



MC United Soccer Club
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EXCITING NEWS FOR THE NEW YEAR!

Update on MC United's \$2.3 Million Capital Campaign: Preserving and Growing Eastbay Sports Complex's \$6+ Million Economic Impact by Developing a Satellite Sports Complex with Artificial Turf Fields

MC United – in partnership with D.C. Everest (DCE) Community Services – and with the support of the Marathon County Parks Recreation and Forestry Department and the Wolfpack Youth Lacrosse, is leading an effort to support the construction of a new community sports complex, **starting with two full-size, lighted, artificial turf sports fields**. These fields will be located on land at the DCE Middle School, subject to final approval by the DCE School Board. The Marathon County Eastbay Sports Complex (ESC) is – and will continue to be – MC United's main facility for practices, league games, and our tournaments. This new facility, which will serve as a satellite to the ESC, will enhance the considerable economic and quality-of-life benefits of our community. It will preserve, complement and expand the opportunities and field availability for area sports, recreation, school, and community organizations. The two full-size fields can be parsed into four U11/U12 size fields or six U9/U10 size fields for practices and games, when needed. Not only will this provide for additional field space, artificial turf will enable groups to play/practice for a longer season, and mitigate the need for game cancellations in rainy conditions. See the following FAQs about this project.

We are excited to announce several recent developments related to this effort.

- To provide the fiscal stewardship of this capital campaign, we formally established the **MC United Community Sports Facility Enhancement Fund** within the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin. Donations to this fund are tax-deductible. An anonymous donor already contributed \$1,000 to this fund. Below is a link to the fund at the Community Foundation: https://cfoncw.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create?funit_id=1831
- In the past month, we have raised \$185,000. MC United received an initial pledge of **\$110,000 from the B.A. and Esther Greenheck Foundation** to support this initiative, along with a grant of **\$35,000 from the Wausau-Marathon County Fund of the Community Foundation of Northcentral Wisconsin**. The Community Foundation's Board is expected to approve an **additional \$15,000** in January 2020. These funds, along with a pledge of \$25,000 from MC United, represent the first steps in our campaign to support the construction of these fields. We are in the early stages of our fundraising and are grateful for these contributions and pledges.
- Our partnership with DCE Community Services to locate the new artificial turf fields at the DCE Middle School – which has the benefits of an existing infrastructure of parking, restrooms, concessions, and lights, as well as room for future expansion – **reduces the initially anticipated costs of the project by about \$1 million**. This fiscally responsible decision makes our fundraising goals of \$2.3 million more attainable and reduces the burden on philanthropic and private donors.
- DCE Community Services has many years of experience with providing community and other area school, sports and recreation groups with access to DCE facilities (for example, the Greenheck Fieldhouse). This **community focus** will serve as a model for ensuring that these fields will be accessible to a broad range of users.
- **These new fields will expand our options to practice and play during times in our season when ESC is not open** (March, April, October, November), or when field closures at ESC occur during our State League and CWSL Classic league seasons due to wet conditions (May through September). Given the cluster of additional grass fields already on site, this also is an ideal location for expanding our tournaments.

I look forward to keeping you updated and thank you for your support of MC United.

Sharon Belton, President (fox.sharon@gmail.com)

1. WHY DO WE NEED MORE FIELDS IF WE HAVE THE EASTBAY SPORTS COMPLEX?

The Eastbay Sports Complex is – and will continue to be – MC United’s main facility for practices, league games, and our tournaments. These new fields will expand our options to practice and play during times when ESC is not open (March, April, October, November), or when field closures at ESC occur during our State League and CWSL Classic league seasons due to wet conditions (May through September). Given the cluster of additional grass soccer fields already on site at DCE, it is also an ideal location for expanding our tournaments or for other events at ESC that need additional space.

Our community is fortunate to have access to a top-quality outdoor sports and recreation facility like ESC. ESC serves as Marathon County’s primary soccer destination, as well as host site to many other sports and community events. ESC attracts more than 150,000 visitors and generates \$6+ million annually in economic impact¹. MC United’s youth soccer tournaments, which are now at capacity, account for approximately \$2.8+ million in local spending². Since locating our tournaments at ESC in 2015, the total number of teams participating in the tournaments has expanded (see Table 1). Approximately 70 percent of the teams participating in our tournaments are from communities greater than 90 miles outside of the Wausau area.

