

BOBCAT ATHLETICS COMPLEX FACILITY UPDATE



The Bobcat Football Program Has A Long History Of Success Following Facility Renovations...

BY MSU STAFF

From the beginning, the new athletics complex in the north end zone of Bobcat Stadium was about much more than football.

“It’s such an exciting project because it impacts each of our student-athletes,” says Montana State Director of Athletics, Leon Costello. “By creating a space for our football program outside of the Fieldhouse, we have the opportunity to better serve student-athletes and coaches in every other sport by utilizing and modifying existing space more efficiently. It positively impacts every student-athlete and everyone in Bobcat Athletics.”

When completed in August, the

donor-funded Bobcat Athletics Complex will host most of the football program’s operations. Coaches’ offices and locker rooms, player locker rooms, a strength training facility, and equipment and athletic training areas all move across Kagy Boulevard. In addition, Bozeman Health will open a clinic in the complex to serve all Bobcat student-athletes and MSU employees.

The excitement of moving into a new 40,000-square-foot building has enveloped Bobcat Football

for months—although the actual process of moving will be compacted into the span of a few days—and its effects will be lasting. Meeting rooms will accommodate the full team and can be broken into segments for smaller groups. Some coach’s offices are also built to hold position group meetings, in terms of size and video capabilities.

Mirroring the layout in Brick Breeden Fieldhouse, athletic training, injury rehabilitation, and strength training areas lie adjacent to each other to provide maximum convenience for student-athletes and coaches. The new athletics complex features a state-of-the-art hydro areas to provide all Bobcat student-athletes top-of-the-line opportunities to recover from injuries.

Montana State Director of Athletics Leon Costello says the facility supports the program’s continued growth and allows the department to better serve student-athletes. “This facility reflects the mission of Bobcat Athletics to develop excellence in the classroom and competition, as well as support the holistic approach to student-athlete well-being,” he says. “It mirrors the facility growth on the Montana State University campus and the growth within Bobcat Athletics. It will also be a great welcome center to the south end of campus.”

The end zone complex marks Bobcat Stadium’s third major renovation and addition since it was built as Reno H. Sales Stadium in 1973. A quarter-century after opening, the west grandstands, sky suites, and press box rose to represent a new era of Bobcat football. From the 1998 season, when that phase of the complex was completed, until the end of the 2010 season Montana State compiled a 79-72 record and won four Big Sky Championships.

After the 2010 season the stadium underwent another drastic addition, when more than 7,000 seats rose above the south end zone to form the Sonny Holland End Zone complex. That helped spur continued success, with the program compiling a 69-43 record while winning two more Big Sky titles and hosting seven of the program’s 12 all-time post-season home games. In fact, the eight home playoff games Montana State has played since 2010 marks more than one-third of the 21 all-time playoff games in school history.

The Bobcat football program has a long history of success following facility renovations. While continually upgrading and moving its first real on-campus football field throughout the 1920s the Bobcats suffered through only one losing season from 1920-29. Permanent Gatton Field’s construction in 1930 was welcomed by a 6-3 season, but conference uncertainty, coaching changes, and the winds of war suppressed football success in

the 1930s. The program’s next winning season was 1946, but from 1954 through 1968 the Cats enjoyed winning seasons every year but two. The construction of Reno H. Sales Stadium in 1973 ushered in another period of sustained success.

The addition of the Bobcat Athletic Complex in the end zone fits Montana State’s pattern of facilities improvements that enhance and emphasize opportunities for student-athlete success, says Costello. “The opportunities created by the addition of this facility positively affect every Bobcat student-athlete. Moving football to Bobcat Stadium allows us to create space for our academic services team that benefits all of our student-athletes, and alleviating congestion in our athletic training and strength training spaces allow us better use of those spaces. This is an exciting project in so many ways, and we are all thankful to those whose generosity give us this opportunity.”

