

# Field of Teams

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Judge will benefit from unnaturally good field

By Angie Wallace  
Special to The Tribune

Growing up, Jim Cordova remembers getting splinters while watching his father coach from the old wooden bleachers at Judge Memorial High's football field.

When Jim took over for his father, Gill, more than a decade ago as the Bulldogs' head coach, he thought he would always coach on the same grass field every Friday night in front of the same old bleachers.

But come August, things will be different for Jim Cordova, and the rest of the Judge Memorial athletic community.

After Judge Memorial's \$3 million project is completed, Cordova will coach the Bulldogs on a full size, all-weather sports field with synthetic turf - and in front of a new, 1,600-seat stadium.

"My kids can't wait to play there," Cordova said. "It's going to be so much nicer. We'll have the Friday night lights going. Putting this beautiful stadium in place of the old practice field and the old wood is going to totally change the campus."

Judge Memorial, which occupies a little more than four acres, is the first school in Salt Lake City to adopt the synthetic turf field.

However, a handful of schools around the state have already enjoyed the benefits of having an all-weather field, including Logan and South Summit.

Judge will also be the second Catholic high school to invest in an artificial turf field, after Juan Diego in 2004. Juan Diego football coach John Colosimo says all-weather turf fields could become the new trend among Utah high schools.

"I think you'll see more and more schools moving to the synthetic fields," Colosimo said. "We have five programs that benefit from it, and I think Judge will benefit from the all-weather fields because they don't have a whole lot of practice field space, and (the fields) are durable and can endure multiple weather conditions and several teams playing on them."

Instead of watering and maintaining their old field just for athletic events on Friday nights, seven sports teams at Judge plan to use it for practices and home games starting this fall. It also will also be used by for gym glasses.

Along with the Bulldogs' football team, the girls' and boys' soccer and lacrosse teams will benefit as well. Both track teams can use the facilities simultaneously, as a two-lane track will wrap around the football field.

This complex will also mean that the varsity, junior varsity and freshman teams at Judge won't have to commute anymore for practices. They also won't have to host games at other venues, which will save athletes an hour.

"Because we'll have one field in good condition, we won't have to send kids to practice on buses anymore to use any available city park; we'll have them practice and play in our own back yard," Judge principal James Hamburge said. "This is really going to save time and traveling expenses. Plus, it will lessen my worrying as a principal with having everything supported on site."

Hamburge also thinks the stadium will be an ideal spot for state tournaments and for practice space for visiting professional teams. He has already received interest from the University of Utah's lacrosse team to use the new field as their home site.

In addition, Judge hopes the new facility will help attract prospective student-athletes.

"We'll finally have a showpiece of top quality that will be attractive to prospective students," Cordova said. "Plus, from the stadium, they will have a great view of the city."

The facility is a continuation of many remodeling projects funded by the Judge Legacy Campaign, which began in January 2004 with tuition and charitable donations.

Judge has already renovated its labs, classrooms and office areas, and after finishing the football complex, construction will focus on the performing arts addition and a \$1.3 million project to restore its gymnasium.



Judge Memorial football coach James Cordova will enjoy working with the Bulldogs in a renovated stadium August. (Leah Hogsten/The Salt Lake Tribune )