



49 LOCATION AND USE OF PLAYING FIELDS

Amateur Athletics Association considers that four additional athletic fields are needed to provide for present and future needs to augment the principal central track at Olympic Park and that these should be decentralised. The space requirements for a standard athletic field, including accommodation for competitors and spectators, is about four acres.

Winter Sports

Football: Australian Rules football is the principal seasonal winter sport and approximately 15,000 players are engaged each Saturday in winter. In addition, football has the largest public following as a spectator sport and attracts up to 200,000 spectators on a Saturday afternoon. Some 300 grounds, including school grounds, are used for football, many being used for both Saturday morning and afternoon matches. In general, the grounds used for football are those used for cricket during the summer, but many cricket grounds are unsuitable for winter sports because of inadequate dressing facilities or unsuitable playing surfaces. It is estimated that an additional 40 football fields are required to satisfy present needs. The space requirements for football grounds are the same as for cricket, three acres for a junior ground and six for a senior ground.

The popularity of football is expected to continue to grow with the population, and because of its strong public following it is likely to require in the outer suburbs several additional enclosed ovals, each capable of providing for at least 25,000 spectators.

Soccer: Soccer has grown in popularity since the war, mainly as a result of the large influx of migrants. Some 1,500 people play soccer on a Saturday on 46 sports fields, but the present facilities are inadequate to provide for the peak demand and many of the grounds in the inner suburbs are used for three games on the one day. The Soccer Authorities claim that an additional seven grounds are needed to satisfy current needs, including one central enclosed ground for the leading games. The space requirements for a standard soccer ground is three acres.

Rugby: About 800 players are engaged in Rugby football on a Saturday. Most play Rugby Union, which has the use of 10 grounds in the metropolitan planning area, while Rugby League competitions use three grounds. Two of the grounds used for Rugby Union are available only on alternate Saturdays and are shared with other sports. The Authorities consider an additional three grounds are necessary to meet present requirements. The space requirements are three acres for each ground.

Baseball: This sport has also grown with the population and is played by many cricketers as a winter sport. There are now 133 teams in the metropolitan area comprising some 1,600 players on a Saturday. They use 73 playing fields, but many of these are shared with other sports, especially football. Baseball is normally played between 12.45 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. which means that it can be played before other afternoon games commence. In the junior grades it

is possible to play two baseball games simultaneously on a normal sized football oval. Comparatively few grounds are used exclusively for baseball. The Victorian Baseball Association considers seven additional grounds are required to meet present needs, and that one centrally located, enclosed baseball field is desirable. The principal deficiency for grounds is in the outer suburbs. The area required for a standard playing field is 2½ to three acres.

Hockey: Although this sport is played mainly in the winter, it is also being developed as a summer sport. There are 123 men's and 44 women's teams participating, which involves some 2,000 players on a Saturday. Forty-six playing fields, including five in school grounds, are used by men and 13 by women. This sport requires a good, level surface which limits the areas available. Eleven of the playing fields are located at Elsternwick Park and two matches are played each Saturday on most of these fields. The development of this sport is limited by the number of suitable grounds especially in the outer suburbs. It also lacks an enclosed central field. It is estimated that at least five additional playing fields, each of two acres, are required to meet present needs.

Lacrosse: This is a comparatively small winter sport involving about 500 players each Saturday. It is largely concentrated in the eastern and southern suburbs, especially in the Camberwell, Caulfield and Malvern areas. Twenty-one playing fields are used, including three in school grounds, and many of these are shared with other sports.

Other Sports

Tennis: Measured by the number of players, tennis is the most popular of all sports. It is estimated that approximately 44,000 people play tennis regularly each week-end in the metropolitan area. Of these about 10,000 are engaged in official competitions, about 29,000 play as members of private clubs or on public courts, and about 5,000 on courts attached to private homes. There are approximately 3,500 tennis courts in the metropolitan area, of which 1,236 are used by clubs affiliated with the Lawn Tennis Association of Victoria. Of the remainder, about 600 courts are used by non-affiliated tennis clubs or institutions, 450 are public hire courts and some 1,200 courts are attached to private homes. Tennis is played by men and women of most ages, and apart from the regular week-end players there are day and night competitions during the week. Many women play regularly on week days.

It is extremely difficult to estimate the total number of courts needed today, but most clubs have limited memberships because of the number of courts available, which makes it clear that there are insufficient courts to meet current needs. In addition, the number of privately owned courts that are available to the general public are declining in the inner areas as land increases in value and is used for other purposes. In future, therefore, an increased proportion of courts will need to be provided for public use if adequate playing facilities are to be maintained in these