

Lourdes Park

Pavilions provide fans with a special place at 'the Tigie'

WHEN THE 2007 BASEBALL SEASON cranks up in February, fans will have a new place to gather at M.L. "Tigue" Moore Field.

Lourdes Park features nine pavilions and some open areas that are surrounded by a wrought iron fence. Each pavilion has a steel roof, concrete floor, lighting and electrical outlets. Built-in barbecue pits could be added.

One pavilion measures 30 feet by 30 feet; two are 20 feet by 20 feet; and six are 10 feet by 10 feet.

UL Lafayette is the only university in Louisiana that has such a park at its baseball stadium.

Head coach Tony Robichaux said the addition is intended to enhance an environment that promotes "clean family fun."

"We'll officially open it for our first home game on Feb. 13. From there, we'll probably rent the pavilions on a seasonal basis," he said.

The coach saw a similar facility for the minor league Mobile Bay Bears about five years ago. "When I'm on the road, I always try to visit other facilities to get ideas that might work here," he said, adding that minor leagues make an extra effort to provide ballparks that are "fan friendly."

Robichaux and John T. Landry, development officer for UL Lafayette, first explored obtaining a matching grant to pay for part of the cost of constructing the park. But one of the grant's stipulations was that the park would have to be open to the public at certain times.

The university preferred to maintain complete control of the park, so it allocated half of the necessary funding. Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center provided the other half. Home Bank donated the park's fence and sidewalks.

Berch Stelly, community relations director for Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center, said it wanted to participate in a project that would improve the university's athletic facilities "but, just as importantly, would generate badly needed revenues for the baseball program."

"Spring sports," such as baseball and softball, rely heavily on self-generated funds.

"Lourdes Park will give us a unique way to not only generate revenue but also to maybe increase season ticket



The new pavilions feature concrete floors and electrical outlets. They are surrounded by a wrought iron fence.



1979. Moore, who died in 1994, has been described by sportswriters as “Acadiana’s ‘Mr. Baseball’ for decades.”

“With our fan support, we have one of the best home field advantages in the country,” Robichaux said.

Since 1999, UL Lafayette’s baseball program has consistently ranked in the top 50 nationally in total and average home attendance.

Here are other improvements made at the

stadium recently.

- New stadium bleachers were installed by the university on the first- and third-base sides.
- Brick wall borders were added on the first- and third-base sides, from the dugouts to the outfield. Supplies for the project were donated by Acme Brick and Angelle Concrete.

sales, sell more products at the stadium and bring kids out to the ballpark. So it just works in several ways,” Robichaux said.

At presstime, details about pricing and scheduling for use of the park had not been worked out. But Robichaux said the baseball program may rent the pavilions for tailgating at Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns® home football games next year and during Mardi Gras. “Companies might want to have corporate picnics there on days that our baseball team isn’t even playing. So we have a lot of opportunities,” he added.

Gerald Hebert, development officer for athletics, said the pavilions offer naming opportunities, as well, for companies and individuals who want to show their support for UL Lafayette athletics.

Bill Crist, an architect who is director of UL Lafayette’s Physical Plant, said the design of Lourdes Park gives it flexibility. “There’s a fence on all four sides, so the park is self contained. It can be opened from the baseball stadium side. Or, the gate on the stadium side can be closed, while the park can be accessed from the Reinhardt Drive side.

“So, the park can operate independently of baseball, but it can also be operated as part of the baseball stadium area.”

