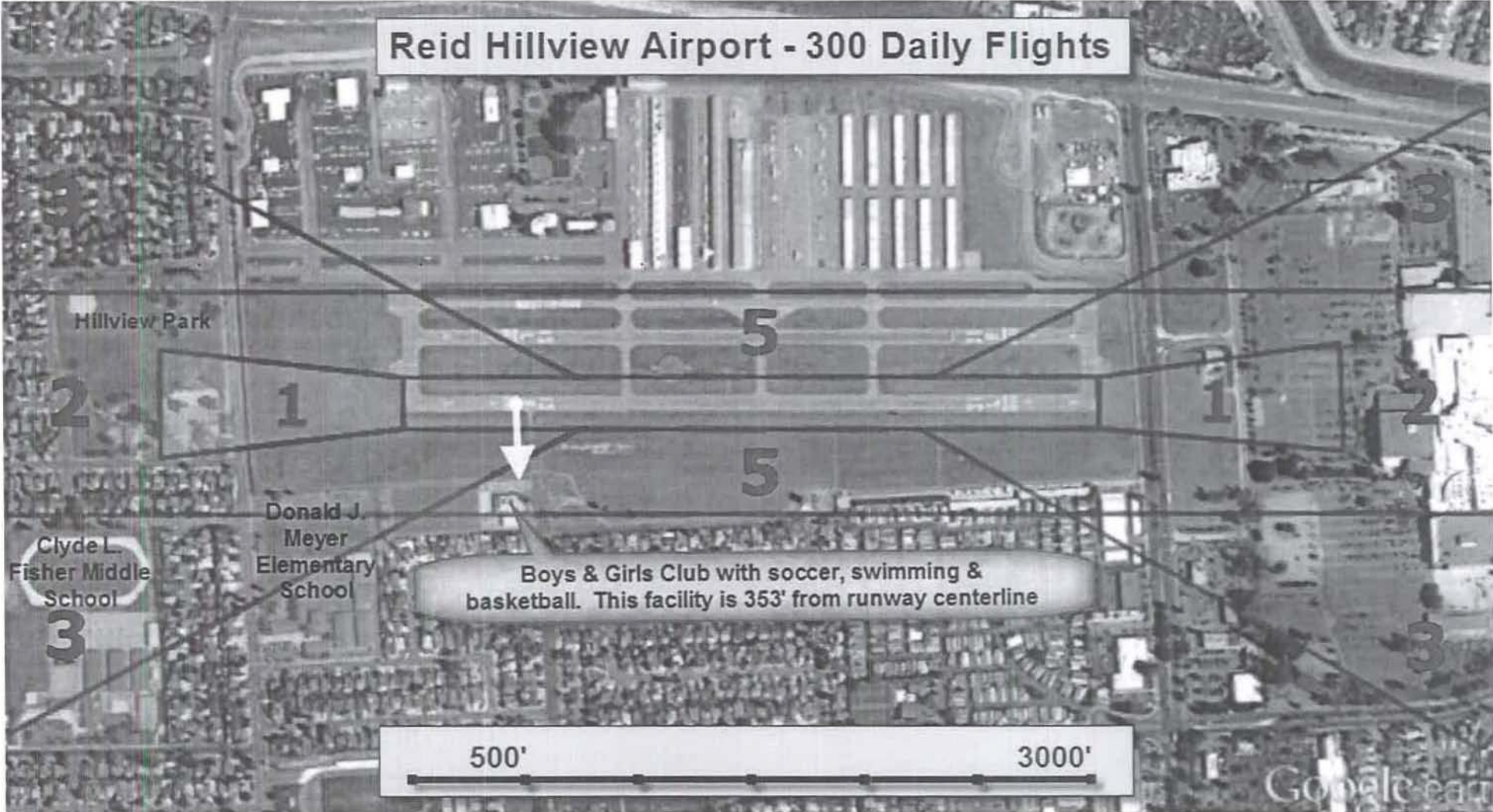
Wisman Youth Soccer Park  
Baseball Diamonds

3000'

500'

Google earth

# Reid Hillview Airport - 300 Daily Flights



Hillview Park

Clyde L. Fisher Middle School

Donald J. Meyer Elementary School

Boys & Girls Club with soccer, swimming & basketball. This facility is 353' from runway centerline



Google earth

# Santa Monica Airport - 452 Daily Flights

Baseball diamonds & tennis courts  
- 412' from runway center line

Golf course

Soccer field

1000'

5000'

Google earth



## Kraig Tambornini

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**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 15, 2012 10:52 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#298]

Name \*

Jeanie Kegley

Email \*

[jkegley3@comcast.net](mailto:jkegley3@comcast.net)

Message to the Planning Commission \*

Are you planning on putting a stop sign or stop lights at the intersection by Contempo Marin?

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 10, 2012 10:48 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#297]

**Name \*** Marcus Witte

**Email \*** [mlwitte@hotmail.com](mailto:mlwitte@hotmail.com)

**Message to the Planning Commission \*** Please know I support for the San Rafael Recreational Facility Project.

I have been waiting for over 5 years. My daughter was 7 years old when I heard about the project and attended a design commission event. Now she is 13 years old. Our community needs a place to play..

## Kraig Tambornini

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**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 09, 2012 10:41 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#296]

**Name \*** Susan Gess

**Email \*** [s.gess@att.net](mailto:s.gess@att.net)

### Message to the Planning Commission \*

I am extremely excited to have a sports complex here in San Rafael. We are soccer players (adults and our kids) and there is a huge limit of available fields in this area. There is always a struggle to find space for practices and games. This facility could help alleviate a lot of that congestion. In addition, it would be fantastic to have a local place to have birthday parties with an athletic theme. In the past, we have travelled to Cotati / Rohnert Park area. I would rather spend my money in my own town. I think the San Rafael Planning Commission should support businesses that are thinking of expanding or starting, especially in this economic downturn. Please support the San Rafael Sports Complex.

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 26, 2012 11:27 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#295]

Name *	Ricki Singer
Email *	<a href="mailto:rsinger14@comcast.net">rsinger14@comcast.net</a>
Message to the Planning Commission *	I support the sports complex because the kids of today and tomorrow need places to go. This sounds like a great well thought out complex. Marin needs this!!!



## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 24, 2012 1:13 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#294]

Name *	John Allen
Email *	<a href="mailto:allenjhunny@aol.com">allenjhunny@aol.com</a>
Message to the Planning Commission *	I am support the San Rafael Recreation Facility Project.

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 22, 2012 11:35 AM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#293]

**Name \*** Victor Meneses  
**Email \*** [vitomene@yahoo.com](mailto:vitomene@yahoo.com)

**Message to the Planning Commission \***

Thanks for let me write a comment. We know that what important will be this project, I read about it and that we were waiting for years. Now I'm a father and I want to my children have a nice place to do sports and enjoy the nice enviroment. Our children in Marin need to be bussy doing any sport, and take them out of streets trust me we need our children doing sports and not in jail. Thanks Victor Meneses God bless all

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 21, 2012 1:58 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#292]

Name \* Ben Polk

Email \* [ben.polk@gmail.com](mailto:ben.polk@gmail.com)

**Message to the Planning Commission \***

I would like to communicate my support for the San Rafael Airport Sports Complex. As an older soccer player (51 and still going!), I play all year both because I love the game and because for more "mature" players it is hard to start and stop such a demanding activity through the year.

Currently many of us older players in Marin drive to the lighted fields in San Francisco or the East Bay to play evening games in the Winter months. Reducing these long drives is a benefit that should be considered when evaluation this project.

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 19, 2012 11:21 AM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#291]

**Name \*** Rob Smith  
**Email \*** [rsmith@pwmarketing.org](mailto:rsmith@pwmarketing.org)

**Message to the Planning Commission \*** to whom it may concern:  
I can't think of a better way to spend funds. we need to have good and safe fields for our children to use. please consider this a potential plus for our community.

thank you

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 18, 2012 6:52 AM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#290]

Name \*

Tracy Smith

Email \*

[trickytee.smith@gmail.com](mailto:trickytee.smith@gmail.com)

Message to the Planning Commission \*

Being a soccer player myself and raising two young girls currently I know that Marin is lacking in sports field availability. Kids and adults need places to run around and get the exercise they enjoy. Thank you

**Kraig Tambornini**

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 8:42 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#289]

Name \* Lydia Collins

Email \* [lmcol@comcast.net](mailto:lmcol@comcast.net)

Message to the Planning Commission \* Our family supports the San Rafael Airport Sports Complex project!

**Kraig Tambornini**

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 5:33 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#288]

**Name \*** Marielle Leon

**Email \*** [marielleleon@gmail.com](mailto:marielleleon@gmail.com)

**Message to the Planning Commission \*** We need more recreational facilities in San Rafael. Field for sure but please add a POOL.

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 5:24 PM

**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com

**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#287]

Name *	Laurie Pedersen
Email *	<a href="mailto:lauriepedersen@pacbell.net">lauriepedersen@pacbell.net</a>
Message to the Planning Commission *	Our family is in support of the San Rafael Recreational Facility Project.



## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 4:53 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#286]

Name *	Phil Sisson
Email *	<a href="mailto:philsisson1@comcast.net">philsisson1@comcast.net</a>
Message to the Planning Commission *	Please approve the sports complex project. It's a good use of city/county facilities.

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 3:30 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#285]

Name \*

Susan Todaro

Email \*

[todarofamily@comcast.net](mailto:todarofamily@comcast.net)

Message to the Planning Commission \*

I would like to voice my support for the new Recreational Facility in San Rafael. There is a dire need for new sports fields and this seems like a very viable solution. Thank you.