Table 1 – Trends in MC United Tournament Participation – 2015 to 2019

FALL SEASON	2015	2019	% Change
MCU FALL CUP TOURNAMENT TEAMS	29	113	290%
SPRING SEASON	2015	2019	% Change
MCU MOUNTAIN BAY CUP TOURNAMENT TEAMS	81	111	37%

Growth in youth sports such as soccer and lacrosse have increased demand for ESC’s fields.³ As shown in Table 2, participation in MC United has increased significantly since we began using ESC in the spring of 2015; preliminary registration data for our spring 2020 season indicates that MC United’s registrations have further increased 20 percent compared to spring 2019. **These trends suggest that demand at ESC will be at an all-time high in 2020.** During the summer of 2019, overuse of the fields, coupled with adverse weather conditions, led to “emergency resting and recovery” for 2.5 months between August and the close of ESC in mid-October. During this time, we relocated all of our practices and about 50 percent of fall league games to other sites. The proposed new satellite sports fields will help preserve, complement and considerably expand the opportunities and field availability at ESC and ensure its viability into the future.

Table 2 – Trends in MC United Registrations – 2015 to 2019

FALL SEASON	2015	2019	% Change
# TEAMS	15	23	53%
# PLAYERS** (U8 TO U19)	153	303	98%
SPRING SEASON	2015*	2019	% Change
# TEAMS	15	23	53%
# PLAYERS** (U8 TO U19)	180	345	92%

* Spring 2015 player counts are estimated using data from Fall 2015, as archived data for the spring season that year are not available due to changes in registration programs/records. Typically, we have larger numbers of players during the spring season compared to fall due to school and other sports activities.

** The total number of unique, individual players in MC United in 2019 is estimated to be about 450-500 players, taking into account those that play both fall and spring; those that play one season or the other; and participants in our Firecrackers Youth Academy (U6 to U8s).

¹ <https://wsau.com/news/articles/2018/may/24/eastbay-sports-complex-impact-keeps-growing/>

² <https://wisconsincentraltimenews.com/2017/06/20/from-garbage-to-gorgeous-former-landfill-becomes-big-draw-as-sports-complex/>

³ <http://www.thecitypages.com/news-opinion/sporting-success/>

Our experience, engagement with other users, the unique characteristics of ESC (a former landfill), and the climatic conditions in Wisconsin highlighted the specific need **for two, lighted, full-size artificial turf fields** and that being able to access such fields would be a game-changer in our area. The full-size fields could be parsed into four U11/U12 size (9 v 9) fields or six U9/U10 size (7 v 7) fields for practices and games. Not only will this provide for access to additional field space, artificial turf will enable groups to play/practice for a longer season, and mitigate the need for game cancellations in rainy conditions).

2. WHERE WILL THE NEW FIELDS BE LOCATED AND WHAT LOCATION OPTIONS WERE CONSIDERED?

With the support of the City of Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, we conducted an exhaustive search to explore suitable sites and partnerships to realize the proposed fields site in an expedited and cost-effective manner. For example, MC United presented its costed concepts to the Wausau City Parks and Recreation Committee (November 4, 2019), and the Marathon County Forestry and Recreation Committee (November 5, 2019), reached out to the Villages of Weston and Kronenwetter, the Town of Rib Mountain, and the City of Schofield, and held meetings with the Wausau School District and DC Everest Area School Districts (December 5 and 6, 2019, respectively). Furthermore, two generous offers to lease or donate land were evaluated, but it was determined these options would require considerable additional investment in site preparation and/or supporting infrastructure.

Following this exhaustive review, taking into consideration availability, construction timelines, infrastructure, constraints, and overall costs, a partnership with the DCE Community Services to locate the fields on existing land at the DCE Middle School emerged as the preferred location. **This site significantly reduces the initially projected costs by approximately \$1 million due to the existing infrastructure at this location when compared to the other options we considered or in developing a new site.** The benefits of this location include the following:

- Site is already designated and used as sports fields, reducing permitting risk and timelines
- Access to existing utilities, restrooms, and concession stand, reducing construction costs
- Ample parking and no traffic or neighborhood concerns, reducing construction costs
- Existing bleachers, flood lights, press box, restrooms, concessions, scoreboard and sound system, reducing cost and adding value
- Access to numerous adjacent sports fields, providing ample space for expansion of events/tournaments
- Integration into existing operation, scheduling and maintenance programs, ensuring sustainability
- Access to know-how about artificial turf and specialized maintenance equipment, ensuring sustainability
- Maintenance, operations, and future replacement of the turf will be handled by DCE, ensuring sustainability

3. WHO WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE FIELDS?

Like ESC, the proposed fields will be open to all users and shared access will be negotiated as part of a user agreement. DCE Community Services will provide groups like MC United with fair access to the fields at reasonable fees (as they currently do with facilities such as the ice and gyms within the Greenheck Fieldhouse.) Other area school and community organizations who wish to reserve the fields will be able to do so under rental agreements. We anticipate that access to artificial turf and lights will make this a popular facility; at the same time, groups will continue to have access to and use ESC and other area facilities.