M. L. “Tigue” Moore Field is acknowledged as one of the best collegiate baseball facilities in Louisiana. It opened in 1978 and was named in Moore’s honor in

LOUISIANA’S RAGIN’ CAJUNS BASEBALL HOME GAMES IN 2007		
Feb. 13	Nicholls State	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 23	Illinois	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 24	Illinois	2 p.m.
Feb. 25	Illinois	1 p.m.
Feb. 27	Louisiana Tech	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 28	Northwestern State	6:30 p.m.
March 9	South Alabama*	6:30 p.m.
March 10	South Alabama	2 p.m.
March 11	South Alabama	1 p.m.
March 20	McNeese State	6:30 p.m.
March 23	Florida Atlantic*	6:30 p.m.
March 24	Florida Atlantic*	2 p.m.
March 25	Florida Atlantic*	1 p.m.
April 3	Lamar	6:30 p.m.
April 6	Western Kentucky*	6:30 p.m.
April 7	Western Kentucky*	2 p.m.
April 8	Western Kentucky*	1 p.m.
April 17	Southeastern Louisiana	6:30 p.m.
April 27	Arkansas State*	6:30 p.m.
April 28	Arkansas State*	2 p.m.
April 29	Arkansas State*	1 p.m.
May 11	Arkansas-Little Rock*	6:30 p.m.
May 12	Arkansas-Little Rock*	2 p.m.
May 13	Arkansas-Little Rock*	1 p.m.

Lourdes Park is one of two facilities that will enhance the athletics complex beginning in the spring. The other is a \$4.3 million indoor practice facility for Ragin’ Cajun teams that is expected to open in time for football spring drills.

- A pavilion on the first-base side was donated and constructed by Ideal Steel. That company is also donating and building a pavilion on the third-base side.
- New light fixtures for the playing field were donated by Jim Prince, Joe Klutts, Pete Canty and Stone Energy. Installation of the lights was donated by the Lafayette Utilities System.

All Ragin’ Cajun teams benefit when improvements are made to an athletic facility, Robichaux said. “If my next door neighbor takes care of his house, it enhances mine. It’s the same here. We’re all linked together. The tennis facility leads to the baseball stadium, which is next to the new track and soccer field. The softball stadium is close by.”

Lourdes Park is one of two facilities that will enhance the athletics complex beginning in the spring. The other is a \$4.3 million indoor practice facility for Ragin’ Cajun teams that is expected to open in time for football spring drills. It will be used by football, baseball, basketball, softball, soccer and track.

At presstime, concrete footings had been poured for the prefabricated building, which will be located near the intersection of Reinhardt Drive and Cajundome Boulevard. The structure will be assembled at the site.

The new facility will feature a 120-yard practice field with drop down batting cages and a separate wing for a basketball court.

Robichaux said the new indoor practice facility will be an important element for recruiting athletes. “It’s going to be so impressive when you drive through here. It shows a commitment to providing competitive athletic facilities and that’s something that student-athletes and parents look for when they come onto campus to visit.” ■

CAJUNS MAKE THE 'BEST DRESSED' LIST

LOUISIANA'S RAGIN' CAJUNS HAVE SOME of the sharpest football uniforms in collegiate athletics.

UL Lafayette ranked fifth among the Top 10 best-dressed university football teams in an article about gridiron garb written by Nancy Armour, an Associated Press national columnist.

"Simple in either red or white, with 'LOUISIANA' in plain block letters on the front, but they work. There's no need to be flashy when your helmet says 'Ragin' Cajuns,'" Armour wrote.

She offered opinions for three categories: good, bad and really ugly.

Her top four picks for fashion flair were Michigan, ("Maize and blue and winged helmets. Enough said."); Florida State; Harvard; and the University of Texas. Notre Dame came in sixth, followed by LSU in Baton Rouge. Rounding out the list were UCLA, Ohio State and Penn State.

Oregon State was No. 1 in the "bad" category for its Halloween hues of orange and black. No. 10 was a tie between Mississippi State and Nebraska. Five other schools made the "Really Ugly"

category. Oregon State ("Oh, where to begin.") topped the list. Notre Dame's special green jerseys, Tulsa, Mount Union and North Carolina were also cited.



Wide receiver Jason Chery

New tennis coach strives to raise Cajuns' rankings

During her inaugural year at UL Lafayette in 2005, assistant coach Katalin Gyulai helped the women's tennis program earn its first national ranking.



