

Here's to new and improved facilities

Written by Scott Unash

Monday, 05 September 2011 21:52 - Last Updated Wednesday, 07 September 2011 21:48



Last Friday night was the night that residents in the Linn-Mar community had been waiting for decades to arrive. They rolled out the red carpet, or in this case the red and black carpet, as the Lions hosted the Kennedy Cougars in the first football game played at the new Linn-Mar Stadium.

The stadium actually opened for business last spring for the track and soccer seasons, but this was the big enchilada that everyone was waiting for. And the \$10 million dollar stadium did not disappoint.

The stadium is one of the best venues in the world of high school football, not only in the Metro and the state, but I dare say the Midwest as well. It has a state of the art playing surface, with FieldTurf, as well as a fantastic eight-lane track that is amazing. There are locker room facilities for both teams as well as a team room for the home Lions to watch film and hone their skills.

The stands are also impressive with seating for around 5,000 on the home side as well as room for around 1,000 people on the visitors side. The press box area is also one of the best around with a wide concourse and individual rooms for coaches as well as the media.

I will say I am a little leery about the parking situation. I'm not sure where most of the home patrons parked, but it was not in the lot to the east of the main gate to the stadium. But I'm sure that will be figured out over time. Overall, it was a sparkling debut for the new stadium, and above all no one has to worry about Indian Creek flooding the playing surface ever again!

But let's not forget that other schools have improved or will be improving their facilities as well. I had a chance to take in Prairie's "new" John Wall Field last week and it also is a top-notch stadium. The improvements that the College Community district has made, including building facilities and the new FieldTurf playing surface that has been installed, are things to be very proud of and I'm sure that had a great deal to do with luring a quality young coach such as Mike Morrissey to Prairie.

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Let's not forget that Kingston Stadium also went through a facelift just a couple of years ago to improve lighting, infrastructure and to put in a new FieldTurf playing surface. This has started to pay dividends for the three Cedar Rapids schools that play there and will continue to do so for years to come.

And Marion has started the ball rolling for improvements to its football field at Thomas Park. The field, which is in one of the most unique settings in all of the state, sounds like it will be getting a nice facelift soon with new bleachers as well as other improvements desperately needed.

It is not a football "arms movement," but with all of these changes and improvements it will certainly do nothing but improve the quality of play in a Metro area that is already a fertile area for football.