**Kraig Tambornini**

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 2:37 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; Imanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#284]

Name \* gail geary

Email \* [gailgeary@yahoo.com](mailto:gailgeary@yahoo.com)

Message to the Planning Commission \* Since the project EIR came out well, and given the void of sports venues available during inclement weather, I support going forward with the project, COMMUNITY will be well served having such a facility at our childrens avail.

**Kraig Tambornini**

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 2:22 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#283]

Name \* Noel Perkins

Email \* [info@hrthinking.com](mailto:info@hrthinking.com)

Message to the Planning Commission \* A new sports complex would be a huge boon to San Rafael. It's a quality of life investment for all Marinites but especially those of us who live and play in San Rafael. Please move forward on this project.

Noel Perkins

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 2:01 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#282]

**Name \*** FREDA O'BRIEN

**Email \*** [fredaobrien@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fredaobrien@sbcglobal.net)

**Message to the Planning Commission \*** Please approve the SR recreational facility project and give the people of SR, both children and adults more playing fields. There is a huge shortage of fields in SR. Help keep our community healthy by passing this project.  
Thanks  
Freda O'Brien

**Kraig Tambornini**

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 1:56 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#281]

Name \* Leslie Allen  
Email \* [allenlesliea@aol.com](mailto:allenlesliea@aol.com)

Message to the Planning Commission \* This is a no-brainer! We are in dire needs of fields in Marin Co. This is a great, safe, healthy place for kids to be! Please approve this.

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 22, 2012 12:20 PM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#301]

Name *	Suzanne Bernard
Email *	<a href="mailto:suzanne_bernard@yahoo.com">suzanne_bernard@yahoo.com</a>
Message to the Planning Commission *	To show my support for this Project! Our kids and family need it. Let's make it happen for the benefit of all of us!  Yes to the Sports Complex!!  Thanks Suzanne

## Kraig Tambornini

---

**From:** In Support of the San Rafael Airport Recreation Facility Project [no-reply@wufoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 23, 2012 7:02 AM  
**To:** dist2@letmarinplay.com; lmanchip@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Thank you for your time. [#302]

**Name \*** Erin Becker

**Email \*** [Erinbecker@comcast.net](mailto:Erinbecker@comcast.net)

**Message to the Planning Commission \*** This project will solve issues facing our community...not limited to:  
A safe place for kids to play  
A community bridging location  
Investing in the health of our youth  
A public statement defining what is important to our community



# GOALS™

# Foundation



EMPOWERING and INSPIRING OUR YOUTH - ONE GOAL AT A TIME



The Goals Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that strives to afford opportunities to help our local youth create, develop and focus on positive life goals that include sports, health and fitness, educational, family and career goals in order to prevent at-risk behavior and activities in the future.

GOALS FOUNDATION 2012

# OUR COMMITMENT

## *Overview*

Kids who have goals and participate in well designed after-school and weekend sports programs are less likely to be overweight, suffer from chronic health conditions like asthma and diabetes and drop out of school. These programs and positive character traits being instilled in our children help them to make better decisions and they are more likely to reject drugs, alcohol, criminal and gang activity.

## *Mission*

Our mission is to help create character, confidence, integrity, motivation, desire and belief in our young people by exposing them to the atmosphere and camaraderie of sports and fitness, regardless of limited physical, mental or financial abilities so they may reach their life potential.

We aim to work in collaboration with the entire community with our schools, cities and county, businesses, parents, sports and other non-profit organizations.



# TOP FOUR GOALS

# 1

## *Fitness and Athletic Goals*

### **Promote the importance of physical activity:**

Our goal is to help motivate children to participate in 90 minutes of sports and fitness activities at least three days a week to ensure they receive the recommended exercise they need.

The Goals Foundation believes that every young person deserves the chance to participate in youth sports and gain the many benefits that supervised athletic programs provide; mental and physical well-being, confidence and self esteem, ethical character and good sportsmanship are qualities that last a lifetime.

# 2

## *Health Goals*

### **Provide children and parents with guidance on nutrition and ways to stay active and healthy to help combat rising childhood obesity rates:**

Our goal is to promote the importance of healthy living. We strive to help kids to develop and foster personal goal setting and motivational habits with a special emphasis on fitness for life. Our staff delivers relevant educational activities where participants are taught the basics of nutrition, the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices and the importance of maintaining healthy eating and fitness habits.

# 3

## *Social Goals*

### **Provide facilities, programs, motivation and a positive environment:**

Our goal is to get our children to play together, make new friends and learn about the importance of teamwork and cooperation in a fun and safe environment. We work to guide at-risk children away from negative influences such as gangs and criminal behavior during the pivotal 2pm-6pm after school hours.

# 4

## *Educational and Career Goals*

### **To engage children in academic activities with the goal of increasing educational attainment:**

Our goal is to assist children and young adults to create educational and career goals that will help them develop more long-term opportunities for themselves and their families by staying in school and focusing on life skills that will help them pursue and accomplish their dreams.



## CORE COMPONENTS

**Mentorship:** Each site is staffed by caring coaches who serve as mentors that are invested in the successful development of each child. Mentors stress the importance of doing well in school and avoiding negative influences such as drugs, alcohol, and violence. We also encourage and in some programs, make it mandatory for our children and young adults to give back with big brother and coaching mentor programs where they become the role model for other children.

**Family Engagement:** The Goals Foundation Soccer strives to turn parents and family members into advocates who reinforce the program's teachings by applying them in their homes. We teach our youth and their parents the dangers and the results of unhealthy eating habits, lack of physical fitness, alcohol and drug abuse and criminal behavior.

Family members are provided with information on nutrition, health, and public services that will aide them in their pursuit of a healthier lifestyle.

*Our emphasis is on making positive and healthy choices earlier in life...*

*Healthy  
activities begin  
on the field  
but live in  
every portion  
of our lives....*

# BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

## *A First-Class Sports Facility with a Mission*

**Our goal** is to build a better community by delivering inclusive, first-class sports, health and social facilities that inspire, encourage and empower our youth and their families through participation in sports, fitness, education and social activities.

The Goals Foundation believes that we can make a difference in our community. Our outreach ensures that all youth in our community are provided the opportunity to participate in quality leagues, programs and activities - regardless of social or economic background.

With donations of money, equipment, field time and program participation, we aim to reach children who might otherwise never have the chance to take part in the "world's game" of soccer and other sports, fitness, educational and social activities.



*Get  
ready  
to be  
inspired!*

### **IMAGINE A PLACE WHERE...**

- Youth and young adults are welcome and equal regardless of race, social background or ability.
- Youth and young adults can learn in a safe and engaging environment that provides an alternative to high-risk behavior during the pivotal after school hours.
- Youth and young adults are met with enthusiasm on and off the field while they learn skills that help prepare them for a lifetime of success.

# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Soccer and other sports have had a long history of developing family structure, providing cultural support and helping children maintain a healthy lifestyle. Our financial assistance programs allow for many young athletes to benefit from the support system sports provide.

**The Goals Foundation** supports under-resourced youth through our financial assistance programs for teams, leagues, individuals and other non-profit organizations. We donate money, time and equipment, organize and run programs and partner with local and national non-profit organizations to ensure opportunities for every youth in our community.



# EQUIPMENT DONATIONS

## *Goals Foundation/US Soccer Foundation Passback Program*



Having the right gear is a big part of having a great soccer experience. Through the partnership between the Goals Foundation and the U.S. Soccer Foundation Passback Program, new and gently used soccer gear is collected by organizations, teams, clubs and individuals and is redistributed locally to help underserved children in our community.

The Goals Foundation and the U.S. Soccer Foundation aims to outfit as many youth as we can with the equipment they need. We supply cleats, shin guards, socks, shorts and soccer balls to youth ages 4 to 18 years who are in need. This program will allow us to enrich lives through soccer and provide desperately

needed equipment to children in underserved communities.

The Goals Foundation, located at Sports City, houses the majority of the shoes and equipment we collect and then distributes it to those in need. The Goals Foundation will pay to distribute everything once it arrives at Sports City.

The Joe Belluzzo Shoe Bank, also located at Sports City, distributes used, good condition, outdoor soccer cleats to children in need.

# GOALS FOUNDATION PARTNER



**TOPSoccer**, the outreach program for soccer, is a program that brings children and adults with cognitive and/or physical disabilities off the sidelines and into the game. Supported by US Youth Soccer, administered by local community members, TOPSoccer promotes personal development in a fun soccer environment designed to improve social skills and overall fitness.

The TOPSoccer program is locally-based to support strong community relationships through the sport, while increasing the social, physical and soccer ability of the TOPSoccer player. TOPSoccer is different from typical soccer as it does not match players by age, but by their ability and skill, starting at 4 years of age and continuing throughout their lives. The unique design of our program allows players to achieve personal success through Buddies, who translate each session to the level and ability to their players, allowing them to succeed.

*Providing  
children  
with joy!*



*Providing  
parents  
with hope!*



# EMPOWERING AND INSPIRING OUR YOUTH...



## ONE GOAL AT A TIME!

\*The Goals Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

**GOALS FOUNDATION 2012**



RECEIVED

MAY 23 2012

PLANNING

## SAN RAFAEL SPORTS CENTER

### White Paper – Hours of Operation

This letter is in response to the proposed hours of operation for the new San Rafael Sports Center. We have thoroughly reviewed our business operation plan regarding this issue.

The hours of operation directly affect our ability to make this facility work financially as well as to keep the costs reasonable and affordable for the citizens of San Rafael. We are very concerned that any reduced hours beyond the current proposal will either make the project too expensive to operate or will require us to raise the fees beyond what we feel is appropriate and affordable to the majority of athletes and families in Marin.