4. HOW MUCH WILL THE FIELDS COST?

The preliminary cost estimate to develop the fields at the DCE Middle School totals approximately \$2.3 million, including contingencies and financing cost. Our partnership with DCE Community Services to locate the new artificial turf fields at the DCE Middle School – which has the benefits of an existing infrastructure of parking, restrooms, concessions, and lights and room for expansion in the future – reduces the initially anticipated costs of the project by about \$1 million. This fiscally responsible decision helps make our fundraising goals of \$2.3 million even more attainable and reduces the burden on philanthropic and private donors.

5. WHO WILL PAY TO BUILD THE FIELDS?

We hope to raise the vast majority (95%) of the funds needed for this project through philanthropic and foundation funds and donations. There are currently several other large community capital campaigns underway that may impact our ability to raise funds and our timelines. To provide the fiscal stewardship of this capital campaign, we formally established the MC United Community Sports Facility Enhancement Fund within the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin. Donations to this fund in support of this effort are tax-deductible. Below is a link to the fund at the Community Foundation: https://cfoncw.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create?funit_id=1831

To date, we have raised \$185,000. MC United received an initial pledge of **\$110,000 from the B.A. and Esther Greenheck Foundation** to support this initiative, along with a grant of **\$35,000 from the Wausau-Marathon County Fund of the Community Foundation of Northcentral Wisconsin**. The Community Foundation's Board is expected to approve an **additional \$15,000** in January 2020. We are grateful for this support. MC United's Board of Directors approved the allocation of up to \$25,000 of our funds to support this effort. This is a significant investment for our club; but one that underscores the importance we place on seeing this come together. MC United families should know that we are not taking money away from our current scholarship programs or other activities like winter gym stipends for teams. Rather, over the past few years we have been able to set aside some of our tournament proceeds, coupled with sponsorship support, in order to have these resources available to invest back into high priority initiatives that benefit our players. In addition to direct financial support, several of MC United's Board members have provided significant in-kind contributions of time and expertise to lay the foundation for this initiative and to conduct the necessary background research to be able to move this forward.

6. WHEN WOULD THE FIELDS BE CONSTRUCTED?

We intend for these fields to be completed during 2020-2021. The preferred site at the DCE Middle School would allow for a rapid construction timeline. However, the construction schedule will be largely dictated by our ability to raise the necessary funds, which also may include the need for bridge financing for multi-year pledges. Other factors such as bidding processes and contractor availability will also dictate the timelines. In general terms, Phase 1 (largely comprising upgrading the first field and other improvements) can be commissioned once the first \$1.2 million in funding has been secured. We hope this will occur in 2020. Phase 2 (largely comprising the upgrade of the second field and other improvements) would follow once the additional \$1.1 million in funding has been secured (2021). Support and donations will help accelerate this schedule.



7. WHO WILL MAINTAIN THE FIELDS AND HANDLE SCHEDULING/OPERATIONS?

DCE, who already has the experience and equipment needed to maintain artificial turf, will maintain the fields. DCE Community Services will handle the scheduling and operations of the field. DCE Community Services has many years of demonstrated experience with providing community and other area school, sports and recreation groups with access to DCE facilities (for example, the Greenheck Fieldhouse). This community focus and partnership will serve as a model for ensuring that these fields will be accessible to a broad range of users in the years to come.

8. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE TURF NEEDS TO BE REPLACED?

Current technology suggests that artificial turf can last 12 to 15 years. When entering into a partnership such as this, DCE takes on responsibility for ensuring that the turf is replaced through internal facility operating and budgeting processes. MC United will not be expected to fundraise again in 12 to 15 years in order to cover the replacement costs of the turf.

9. HOW WILL DONORS BE RECOGNIZED?

Specific plans related to donor recognition and naming opportunities are in progress and will be coordinated with DC Everest Community Services.

10. HOW CAN YOU HELP?

MC United parents who have questions, suggestions, or ideas are encouraged to contact Sharon Belton, MC United's President, at fox.sharon@gmail.com. MC United welcomes all of your comments, including indication of interest in providing financial support or other expertise, or suggestions/contacts for potential supporters of this effort.

THANK YOU