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Help save our playing fields, Minister

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TWO fields in the Klang Valley - the UKRC field in Kuala Ampang and the former Rail-way Recreation Club field at Jalan Ipoh - are on the verge of being history and residents and sports lovers have protested publicly in the media to show their disapproval.

But does anyone even care about the plight of these residents, who are mainly from the lower income group? Is the Sports Minister listening to these people?

The standard of our sportsmen have deteriorated and more so has the standard of soccer.

Even our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad voiced his concern on the standard of our football.

We had great players who were among the best in Asia like Ghani Minhat, Arthur Goh, Soh Chin Aun, the late R. Arugumugam and Mokhtar Dahari, Santok Singh, Zainal Abidin Hassan, Dollah Salleh and many more, but who do we have to be proud of today?

The public fields in the Klang Valley and elsewhere in Malaysia have played an integral role in unearthing great players of our past.

Not only did we have good footballers, we also produced distinguished athletes in other sports as well.

Though we have better facilities now, not many can afford them. And is it strategically placed for the convenience of middle and lower income earners?

There is no use in having the best facilities and coaches which only a small populace can benefit from. And where will those who cannot afford it go to? Virtual sports, I suppose.

Many public fields in the Klang Valley have been taken away without any objections from the Ministry of Sports.

Is it not this space that develops our future sportsman?

Why deprive them of this essential need and later spend millions of ringgit trying to make `stars' out of these under-developed individuals.

History has proven that our past great athletes were nurtured in these public fields before they became sports ambassadors to the nation.

I plead with the Sports Minister to intervene and protect public fields, as these grounds have a role to play in the community, be it for sports or racial harmony.

What better way to cultivate a Malaysian Boleh spirit other than through