In reality, what we sell in our business is time. We do not have a product. We have a service that is 100% time oriented and any loss of time is a direct loss of income that cannot be made up elsewhere. Every indoor soccer and sports facility in the Bay Area that we are aware of has operating hours that do not shut down until at least 11pm including Bladium in Alameda, Off the Wall in Santa Clara, Sports City in Santa Rosa/Cotati, Metro City in Sacramento, Silver Creek SportsPlex and many others....

**Please note that we already agreed to modify our hours of operations to accommodate some neighbor concerns. Our current proposed hours of operation are as follows:**

#### Indoor Facility

Monday-Thursday 9am – 11pm

Friday - Saturday, 8am – 12am

Sunday- 8am – 11pm

#### Outdoor Fields - 10pm

We made these modifications to address the main concern of hours during the majority of weekday and workday nights. We eliminated two additional games on those nights for a net loss of 8 total games per week.

Youth indoor games during the mid-week go from 4:30pm-8:30pm, which does not give enough adult hours of play if hours are reduced to end before 11pm. Also, youth outdoor would also run from 4:30pm-7:30pm, allowing adult play from only from 7:30-10pm on the outdoor fields.

The soccer operation is not economically sustainable as youth only facility. Eliminating the later night time playing hours would severely reduce our ability to operate the facility financially because adults would not be able to use this facility in the evening. This in effect would force to start the adults as early as possible (5pm-6pm) which are now youth time slots and reduce the overall availability of youth games we could provide the community.

#### Summary:

- The facility must also have enough field inventory to survive. This means we have to be able to operate mid-week from 4:30pm - 11pm indoors and from 4:30-10pm outdoors, regardless of youth or adults players. However, youth players are limited to

how late they can play so in order to not only to keep youth fees low but to survive as a business, we must have enough adults playing indoor and outdoor year round.

- The goal is to provide at least 3-4 hours of daily exclusive adult play time at the soccer facility:
  - Higher adult fees are required to offset lower youth fees
  - Soccer operation is not economically sustainable as youth only facility
- The facility needs an 11pm mid-week and Friday/Saturday midnight close time in order to provide more hours of play for our youth as well as to have enough hours' weekly exclusive adult play. The adult play allows us to charge higher adult fees in order to offset lower youth fees.
- Our youth focus is on youth under-12 activities during daylight hours, teen activities after school from 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM and adult activities in evenings from 8:00 PM – 11:00 PM (midnight Fri/Sat).
- Having adults play in the evenings both indoor and outdoor with the lights will allow us to reduce youth fees by 35%-40%. The business is not economically feasible without a balanced schedule of youth and adults playing both indoors and outdoors.

## **SAN RAFAEL SPORTS CENTER.**

### ***WHY THE NEED FOR SYNTHETIC GRASS AND LIGHTS?***

Utilizing natural grass fields makes no sense these days. Almost every new field project from cities and schools these days is done with synthetic grass for the following reasons:

1. Our sports community has a big need for open playing fields. Because they suffer less downtime than grass fields, more players can use the fields in a typical week. More play time for kids and adults increases fitness, reduce childhood obesity and overall makes our community healthier and happier.
2. This facility is a sports park. Parks are very important to the quality of life in Marin County and we are providing a legacy for future generations.
3. Soccer, lacrosse, rugby and other sports are now year round and both youth and adult teams need to train and play all year. Many of the leagues, youth tournaments and state cup competitions are now played in the winter and spring months when many of the grass fields are shut down or are unplayable.
4. The maintenance costs of natural grass are very expensive – up to \$60,000 per field, per year and the fields must still be shut down for 4-6 months.
5. Synthetic Grass remains playable year round, whereas grass gets overused and shut down in the winter and spring months from rain and mud, therefore natural grass fields do not serve the community, our business model or the goal of the project, which is to provide year round all weather fields. Synthetic grass also reduces the use of water, fertilizers and chemicals. Installing synthetic grass is an environmentally sound decision.
6. Both youth and adults need lit fields to play on in the winter & spring time when it is dark before 5pm.
7. Youth indoor games during the mid-week go from 4:30pm-8:30pm which does not give enough adult hours of play. Also, youth outdoor would also run from 4:30pm-7pm, giving adults from 7-10pm on the outdoor fields.
8. Adults pay approx 35%-40% more in fees than youth, which allows us to lower the youth fees. The business is not economically feasible without a balanced schedule of youth and adults playing both indoors and outdoors.
9. As a business, we must also have enough field inventory to survive. This means we have to be able to operate mid-week from 4:30pm - 11pm indoors and from 4:30-10pm outdoors, regardless of youth or adults players. However, youth players are seasonal and youth players are limited in the later evening hours so in order to not only to keep youth fees low but to survive as a business, we must have adults playing indoor and outdoor year round.

The challenge with synthetic grass is that it is extremely expensive to install (up to \$1 million per field). In order to afford it you have to have lights on the field. The soccer operation is not economically sustainable as youth only facility. Reducing the outdoor night time hours of play would also eliminate the synthetic turf because it is not economically feasible to install synthetic turf without lights or enough lit hours of play. This would then eliminate our ability to operate the facility because adults would not be able to use this facility in the evening and it would go against the entire purpose of building the facility in the first place.

#### **The Reasons We Must Have Lighted Fields:**

- To bring enough revenue into the facility in order to have year round play for the community and the positive benefits that come from that as described above.
- Winter is the prime rental season for synthetic grass fields, because most fields in the county are grass and are closed in the winter. However, in winter it gets dark before 5 pm, so in order to generate any significant rental revenue, the fields must be lit.
- Synthetic grass & lights also allow for children to stay healthy and active and away from negative influences and exercise afterschool in the winter months.
- To provide more hours of play for our youth as well as 3-4 hours of daily exclusive adult play. The adult play allows us to charge higher adult fees in order to offset lower youth fees. Having adult play in the evenings will allow us to reduce youth fees by 35%-40%.
- We have chosen the most state-of-the-art environmentally friendly lighting system we could find on the market. It is the Green Generation Lighting system designed by Musco Lighting. It uses 50% less electricity and produces 50% less spill and glare than traditional fixtures. This superior new technology also enables us to make the poles shorter and still achieve adequate lighting. The average pole height is only 31.5 feet, which is half as tall as the light poles other city park and recreation or high school facilities, including the lights at McInnis Park right next door.

## SAN RAFAEL SPORTS CENTER

To: Planning Commissioners  
Re: Responsible Provider Policy

We are writing to you to provide the planning commissioners and city council members with information regarding the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at our proposed facility. A similar letter regarding this issue was sent to Rafi Boloyan in 2011. We also sent this letter to Supervisor Adams and Larry Meredith in response to their concern regarding this issue. On our web site, we have our "Responsible Provider Policies" for beer and wine sales <http://www.letmarinplay.com/ResponsibleProviderPolicies.pdf>

Our facility will have a wide variety food and beverages and will offer something for everyone. Beer and wine will be served. We understand that the city and county has spent considerable time, effort and taxpayer dollars to address underage drinking in Marin, and we applaud this effort.

We share the cities goals and want to do everything in our power to eliminate "problematic" access to alcohol at our proposed facility and we believe that we fully conform to--and in many areas far exceed--the City of San Rafael requirements regarding alcoholic sales.

The attached addendum shows our very detailed, comprehensive policy that dovetails nicely with both the City of San Rafael's and County of Marin's policies and criteria for controlling alcohol problems and underage access.

The County Mission is "...individuals, organizations and coalitions providing leadership and coordination to develop and maintain a comprehensive alcohol and other drug prevention system in Marin County." We feel our facility can act to provide this type of leadership to prevent alcohol, drug problems and teen access and still allow for adults to drink socially and responsibly. The two sides of this issue can co-exist together. Our facility and our staff of educators, coaches and trainers, and the thousands of families that will use the facility, is the perfect place to advertise awareness and prevention of this important issue.

A family oriented facility is just that, a place where the entire family can enjoy themselves--adults and kids. We have proposed a café, not a bar. Many family and sports-oriented facilities offer beer and wine. These are generally, however, not places teenagers go to try and get alcohol. On the contrary, these are places where athletes and their family and friends go to participate and/or be around a healthy environment. When teens and young adults have fun, positive things to do in life such as playing sports, it reduces the chances of them participating in negative or illegal activities such as under aged or excessive drinking, smoking and drugs.

Stress and boredom play a large role in teenage and young adolescent drinking, drug use and bad behavior, and this facility will help to reduce all of those negative traits. Ironically, the lack of sports and recreation facilities such as what we have proposed is a direct contributor to some of these problems. Our facility helps prevent teens from drinking and drugs, not the other way around. In reality, the people who use this facility are the least likely to have issues and problems with alcohol and this has proven true by 15 years of real experience dealing with these type of members and this specific issue.

The County of Marin already allows alcoholic sales and consumption at "family sports and recreation and entertainment venues" including McInnis Park, (right next to youth soccer and softball fields, batting cages, driving range and mini-golf). In fact, at this county facility, anyone over 21 can order hard liquor to go and walk around all of the inside and outside areas where children are present, without any supervision or restrictions. This is much more of a broad and loose alcohol policy than what we are proposing. Many other similar family venues in Marin, including Mulberry Pizza, the Smith Ranch Deli (both on Smith Ranch Road), Pinky's Pizza (across from San Rafael High School), Mt. Tam Racquet Club, Scott Valley Swim and Tennis Club, Tiburon Peninsula Club, Harbor Point and the Marin County Club; all serve alcohol in their sport clubs and several have alcohol service at the outdoor areas that are designed for youth use.

