

NEWS RELEASE

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New Era, New Home for USM Spires Football

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— Before Sept. 20, 2008, the University of Saint Mary football was a team without a home field. Now the Spires have an official home – and it’s right on campus.

The brand-new USM Football/Soccer Complex officially opened Sept. 20 just north of McGilley Field House, as the Spires hosted Bethel College. The Spires dropped a back-and-forth battle 29-22, but that did not dampen spirits for the first-ever football game played at the new complex.

Students and alums from multi-generations came out to witness the experience; exactly what Athletic Director Rob Miller believed would happen if a football complex was built on campus.

“This is what we envisioned from the beginning,” says Miller. “Several years ago I told somebody if we had a football field on campus we would change the atmosphere of the campus. We have, this proves it.”

Miller believes recruits will love the new atmosphere as well. The team has the largest roster in school history this year.

“It’s huge. Just having our own football home will help with recruiting athletes without a doubt. It’s already helped. It’s only going to get better.”

Head Football Coach Lance Hinson completely agrees. Before the complex, Hinson says he would ask recruits to drive to Platte County, Mo. to see the stadium, watch a game, and then drive back to the campus. Now he says recruits will get a first-hand look at the campus, the athletic facilities, and the game experience – all in one package.

“[The complex] is our own, it’s our home, and we’re proud of it,” he says. “Game-day will be an event from now on at USM. That’s an awesome thing for recruits to see and experience.”

Construction on the complex began July 7, and included the installation of stadium-style bleacher seating, an air conditioned, online-accessible press box, and a VIP section. Seating capacity is 1,000.

Sister Madonna Fink, “USM’s No. 1 Fan,” views the new complex as a dream come true.

“I prayed for a long time that we would get a field on campus. To see it accomplished, and all these people here, that’s marvelous.”

The long-term plans for the complex are to add additional seating (the beginning of the game up until half-time it was standing “room” only). Hinson hopes lights will come next, and possibly artificial turf. The turf will be good for the field since it will be utilized for both soccer and football.

Former football players were honored during halftime of the inaugural contest. USM Athletic Hall of Famer Corey Hamilton, C’03, ’05, remembers coaches telling him in 1999 a field would be built on-site one day. Today, he’s pleased to see it’s finally happened.

“From the first minute we got here, we’ve seen a lot of fans, alumni, which is exciting,” Hamilton says. “It’s a great thing for Saint Mary, and an even greater thing for the football team.”

Coach Hinson says the original USM football team had a total of 24 members. Of the 24, 19 were on hand to open the new complex.

(written by Bryan Shrepel)

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