

Alfred University's Merrill Field undergoing extensive renovations

6/29/10



ALFRED, NY A \$1.2 million renovation project is under way at Alfred University's Merrill Field, home to the school's football, soccer and lacrosse teams. The project, scheduled for completion by the end of August, includes replacement of the home side grandstand seating, installation of a new press box, renovations to the restroom facilities, and replacement of the field's current AstroTurf surface with an artificial FieldTurf surface. Demolition of the home side bleachers, originally installed at Merrill Field in 1984, began earlier this month and was completed two weeks ago. The new grandstand, with a seating capacity of 1,645, will be installed in August and will include 210 box-style seats as well as aluminum bleacher seating for 1,435 spectators. Combined with the existing bleachers on the visitors' side and behind the south endzone, Merrill Field will have a total seating capacity of nearly 3,000. Dr. Charles Edmondson, AU president, said the project will enhance the University's athletic facilities and be a source of pride for student-athletes, coaches, alumni and fans. "With the improvements to the grandstand and press box and the installation of the new field surface, Merrill Field will be one of the finest outdoor facilities in Division III," Edmondson commented. "This project reflects our commitment to maintaining the University's long-standing tradition of excellence in collegiate athletics." "This will really help with our recruiting efforts," added James Moretti, athletic director. "Not just for student-athletes who use the field, but with recruiting in general, because it improves the overall appearance of our (sports and recreation) facilities." The new FieldTurf playing surface, emblazoned with the AU Saxons athletic logo, will replace the AstroTurf system that was installed in the summer of 1999. Completion of that portion of the project is set for mid-August. "The new turf brings us into the mainstream with other colleges. Our student-athletes will really enjoy playing on it," Moretti said, adding that he expects spectators will appreciate the improvements. "This will enhance the atmosphere at Merrill Field and add to the fan experience." The project also involves replacement of the two-story press box, located at the top of the home side bleachers. The new single-story press box will measure 12-by-48 feet and will include a viewing area for the press and game day crew along with separate rooms for home and visiting coaches. The pre-manufactured press box will be installed in August. Renovations to the restroom facilities, located beneath the grandstand, will also be completed by the beginning of the upcoming school year. LeChase Construction of Rochester is completing the bleacher/press box replacement project; the contractor for the FieldTurf installation is Clark Companies of Delhi, NY. Both projects will be completed in time for the football team's 2010 home opener Sept. 4 against Widener. The men's soccer team will open play at the new field on Sept. 1 against Hobart. The women's soccer team plays its first game on the new field Sept. 11 against Elmira. The men's and women's lacrosse teams, which compete in the spring, also use Merrill Field.