There are hundreds of other public and private facilities, cafés, restaurants and businesses in Marin County that serve alcoholic beverages and where children and teenagers go with their families to recreate or socialize. Even Chuck E. Cheese and Disneyland serves beer and wine.

The majority of indoor soccer and sports facilities in California and across the country also serve alcohol, including "Bladium" in Alameda, "Off the Wall" in Santa Clara, Silver Creek SportsPlex in San Jose, etc. It is also a 100+ year worldwide social tradition throughout many different cultures among adult soccer players to have a social drink together after a match, and it actually embodies good sportsmanship when both teams and the match officials can come together after a game to socialize together.

Why are we confident that we this will not be an issue at our proposed facility? Because it is our responsibility to run a family-oriented sports, health and entertainment facility and any negative alcohol issues will only serve to severely hurt our image and our core business. It is also our moral belief that we need to provide a safe, fun, healthy environment for our members and their families and guests. Beer and wine is not our main business and so we won't compromise our fun, safe and secure leagues, programs and facility for a few beer sales. It will be available as a convenience for adult social gatherings and so we will run an extremely tight ship when it comes to this issue.

It is also important to note that the current facilities in Sonoma County have run for 15+ years have an exemplarity record regarding this issue. As a matter of fact, they has been serving beer and wine to their members in Santa Rosa and Cotati for 12+ years now. They have had over 45,000 total members over those years including 6,900 current players (3,700 adults and 3,200 youth players) and have never had a single complaint related to alcohol from any parent or person, nor have they had any alcohol related facility issues that we are aware of.

The city of San Rafael police department also checked our record in Santa Rosa and found it to be 100% clean with no facility incidents. It is actually an extraordinary record.

Also, the city of San Rafael does not require restaurants and cafés to get approval to serve alcohol as it is solely an ABC issue. We are not sure that this issue legally belongs anywhere in the merits hearing, although we are happy to address it head on if needed

According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Department of Education, most children are having a difficult time meeting the very minimal standards for physical fitness. Only 25% of 5<sup>th</sup> graders, 29% of seventh graders and 27% of ninth graders were able to pass these tests. Our schools are cutting back on PE classes, after-school fitness programs barely exist, many parks are unsafe for kids to go by themselves, so pick-up baseball or soccer games hardly exist any more; parents also now allow for a sedentary lifestyle of video games and TV. Childhood obesity is

already at an alarming rate and is only getting worse. Children and adults need more exercise and better diets.

This proposed sports facility addresses these very concerns of health and fitness for our young children, teenagers and adults and will be a positive influence for Marin. We hope that members of the commission as well as county commissioners will support this needed project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

San Rafael Sports Center Group

CC: San Rafael Planning Commissioners, City Council Board Members

#### **ADENDUM #1**

Below is our 18-point **Responsible Provider Policy** plan and facility policies we propose in order to provide the community with a responsible beverage service program and in order to minimize alcohol related problems and negative influences on our youth:

1. No facility advertising of alcohol or tobacco except normal internal menu advertising in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor cafe serving area. Absolutely no pro-alcohol or tobacco marketing or promotions. Menu signs will be above 5' height.
2. Beer and wine sales will be contained to only the second floor cafe area and will not be allowed on the field levels or outside except for the occasional special event. This means that young children will not be exposed to any alcohol or advertising when they come to play at the facilities. There will also be a snack bar on the first floor so parents would be making a choice to bring their children into 2<sup>nd</sup> floor café area where food, beer and wine would be available to purchase. 90% of the facility grounds are **off limits** to alcohol beverage consumption. 100% to tobacco.
3. Establish a "21 and over" section on the second floor for adults only who might want to drink out of the way of our youth.
4. Comprehensive ABC education and training for all staff involved in selling beer and wine or policing such areas. Train all staff in early identification of potential problems.
5. Strict policy regarding excessive drinking –patrons will not be served if they appear to be under the influence. Employees will be trained to deal with any potential problems and people will be immediately cut off from drinking if they look under the influence, get loud or unruly in any way. A no tolerance policy regarding any members or patron who drink before they play or violate any alcohol policies of the facility - lifetime ban if policy is violated.
6. The inside and outside of the facility will be monitored at all times. This is done in person and by video surveillance that monitors all facility areas seating area and the parking lot as well as in person security.

7. Check every single I.D. before selling. Make it almost impossible for anyone under the age of twenty-one years old to drink in and/or around this facility. Issue a lifetime facility ban for any adults who buy or attempt to purchase alcohol for a minor.
8. Limit patrons to one beer or glass of wine per order.
9. No alcohol allowed to be brought out from inside the facility.
10. Confiscate any I.D. that looks suspicious and call authorities.
11. Expensive beer and wine prices to discourage excess drinking.
12. Sponsor alcohol and drug prevention classes at our facility.
13. Allow free community use of our meeting rooms to any outside group that would like to have meeting or classes that address problematic alcohol and drug use, and establish classes at our facility for teenage drinking and drug abuse.
14. Encourage ABC and our local police to be part of our facility and welcome them to conduct random checks and evaluations of the facility, and have them assist us with our responsible beverage program.
15. Participate in weekend programs for teens. For example, play all high school coed indoor soccer leagues on Friday and Saturday evenings, thereby giving teenagers in Marin an alcohol, drug and tobacco-free alternative place to go on weekend nights.
16. The facility will have open spaces, good lighting, early closing times and staff security.
17. Internally evaluate and modify policies and procedures if needed, every three months.
18. Through our **"Goals Foundation"** we will to help educate children and young adults between the ages of 7-18 in order to prevent at-risk behavior and activities in the future. At risk activities include dropping out of school/lack of a good education, and **substance/alcohol use**, unhealthy eating, sedentary lifestyle, depression and confrontations with the juvenile justice system, including crime, violence and gang activity.

Kids who have goals and are involved and focused on competition are more likely to have a focus which makes it easier for them to stay away from the peer pressure of drugs, alcohol & violence. We also encourage our young adults to give back with big brother and coaching mentor programs where they become the role model for other kids and to speak at classes or events to other youth members about the dangers of alcohol and drugs.



## San Rafael Sports Center Fact Sheet

### Facility Usage:

The San Rafael Sports Center is a publicly accessible, privately funded multi-sport recreational facility that will allow families in Marin County the opportunity to recreate year round on safe, all-weather fields and courts- all built without a dime of taxpayer funds. This facility will help to address many urgent issues and needs that our community faces and will be a community asset to the City of San Rafael and Marin County.

This family facility will be open to the general public for training, leagues, field/court rentals and many other programs for both youth and adults. The center will be open for the entire family to recreate and socialize. Our motto is "Sports, Fitness & Fun for Everyone" and we are committed to providing an active, safe and social place for the entire family.

Based on 15-year operating history from our proposed operator, We anticipate 45% of the total facility use will be from San Rafael and Dixie youth soccer players, 25% from San Rafael adult residents and 30% from other Marin county youth and adult participants.

Yearly registration fees are required only for indoor league play. There are no registration requirements to rent any of the indoor or outdoor fields, book a party, join a class, camp or clinic, play pick up soccer, use the "Kids Zone" inflatable area, use the Family Fun Center, book a school or group event or the come to the café. We also offer free field time and coaching for low income and mentally challenged children in the "TopSoccer" program through the non-profit "Goals Foundation" and as well as free meeting space time for the local community.

### The San Rafael Sports Center will provide the following Community Benefits:

- It's anticipated that over 25,000 different San Rafael and Marin families will utilize the positive benefits of this facility over the next 5 years.
- Help reduce obesity and medical problems/costs by creating up to **14,570 hours per year** of healthy sports playing time for San Rafael and Marin children and adults.
- Increase San Rafael resident's safety by building local facilities.
  - Reduces San Rafael and Marin families travel by **1,066,152 miles per year\***
  - Saves San Rafael and Marin families over **17,769 hours of traveling on the road\***
  - Reduces global warming impact from cars CO2

- Our city will benefit from local sales tax and new jobs, especially jobs for teenagers and young adults.
- Local restaurants and other businesses in the North San Rafael area will see an increase in business from all the families visiting the area, particularly on weekends.
- Our fields are the safest possible playing fields and will result in an overall reduction sports injuries vs. what is occurring on the current dangerous city/county fields.
- Our fields will help the environment by eliminating water usage as well as harmful fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.
  - Because they suffer less downtime than grass fields, more players can use the synthetic grass fields in a typical week.
  - This equates to more play time for both youth and adults and increases fitness, reduces childhood obesity and overall makes our community healthier and happier.
- This project will increase our community's quality of life creating a healthier community, physically and economically.
  - Will provide our community a healthy, fun, social and physical outlet for our kids and adults
  - Will help get our young adolescents off the street and into healthy programs
  - Will help reduce drug use and crime.
  - This project will greatly assist in providing more space in the community for our seniors to have recreational opportunities at no charge.

**The San Rafael Sports center has something for everyone to cheer about and enhance our community's quality of life.**

#### **\*Travel Calculations**

The indoor soccer facilities in Sonoma county currently has 464 soccer & lacrosse members that play from San Rafael and Marin County.

On average, these players drive up to Santa Rosa 1x per week traveling an average of 80 miles round trip = 464 trips per week/2 players per car = 232 trips x 80 miles = 18,560 miles per week x 24 weeks average per year = 445,440 miles per year.

Driving to the new Marin Facility from the same San Rafael 4th street location is 9.75 miles round trip. If the same 464 members traveled 1x per week x 24 weeks per year = 54,288 miles per year.

