

Willowbrook—

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days a week and all day Saturday and Sunday.”

As are the rest of the Island's fields. While the older, more established leagues have been using the same fields for years and have little trouble obtaining leases for those fields, expansion has been hampered because there aren't any new fields available. The fields that went unused in the past, when the action wasn't as heavy, are either booked solid now or have disappeared under housing developments.

“All of the old fields that were around years ago are gone now,” said Ben Defibaugh, president of the 80-team Staten Island Slow Pitch League. “I'd expand if I could, and so would the other leagues, but we only have so much to work with.”

The ASA leagues, with 120 teams divided among 15 divisions, has the same problems as

the rest of the leagues, even though it has a four-field complex.

“We turn down 15 to 20 teams a year,” Vince Scamardella, ASA Metro-New York Commissioner and treasurer of the Island's contingent, said. “There's just nowhere to put them. We go seven days a week on all four fields as it is and we lost five nights at Gateway (State Park) to another league.”

There are any number of open spaces on the Island that could be converted into ballfields, but while the SIDC fields won't cure the problem of the lack of fields totally, the transition would be a speedy one because the fields are only a manicure away from respectability.

The SIDC issue cannot be resolved until the study is completed, but the fields are needed now. Unfortunately, the leagues, teams and players must all suffer through the wait.

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