



HOMELESS PROBLEMS AT YOUTH SPORTS VENUES

Recently, the Folsom Athletic Association (FAA) received a complaint about an encounter at City Park's Kuntz Field between a member of a youth sports team and a homeless individual. During the course of a game, one of the youth athletes tried to use the bathroom located behind the field and on entering the facility, saw a man using narcotics. FAA has had previous related complaints from sports league managers and parents.

On Tuesday, March 15th, a group of FAA representatives met virtually with staff from the City of Folsom, including the City Manager, the Chief of Police, the Director of Parks and Recreation, the City's Homeless Coordinator and Police Sergeant Aaron Zelaya, the Folsom PD lead on issues related to homelessness. City staff was both engaged and responsive and FAA was asked to work directly with Sergeant Zelaya to help address this problem.

IF ANY COACHES OR PARENTS EXPERIENCE A SIMILAR SITUATION INVOLVING CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY. DO NOT ENGAGE WITH THE OFFENDING PARTY. If a crime is in progress or if someone is a danger to themselves or others, you should call 9-1-1. To report an incident, you can also call the non-emergency line for the Police Department at 916-355-7231.

According to Sergeant Zelaya, his team has already increased patrols of city parks and expressed a willingness to fluctuate work schedules to more closely align with youth sports games and practice times. Based on their work with the homeless, the team has also taken advantage of opportunities to educate and inform some of our unhoused citizens about avoiding these types of situations.

FAA will continue to work with the City to implement other possible measures to better ensure the safety and wellness of youth sports participants in the future. In the meantime, if any league officials or coaches would like to discuss this issue further, please contact FAA Board Member Will Kempton at willkempton1947@yahoo.com or Sergeant Zelaya of the Folsom Police Department at azelaya@folsom.ca.us or 916-934-9220.