Building the new San Rafael Sports Center will save 391,152 total miles per year, just from Sonoma County trips.

San Rafael and Marin County soccer and lacrosse families currently travel all over the bay area to find available fields and facilities to play at. On average, 2,500 (1,250 after carpool) of these families travel 2x per month out of Marin County = 30,000 total yearly trips. They average 90 miles roundtrip = 2,700,000 miles per year.

Building the new San Rafael Sports Center will save at least 25% of these trips, reducing our families travel by 675,000 trips.

**Combined, building the San Rafael Sports Center will save 1,066,152 miles per year and 17,769 total hours spent traveling on the road.**

The proposed operator has been in operation since 1996 in Santa Rosa and 2002 in their Cotati facility. They operate a professional, first class facility for our community and will offer the following for the San Rafael facility:

1. Youth and adult indoor soccer leagues.
2. Indoor and outdoor field rentals for soccer, Lacrosse, rugby, flag football.
3. Lil Kickers nationally renowned child and player development programs (2-9 yrs)
4. Drop in pick up play.
5. Birthday and team parties.
6. Kids Zone inflatable area.
7. Family Fun Center game area
8. Mom play café
9. Toddler learning center.
10. Community and team meeting rooms.
11. Community fundraising events (sports leagues, Red Cross, schools, non-profit organizations, Special Olympics, etc)
12. The Goals Foundation, a Non-profit 5013c entity that provides money, field space, programs and mentoring for "at-risk" and low income children as well as physically and mentally challenged children.

- Total overall members since 1996 = 45,000+

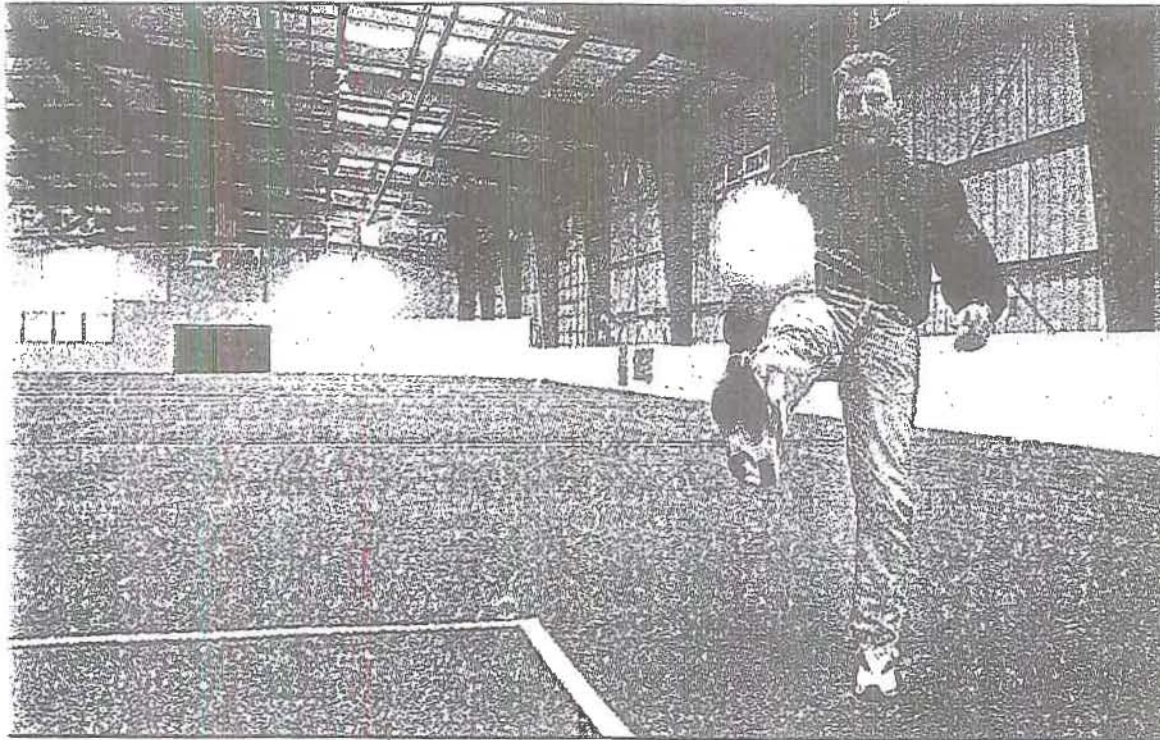
- Total current members = 7,350
- Total youth members = 58%
- Total adult members = 42%

Note: Since 1996, there has not been a single complaint to the city of Santa Rosa or the county of Sonoma from any neighbors regarding either of the Sports City facilities. Not a single complain about noise, lights, traffic, alcohol, etc. In fact, the City of San Rafael police department contacted the city of Santa Rosa and verified that there have been zero complaints. Sports City have been great neighbors and community members.

# SPORTS

**B**

Holly Woolard, Sports Editor 382-7206



IJ photo/Marian Little Utley

**OPEN SPACE PRESERVE:** Terra Linda's Andrew Rowley shows off his multi-purpose facility.

## Indoor soccer dream gets kicks up north

By Dave Albee

Independent Journal reporter

SANTA ROSA — The beauty of Andrew Rowley's indoor soccer field at Sports City in Santa Rosa is that it's everything soccer moms, dads and kids want under one roof.

The shame of it is it's not located in Marin. That was Rowley's original plan, but financial constraints and city and county fathers forced Rowley to get his kicks further north.

"That's the most frustrating thing," said Rowley, who grew up in Terra Linda. "Marin's basically developing into a retirement community. They don't care about the kids. They care about themselves and their little nestegg."

Sports City, a 25,000 square-foot multi-purpose facility, is so successful in meeting the thrills and

frills of soccer players in the North Bay that others, like John Manchip of Novato, are chasing Rowley's dream and running into the same road blocks.

"Andrew's got a great thing up there, but we really need something in Marin," said Manchip, coach of the Marin Hawks boys 16 & under team in Mill Valley. "It's absolutely impossible to do ... We're getting no help."

Rowley decided he had to help himself. He got the idea of building an indoor soccer facility about eight years ago when, as coach of the Dixie Stompers 12 & under team, he took them to the national championships in Fayetteville, Ga. There, Rowley marveled at Fayetteville's facility — an indoor soccer complex surrounded by 10 perfectly cut Bermuda grass fields — like it was the Taj Majal of youth

See Rowley, page B7

# Rowley

From page B1

soccer.

"Like nothing we've seen out here," Rowley said.

The Dixie Stompers, though living in affluent Marin, usually trained indoors at Miller Creek School. Other soccer teams used indoor basketball courts, which are hard and short and, well, not very practical.

Rowley had a vision. He saw a need for a decent-sized indoor soccer field in Marin and dedicated the next four years to finding one. Ideally, he wanted to build a big one from the ground up, but vacant land near Highway 101 in Marin was scarce and expensive. Very expensive. And very precious.

If he had his druthers, Rowley would have loved to build an indoor/outdoor soccer complex near St. Vincent's School. He would have settled to purchase an abandoned airplane hangar at Hamilton Air Force Base, but the one they were looking at was run-down and, according to Rowley, it would have cost a couple of million dollars to purchase it "as is."

Rowley couldn't catch a break. Finally, he gave Marin the red card and took his dream north to Rohnert Park, where he owns a house. He had his eyes on vacant land next to Rohnert Park Stadium, and, when Al Davis and the Oakland Raiders were looking for a summer training camp early last year, Rowley figured he had the right proposition. He and his partners, Wally Lourdeaux of Ross and Rick Herbert of Santa Rosa, could build their "Sports City" and the Raiders could use part of the building for their locker room and practice on the grounds around it. The outdoor football fields could be converted to soccer fields once the Raiders broke camp.

Nice idea. Except Rohnert Park didn't have a hotel next door to the

facility, which was one of Al Davis' prerequisites. Napa had what the Raiders' owner was looking for. It managed to put together a deal that's similar to the one Rowley proposed.

So Rowley's quest continued. North. After looking at about 100 buildings, he settled on leasing a large building in northwest Santa Rosa that previously housed a dry wall company and lumber company.

"It was a race. Other groups were looking around, too," Rowley said. "We needed to get going. We needed to get a start. People were crying out for it."

Sports City, which sets back about 100 yards off Piner Road, is a little hard to find and hard on the eyes from the outside.

"Pathetic," quipped Manchip, who actually missed it and drove two miles past Sports City the first time he visited.

But, inside, well, it's another world. It's slick.

"It looks like a warehouse, but when you go in ... there's just nothing like it around," said Lesley Zwilling, manager of the Mill Valley Amazons 14 & under girls team. "The kids think it's pretty cool. They love it."

For a variety of reasons, Rowley and his partners spent \$250,000 in construction costs to knock down walls and put in a soccer field, which looks like a regulation hockey rink except it has bright green AstroTurf laid on top of quarter-inch padding on the floor. There is plexi-glass the length of the west side of the rink where spectators can stand or sit on stools and watch. Or play video games or visit a snack bar behind them.

Rowley eventually wants to build an upper deck, above the rink, where spectators can either watch games below or sit in a 21 & under sports bar with television sets and pool tables.

For now, Sports City is sold out. There are 165 men's, women's, coed

and youth teams who currently use the facility plus it's available for drop-ins and birthday and even slumber parties. Sports City recently hosted a slumber party that ordered out for pizza and played soccer until 3 in the morning ... but ended at 7 a.m. when sleeping bags were picked up to allow a team to practice on the field.

The building holds 200 people, but it was jammed-packed by about 400 spectators, including a fire marshal, for a game in January between the Croatian National Indoor Champions and Juventus, a local All-Star team.

