

## Jefferson baseball gets Kernels scoreboard

Written by Jim Ecker  
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Players and fans shouldn't have any trouble knowing the score at Cedar Rapids Jefferson High School baseball games this season.

The J-Hawks have purchased a scoreboard from the Cedar Rapids Kernels and the city of Cedar Rapids and plan to install it in right-center field for everyone to see.

The scoreboard is 36 feet long and 9 feet high, much bigger than the current board at the high school field in southwest Cedar Rapids.

"It's a beast, that's for sure," said Kyle Rodenkirk, a Jefferson grad who will be the head coach this season. "It will be really neat."

"It's going to be nice, because that little one we have there now malfunctions all the time, so I thought we had to get something that works."

The highest bid for the scoreboard came from South Carolina, but those folks did not want to pay for shipping. "Then they came to us and we got it," said Rodenkirk. "We couldn't be happier."

The Cedar Rapids Kernels have installed a new scoreboard this season and the old scoreboard was offered for sale. The city also offered to sell the video board from Veterans Memorial Stadium, but the J-Hawks passed on that part of the package.

Jefferson also plans to install a new irrigation system in the outfield in time for this season. The J-Hawks currently have a sprinkler system for the infield but not for the outfield, and the outfield grass turned brown last season during the dry conditions.

"It looked like a wildfire went through there," said Rodenkirk, who called it a safety issue.

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The total cost for the scoreboard and irrigation system has been pegged at \$16,000 by Chris Deam, the athletics director at Jefferson.

"This has been planned with the help of several groups and individuals," said Deam. "We are thankful for the dedication of all those involved in the project, including the Jefferson Booster Club. which works very hard to raise money for such projects."

Rodenkirk said he appreciates Deam's support in improving the field.

Part of the backstop on the first-base side of the field suffered storm damage this winter and will be repaired as well. Deam said the Cedar Rapids school district is paying for those repairs.

Rodenkirk said the new scoreboard will display the score by innings, runs, hits, errors, balls, strikes, outs and the uniform number of the batter.

The scoreboard also is equipped with a radar gun display and a clock, should Jefferson choose to activate them.

Rodenkirk talked about the improvements at a recent player and parent meeting.

"When I said the scoreboard, you could tell people took a little more pride in it. That's really good," he remarked.

"Hopefully they see that I'm trying to make this a better place and good things will happen. It's not going to happen overnight, but that's why you're in it for the long haul."