Still, Sports City isn't exclusive to soccer. Volleyball is played there and even bocce ball, though the older bocce ball players are a little annoyed by the loud modern music used by a Jazzercise class that subtitles the facility during the day.

Rowley also has entertained the idea of opening the building for basketball, lacrosse, field hockey, arena flag football, karate, boxing and gymnastics. Summer youth camps are being discussed which, Rowley said, "could turn this place into a giant day-care center."

The only problem is it's a long way to drive from Marin. Zwilling and Manchip said it takes their teams almost an hour to get there from Mill Valley, Tiburon and Central Marin and "we're getting complaints already," Manchip said.

The facility opened on Dec. 2. Rowley, 28, was inside with a fire inspector taking a final walk-through five minutes before a parking lot full of parents and their kids were busting to get inside for their first glimpse.

The demand to use the facility has Rowley working 12-to-18-hour days six days a week. He takes Sunday off. Soccer players, however, do

## Sports City

The details on Andrew Rowley's Sports City, North Bay's Indoor Soccer Center:

■ Address: 921 Piner Road, Santa Rosa

■ Directions: Take 101 North to Bicentennial Way Exit

West, turn right on Range Road, left on Piner Road.

■ Astro-Turf Field Rental Rates: From \$60 to \$85 an hour.

■ Birthday Party/Slumber Party Packages: From \$100 to \$220.

■ Information: 707-526-1320.

not rest and Rowley's six-person staff manages when he's not around.

There always seems to be someone or some team or some corporate group waiting in line to get their kicks indoors. To find a nicer facility, they would have to travel to Sacramento or Santa Clara.

Too bad there wasn't one in Marin. Rowley has blueprints to someday build a bigger one, like around 75,000 square-feet, wherever there is a strong desire to accommodate the growing legion of soccer participants.

Like in Marin. But, in Rowley's eyes, playing political hardball doesn't include soccer.

"They say what they want is a future for the kids, but it's all talk," Rowley said. "If you look at Marin County, it's a joke what they give the kids. The fields are a disaster. They're all run-down."

They're all outdoors. That's a shame.

## Soccer dream



CHAD SURMICK/PRESS DEMOCRAT

*Scotty England takes a break on sideline.*

***SR players getting  
their kicks indoors C1***



ASSOCIATED PRESS

*Jim Furyk tips his cap after firing 66.*

**Furyk holds lead  
at Pebble Beach C1**

# State trying to block shipwreck salvaging

B1

# THE Press DEMOCRAT

## SPORTS

Santa Rosa, California, Saturday, February 1, 1997

## A PLACE TO PLAY



CHAD SURMICK/PRESS DEMOCRAT

Members of under-10 teams the Blitz, left, and the Terminators play at Sports City on Piner Road. The stadium, Sonoma County's first indoor facility, opened in December. There are teams for players of all ages and skill levels.

# Birth of a SR soccer dream

By BRUCE MEADOWS  
Staff Writer

If you really let your imagination wander, it looks a little like a brilliant emerald surrounded by sea of white clouds.

So green, so flat . . . so dry. But there is no denying that this is indeed a soccer field, the first indoor soccer facility of its kind in Sonoma County.

"It really blows people away when they

## County's first indoor facility growing

walk in the door," said 28-year-old Andrew Rowley, a successful soccer player/coach and one of three investors in Sports City, located at 921 Piner Rd. in northwest Santa Rosa.

Sports City, which includes a 175-foot by 76-foot indoor soccer field as well as two volleyball courts on a Sportcourt surface, opened for business in

December, a little earlier than Rowley would have preferred.

"There was and still is work to be done," Rowley said. "But it was time for indoor leagues to start, and with the weather we had, we wanted to get it open."

The response, he said, has been amazing, even by Rowley's optimistic

standards.

"People walk in here and can't believe how big it is," he said, explaining that indoor leagues in this area play on basketball gym floors. "And once they actually get out on the field, you should see the look on their faces."

Besides having a state-of-the-art synthetic surface with a forgiving one-quarter inch pad beneath it, the facility is also completely surrounded by

See Soccer, Page C4





ANNIE WELLS/PRESS DEMOCRAT

*Juventus' Luke Oberkirch tries to stop an unidentified Croatian National indoor player in an exhibition game earlier this week at Sports City won by the Croatian team, 8-3.*

## Soccer

*Continued from Page C1*

a curved white wall, similar to what you would find at a Major Indoor Soccer League arena.

A small pro shop will be operational within a week. There is also a team/birthday room and snack bar.

Down the road is a possible second deck so bleachers can be installed. Presently, there is not much room for spectators.

And way down the line, said Rowley, is the possible addition of some kind of adult cafe, although that's on the back burner for now.

One apparent shortcoming at Sports City is a lack of shower facilities, a problem that probably won't be solved at the present site.

But for anybody who has searched in vain during wet weather for a place — any place — to practice a team for State or Association Cup play or winter tournaments, the field is the thing, a place to get a ball on your foot, a chance to work on moves, defense or set plays . . . soccer.

## Soccer's not the only game to be played in Sports City

By BRUCE MEADOWS  
Staff Writer

It's called Sports City, not Soccer City, for one very good reason: soccer is not the only language spoken at the new Piner Road indoor sports facility.

Besides the large artificial turf soccer field, there are also two regulation volleyball courts with a Sportcourt surface.

Dave Martinez, a volleyball player for 20 years and a coach for the Empire Volleyball Club, is managing the volleyball program at Sports City.

The volleyball courts just opened this past week, and will be available for drop-in play until leagues start up Feb. 3.

"We've had a good response," said Martinez. "Volleyball teams are constantly having to share facilities with basketball and other programs. Trying to

find adequate practice sites is tough."

Leagues will run Monday through Friday nights, with openings for five leagues, including men, women and coed.

Besides adult leagues, Martinez will also stage youth clinics, put on by the Empire Club, and try to create recreational programs for kids — including boys.

"Boys' volleyball is big in so many other areas," said Martinez. "I'd like to see something established here for boys."

Clinics will be available for youngsters starting this week, Monday through Friday. There will be two sessions — 4-5 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. Cost is \$30 for five one-hour sessions or \$6.50 for a single session.

For information, call Martinez at 526-2884.

# INDOOR KICKS



## Diehard locals make the trek to Santa Rosa for soccer fix

By Abel Martinez  
IJ correspondent

SANTA ROSA — It's 8:30 on a Thursday evening — a time when most adults are getting ready for bed — and a group of soccer junkies known as the Marin Blockheads are getting set to begin their weekly ritual of indoor soccer.

Here at Sports City, a two-year-old indoor soccer facility, 40-year-old Marin resident and team captain Rob Neville leads his troop of Blockheads into battle in the over-30 men's division.

"The love of playing brings us here — and it's good for fitness," said Neville, who makes the 45-minute drive with his 10 teammates once a week.

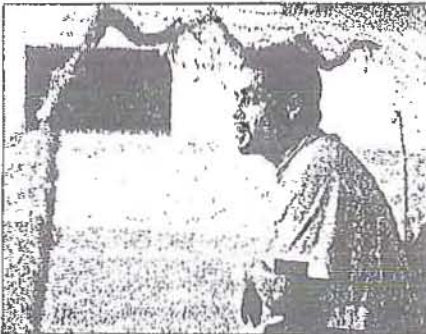
The facility consists of two indoor arenas — one larger than the other — but both smaller in dimension than a standard soccer field.

The playing arena is similar to a hockey rink in that it's surrounded by a combination of plywood and Plexiglas. But rather than ice, the surface is field turf and the goals are built into the walls. With a flat surface and a small amount of space, the indoor game requires the outdoor player to think and play at a faster pace.

"It's a much faster and much more physical game than outdoor," said Tommy Kennedy, 44, another Blockhead.

At Sports City, the afternoon and weekend time slots are reserved for youth players. That means the older players don't get to take to the field until between 7 and 11 p.m., and sometimes even later.

For many it begs an obvious question: why do it? "For the stupidity and passion for the game," answered Blockhead John Brooks. "You have to have



IJ photos/Jeff Vandsol

**FOR KICKS:** (Top photo) Rob Neville of the Marin Blockheads uses the boards to keep his balance while fighting off a defender. (Above) Ralph Montes of Novato sits in the penalty box after being called for tripping.

some screw missing in your head to come play up here at midnight."

Sports City, which opened in December of 1996, has been a big success in its first two years. It has had more than 12,000 registered participants and currently has more than 4,000 players for the winter session.

"The facility is doing great," said Andrew Rowley, one of Sports City's creators. "It's gotten more use than we expected."

Due to its popularity, plans are already in the works to open a new facility in Santa Rosa in December. The new venue, Sports World, will be for more than just indoor soccer, though, Rowley said. It will

also include a fitness center, rock climbing room, batting cages and possibly an indoor running track. It will even serve as a daycare center.

"It will be a family-oriented place," said Rowley.

While Sports City does draw the occasional diehard, most of its leagues have rosters made up of beginning recreational players. There are 27 women's teams in the over-30 section alone.

Currently there are 10 teams from Marin. Whether they're 30-year-old men playing for the passion of the game or 5 year olds getting their feet wet in the pee-wee division, everyone seems to make the 45-minute trek with little complaint.

"The facility is better than anything you can get down here," said Mark Goodman, who coaches the girls under-13 Novato Thunder. "It would be great to have one in Marin, but the question would be where they could put it."

The continued absence of an indoor soccer facility in Marin has not been for lack of trying. Rowley said he's explored the possibility for six years, but hasn't been able to find the building space at an affordable price. Initially, he and his partners were eyeing Marin as the spot to build Sports City.

"We have been meeting with city officials, but it is difficult," said Rowley, who added they continue to discuss future possibilities for Marin.

Meanwhile, local soccer teams will continue to deal with poor field conditions during the winter, and the soccer junkies will continue to make the commute north.

"A facility would be successful in Marin," said Goodman. "And it would save us an hour and a half round trip."

"We're not really surprised because there are so many kids playing soccer in this area on gym floors, and this surface is far superior," said Rowley. "But the adult program is taking off, too, and we think it's going to grow."

"We're 100 percent full for leagues ... 140 teams, with all ages and abilities."

Rowley emphasized that recreation players should not feel left out, that the facility is there to serve not only select and upper-house teams.

"They should know that they can sign up as individuals and be put on house teams in our leagues," said Rowley. "The select teams and B teams are usually taken care of, but we want any kid who wants to play to have that chance."

Rowley realizes that youth team demands will subside when the sun comes out for an extended period of time. But he figures by that time, when kids head outdoors, he'll have built a strong program of adult leagues.

And from what he's heard so far, soccer players aren't the only people showing an interest.

Rowley has talked to representatives for lacrosse, flag football, fast-pitch softball, bocce ball and even an indoor putting contest about use of the turf. The volleyball area has been eyed by basketball, indoor tennis, karate and boxing and jazzercise groups.

Facility use is, apparently, only as limited as the imagination of the community it serves.

Rowley was an outstanding prep soccer player at Terra Linda in Marin County and climbed the ladder of state and regional Olympic Development teams. He played a year at San Diego — Eric Wynalda was on the team — but a series of knee injuries kept Row-

ley on the sidelines.

He tried his luck in England, where he played for Sheffield Wednesday's second-division team, but his physical problems continued.

"My knee didn't hold up," said Rowley. "I was spending too much time on the training table."

He ended up at Sonoma State, where he got a degree in business in 1992.

Rowley has enjoyed success as a youth coach, handling a Marin County team — the Dixie Stormers — for nine years, including an Under-16 state title.

**"That's my ultimate goal here: an indoor/outdoor (lighted) facility run on a club concept."**

**ANDREW ROWLEY  
SPORTS CITY INVESTOR**

He recently spent two years in Hawaii coaching the Tsunami of the United Systems of Independent Soccer Leagues, winning the Western Division title two years ago before losing to a Tony Meola-led New York team in the national finals.

During a trip to the indoor nationals with his youth team, Rowley was awed by an indoor/outdoor facility in Atlanta.

"They had a full-size indoor field like ours, but also a dozen outdoor fields, an incredible place," said Rowley, adding that much of the staffing was done by players who were part of the club.

"That's my ultimate goal here: an indoor/outdoor (lighted) facility run on a club concept."

Sports City occupies a 25,000-square-foot warehouse — Rowley said rent is about 35 cents a square foot — and it took him two years to find the clear-span (no poles) site, which formerly housed a lumber and drywall operation.

Rowley and his partners — Wally Lordeaux, a Marin developer and soccer coach; and Rick Herbert, who co-owns Sonoma Marina along with Lordeaux — have a three-year lease with 10 one-year options, so they may stay put a while. After all, the field

But Rowley is always on the lookout for other sites, where he might build his dream complex.

"We talk about building a 75,000-square-foot, double-deck facility, with a full restaurant, weight room, maybe open 24 hours," said Rowley. "Who knows?"

Teams belonging to Sports City leagues get a break on field rental. A one-hour group or team drop-in is \$70 for a league team, \$85 for members renting the field for a non-registered team and \$100 per hour for non-members and non-registered teams.

Cost of individual drop-in play Monday through Friday, noon-2 p.m., is \$4 for members, \$8 non-members. Hewlett-Packard rents the drop-in slot Thursdays.

Annual memberships are \$10 for youth (17 and under) and \$20 for adults.

There are leagues for just about everyone, including mothers and fathers who want to gain a better understanding of that strange sport their kid enjoys so much. Leagues are available for outstanding players, and for those who simply want to learn the game, regardless of age.

There is a Little Kickers program, an eight-week session for age groups 4-5, 6-7 and 8-9 that meet once a week for eight weeks. The next session starts Feb. 14.

Birthday and team parties range from \$100-\$220, and include an hour of field time — for any regular activity, not necessarily soccer — and an hour in the party room. Cost varies based on what is provided in terms of cake, drinks, decorations, T-shirts, etc.

Basic rules have to be followed at Sports City, including no foul or abusive language, no outside food or drinks in the facility, and those using the soccer facility must use balls provided by Sports City.

Soccer rules are enforced with two-minute penalties for infractions like boarding (knocking an opponent into the boards), spitting, indecency toward officials or opponents, retaliation or unsportsmanlike conduct.

No specific soccer shoes are required, but footwear must be flat-soled with no molded cleats or black-soled shoes.

In the case of Sports City, one look is worth a thousand words. Rowley wants players, coaches, parents — anyone — to check it out and judge for themselves.

"We have a lot of big plans, but we're also realistic," he said. "A lot of what we do in the future obviously depends on what han-



## Soccer gives students a goal

**Teams give players in SR elementary school league a lesson in sports, reading**

By [ROBERT DIGITALE](#)  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Published: Friday, May 7, 2004 at 3:00 a.m.

Santa Rosa-area elementary schools are using organized soccer to stimulate students in their schooling and to provide the fun and discipline of team sports.

Nine schools in the city's core and west side are working with the city and community groups to organize school soccer teams.

The nine schools all have large concentrations of economically disadvantaged children. Community groups have donated about \$20,000 to provide what for many students is their first chance to play an organized team sport.

"I would like these kids to have access to all the enrichment that a lot of other kids do have access to," said Brook Hill Principal Karen Arter, who worked with the city to start a program last year for five Santa Rosa district schools.

On Tuesday at Sports City's indoor soccer arena on Piner Road, teams combining boys and girls battled for the ball as scores of parents and siblings cheered each goal. Principals attended and called encouragement to their students.

Burbank School Principal Marty Cassity said the soccer program has been a good motivator for the participating students.

Students know "you've got to do your homework" in order to play, he said. Those who don't keep up academically or exhibit poor behavior in school lose the privilege of playing.

Around the city more than 300 students are taking part in the school teams. For many it is their first time in organized sports. The program's leaders hope it will spark some to eventually advance to the city's youth leagues, as well as to high school teams.

Indoor soccer is played by teams from five Santa Rosa district schools: Brook Hill, Burbank, Lehman, Lincoln and Monroe. Four other schools, Bellevue, Meadow View, Roseland and Sheppard, will play their first games of the spring Tuesday at Southwest Community Park.

Many of the Santa Rosa district coaches are teachers who volunteer their time. The coaches in the southwest are provided through a contract with the soccer organization Atletico Santa Rosa.



CRISTA JEREMIASON/The Press Democrat  
Meadow View School students Violeta Tamayo, 8, left and Monica Nanién, 10, read a book about soccer. Photos by CRISTA JEREMIASON / The Press Democrat  
Monroe Elementary teacher Charlie Seymour coaches his players during halftime of a game at Sports City in Santa Rosa. Monroe is one of nine schools in the league.

The southwest program began three years ago after City Council members challenged community groups to help provide worthwhile activities for the area's students. The Santa Rosa district program started a year later when city staff members went to Arter, the Brook Hill principal, and asked what kinds of programs would benefit her students.

In both parts of town, organized soccer was seen as an important program. A number of community groups and businesses responded with donations.

This year the southwest program added a new dimension - linking soccer with literacy. Exchange Bank donated \$5,000 to purchase books specifically about soccer. Some books tell of the game and its history. Others provide fictional stories for readers of many abilities.

At Meadow View School, the students practice or play soccer games two days a week, then read and write about soccer two days a week. The idea, said reading teacher Marci Murphy, is to take something that interests the children and connect it to the essential skill of reading.

"They're all here because they want to be here and they want to learn more about soccer," she said.

Third-grader Jennifer Yacuta, who Thursday was reading "Arthur and the Best Coach Ever," said by practicing on the field the students are getting better at soccer. And as a result of their time with the soccer books, she said, "we get better with reading."

At Monroe School, team members said they had learned about sportsmanship and about the hard work and commitment that comes from playing on a team.

"The strict discipline makes you a better student," said sixth-grader Rodrigo Solorio.

Monroe student Timmy Ireland said, "Being on the team is a really good privilege because you get to represent your school."

Monroe coach and first-grade teacher Charlie Seymour said he knows his students love being on the team. The day after each competition, he said, "they flock to my room to talk about the game and how it went."

This story appeared in print on page 1

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**Teams give players in SR elementary school league a lesson in sports, reading**

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## SPORTS

Santa Rosa, California, Sunday, May 11, 1997

## These moms get their own kicks

### LOWELL COHN



WINDSOR — This is a story about soccer moms at play.

You know what a soccer mom is. She's that devoted creature who stands on the sideline cheering for

her son or daughter. She is chauffeur to her kids, comforter when her child gets a scraped knee, and the bearer of the team snack.

Now, she is more than that. Welcome to the land of WOW, which stands for Women of Windsor. WOW is a team of middle-aged women, ages 33-50, who grew tired of standing on the side and decided it was their turn to have fun. So they formed a soccer team which competes in a brand-new local all-womeas' league, the other teams being the Red Hot Chili Kickers, the Wizard Women, the Cheetahs, and the Rincon Valley Soccer Moms.

**F**act: If you stand the 16 members of WOW on their heads, their shirts read "MOM."

Fact: WOW's motto is "No Whining." And don't you wish the San Francisco Giants, Oakland A's, 49ers, Raiders and Warriors had the same motto?

WOW got started six weeks ago when a woman from a Santa Rosa team, in need of members, asked Windsor soccer mom Sandee Gibson for recruits. Gibson said to herself, "Well, I'll just organize my own team." And that's exactly what she did. She started phoning moms she had come to know through her kids' soccer teams, and the response was overwhelming.

"I just told them, 'You can make a fool of yourself with other people like you,'" Gibson said.

That was an irresistible sales pitch. It also helped that Gibson started talking about the year-end party from the get-go. Moms like a party. At season's end, WOW will rent a fleet of limos and drive to San Francisco for a banquet.

See Cohn, Page C6.



# Cohn

Continued from Page C1

Everyone liked the idea of the party and the limos, but some weren't exactly confident about the soccer part. Take the case of goalie Julie Andolson. At 50, she wasn't sure she was up to the rigors of soccer. To test herself, she ran across the Costco parking lot. After she'd caught her breath

and noticed she was still alive, she grabbed her cell phone, called Gibson, and shouted, "Sign me up now before I lose my nerve."

Like all goalies, Andolson is serious about soccer, and wears specialized gloves when she plays. Except that hers are yellow rubber dishwashing gloves. Andolson's yellow gloves have become the symbol for WOW. "They grip real well," says teammate Karen Bunch. "I think it's kind of inventive."

Even though the WOW moms thought they understood soccer, they quickly learned the difference between watching and playing. They compete on Sundays (only not today on Mother's Day) at Sports City on Piner Road. It's an indoor facility with AstroTurf, and the first time they set foot on it, some of the women fell flat on their faces even though no one was around them. Their feet stuck on the turf. Down they went. And couldn't you just die of embarrassment.

Of there was the matter of kicking the ball. "I had watched kids," Gibson said, "but like how do I kick the ball?"

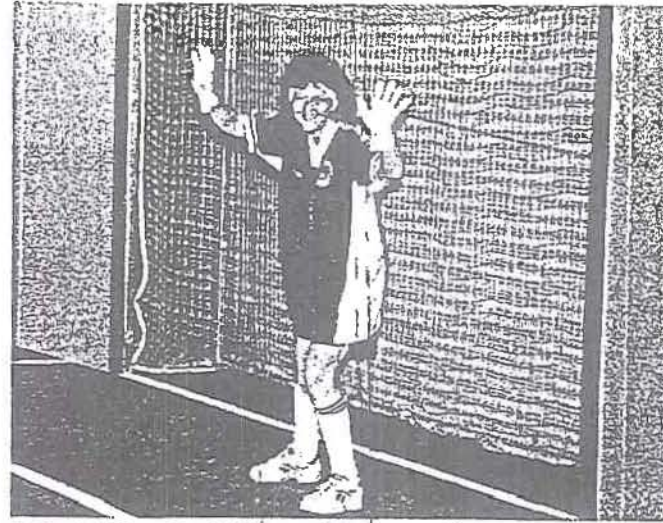
To which teammate Shell Gordon added, "You think something as simple as kicking the ball is simple. It isn't."

And then there were the crucial issues of soccer etiquette. Like women have it and men don't. Before the first game, an official sternly warned the WOW players, "No spitting."

No spitting?

"We just cracked up," said soccer mom Susan Wilhelmson.

"It was like, 'Oh, God, we can't spit,'" said Gordon, who'd never once experienced a desire to let



Julie Andolson shows off her goalie's gloves, which actually are yellow rubber dishwashing gloves.

loose a gob of spit in her entire life.

The WOW moms are also polite, which provides a new wrinkle on the American sporting scene. "The apologizing out there is hilarious," says Wilhelmson. "Everybody's

constantly saying, 'Excuse me. I hope I didn't hurt you.'"

It is not uncommon to hear Wow moms say, "Oh my God. I'm sorry." (And can you imagine Reggie White creaming Steve Young, then exclaiming, "Oh my God, Steve. I'm sorry.")

"It's a woman thing," says Gibson. "I'd just as soon not do it. I want to be tough like men."

"I go home and feel bad if I hurt someone," says Bunch.

"Well, she's a nurse," Gibson says. "She's supposed to be helping people."

The constant apologizing has led to humorous consequences. In the

last game, WOW mom Marcia Shaw and an opposing player knocked into each other, and Shaw fell to the turf. Naturally, the other woman stopped what she was doing, helped Shaw up, patted her on the back, and said, "You OK?"

Suddenly, they heard a loud whistle. The referee, obviously a slave to the rule book, ran over yelling, "You can't touch another player." He awarded WOW a free kick, but the WOW moms felt guilty because they knew the offending player had her heart in the right place.

Another time an opposing mom was sent to the penalty box for kicking the ball off the ceiling, a no-no in indoor soccer. She sat in the penalty box, her shoulders hunched, serving her two-minute sentence. "I've been bad," she was heard to mutter.

Then there was the case of the goalie and her shirt. We'll let Gibson tell this story. "In our last game I took out the goalie on our team. I ran her over. She was hurt, so she ran off the field to change shirts with another player, because we only have one goalie shirt."

Gibson was grinning as she spoke. "Our goalie ripped off her shirt and so did the other player. They were down to their bras. It was dead quiet in there. Then one of the husbands yelled, 'God, I love women's soccer.'"

Indeed.

To comment on Lowell Cohn's column, call 523-8080 and hit category No. 4225 or he can be reached by e-mail at [lacohn@aol.com](mailto:lacohn@aol.com).

Go Back

## TITLE IX BENEFITS REACH BACKWARDS

Published on March 17, 2002

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BYLINE: Ann DuBay

PAGE: G1

COLUMN: Ann DuBay

Thirty years ago this spring I broke my arm playing baseball.

It was a recess pick-up game at Mark West School. My team was in the field and when the batter hit the ball into center field I ran hard to cover second and collided with Mike Smith (who I had crush on, and who was running equally hard from first base).

I held onto the ball, but when I stood up to prove it, my left arm dangled limply, my Mickey Mouse watch wedged between two broken bones.

The novelty of the cast wore off quickly (Mike Smith signed it, but failed to write the mea culpa I thought I deserved or the love note I thought I inspired), and depression set in when I realized that I would spend the rest of baseball season on the sidelines.

I didn't know it at the time, but 30 years ago when Congress passed Title IX of the Education Act of 1972, only 1 percent of school athletes were girls. For the most part, the only place you found girls on athletic fields was on the sidelines, in cheerleading uniforms.

My three sisters and I, who learned to love and play sports through our father (who was the best coach we ever had), were a rarity.

This is hard to imagine now in an era when girls make up more than 40 percent of all school athletes. Hard to imagine, until you go to a place like **Sports City** and talk to -- or watch -- women playing **indoor soccer**.

On the field it's easy to distinguish the pre- and post-Title IX women: The dividing line seems to be around age 38, with women who are younger playing with well-honed skills and women who are older playing with, well, enthusiasm.

Take for example 31-year-old Danette Paskaly. She's a natural on the field: She moves the ball with ease, kicks with power and is always in exactly the right place to score a goal.

Paskaly started playing soccer when she was in second or third grade and she joined a league team when she was in fifth grade. At Healdsburg High she was one of three girls on the boys team (Title IX required girls be given an opportunity to play on boys teams if girls teams didn't exist). The next year a girls team was created and Paskaly helped recruit friends onto the team.

Paskaly admits that first team wasn't very good, but recalls with pride what she helped create: "I went back to play in an alumni game a couple of years ago, and now they (the Healdsburg Greyhounds) have more girls than they can handle."

Paskaly's experience is in stark contrast to Brenda Hess, 40, who started playing soccer a year ago -- her first

foray into competitive sports.

Hess can't remember there being girls teams at the Los Angeles middle or elementary schools she attended and she didn't even consider sports a possibility when attending high school in Sonoma County.

But after watching and coaching her three children, Hess decided to try soccer herself. Now she plays for and coordinates a **Sports City** team. And she's become a soccer addict, playing at drop-in sessions whenever possible.

"I love it," Hess says. "I never knew what it like to be part of a team, I just never had that growing up."

Debbie Wilson, 46, also took up soccer after watching her kids play.

Wilson grew up in Petaluma and went to Petaluma High School. She doesn't remember any girls sport teams. "Mostly girls did cheerleading," she recalls. But seeing her kids play made her "fall in love with the game." Eight years ago she started playing and now participates on both coed and women's teams.

Says Hess, "Even though I started late, I look at Debbie and think, 'If I can be that good in a few years, I'll be happy.'"

Because of Title IX, the daughters of Hess and Wilson grew up assuming that sports are a part of a girl's life. And, by helping out their daughters' teams, both Hess and Wilson learned that there is no magic involved in athletics -- just a willingness to practice and to learn. From there, it was short leap to actually playing themselves.

We all know the benefits that can occur when kids play sports: Self-esteem, confidence, a life-long commitment to health. But the biggest gain from Title IX may be, as Hess points out, the pleasure gained from being part of a team.

For many women who are full-time moms or who work in pink-collar professions (I've met a large number of teachers and nurses who are surprisingly aggressive soccer players -- given the reputation of these tender-hearted professions), being part of a sports team is a unique and empowering experience.

Where else in life are things black and white? Where else can you talk, gleefully, about kicking someone else's booty? Where else can you complete a task -- win or lose -- in a specific period of time?

When Congress was considering Title IX in the spring of 1972 it was thinking about how the current and future generation of girls would benefit from athletic programs.

Thirty years later, it's clear that women -- even those who were in school too late to gain directly from the program -- are the big winners.

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