Katalin Gyulai

She made school history again this year by becoming the first female head men's and women's tennis coach. She replaces Justin McGrath, who resigned to take a coaching position at Cal Poly.

"We finished last season ranked in both men's and women's and we look to improve on that this season," Gyulai said.

Interim Athletic Director David Walker said he's confident that Gyulai has the ability to direct the tennis program. "Her success in leading the women's tennis team has allowed the program to reach new heights and we know she will continue this success as a head coach."

Gyulai arrived in Lafayette in September 2005 and had a notable fall season. Some highlights:

- The women's team won the University of Houston Cougar Fall Classic.
- Cajun sophomore Kimmie Lyles won the Flight B of the Pepsi Challenge hosted by UL Lafayette.

• The Ragin' Cajun doubles team of sophomore Tammy Day and freshman Clemence Remy reached the quarterfinals of the ITA Regional Tournament. It also finished the fall season with a No. 8 regional doubles ranking.

Gyulai began her coaching career in the 2003-04 season as an assistant at the University of Texas-Pan American. Her duties there included recruiting for its women's tennis program.

Gyulai is a certified United States Tennis Association official.

Nothing tops "Ragin' Cajuns"

"Ragin' Cajuns" is the best nickname for a college team in the nation.

Results of an informal, online ESPN poll taken this summer showed that 27.5 percent of respondents chose UL Lafayette's moniker as No. 1. A total 508,883 votes were cast in a survey entitled, "What are the best things in college sports?"

The "Banana Slugs," the name of the unofficial mascot for University of California Santa Cruz's coed teams, was the second place finisher, with 13.9 percent of the votes. Following close behind were:

- Tulane "Green Wave," 11.5 percent;
- Alabama "Crimson Tide," 8.8 percent;
- Marshall University "Thundering Herd," 8.5 percent; and
- University of Texas "Longhorns," 7.1 percent.

The remaining contenders each garnered less than 4 percent of the votes:

- Wake Forest "Demon Deacons," 3.9 percent;
- Arkansas "Razorbacks," 3.9 percent;
- Texas Christian University "Horned Frogs," 3.8 percent;
- North Carolina "Tar Heels," 3.5 percent;
- Southern Arkansas "Mule Riders," 3.3 percent;
- Purdue "Boilermakers," 2.2 percent; and
- Oklahoma "Sooners," 2.1 percent.

The nickname "Ragin' Cajuns" was first used – unofficially – in the early 1960s for the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now known as UL Lafayette) football team.

"Ragin' Cajuns" was listed as the team's official nickname in USL's 1974 Football Guide.

Gomez rewrites Cajuns' record book

IT WAS THE 2003 WOMEN'S COLLEGE WORLD Series in Oklahoma City.

On the pitcher's mound: the University of Texas' Cat Osterman. The 6-foot, 2-inch hurler was cool and confident. It's no wonder. She hadn't given up a hit in nearly 65 innings.

Ragin' Cajun freshman Danyele Gomez stepped up to the plate. Anyone unfamiliar with Gomez probably considered it a classic David vs. Goliath matchup. But fans who had followed Gomez' career all season knew that it was more like two Goliaths.

Gomez had earned a reputation for successful "firsts." She hit a grand slam, for instance, in her collegiate debut, the season opener against Louisiana Tech. In her first NCAA regional competition, she claimed a solo against San Diego State.

Now it was her first at bat in a World Series.

Osterman pitched the bright yellow ball. Gomez sent it sailing more than 300 feet, where it landed beyond the left field fence for a home run.

UCLA won the World Series that year. But Gomez and Osterman continued to play like champions.



Danyele Gomez

This year, both were named to the First Team of the Louisville Slugger/NFCA NCAA Division 1 All-America Team.

Gomez wrapped up her career with 83 career home runs. That's the fourth highest number of home runs in NCAA history.

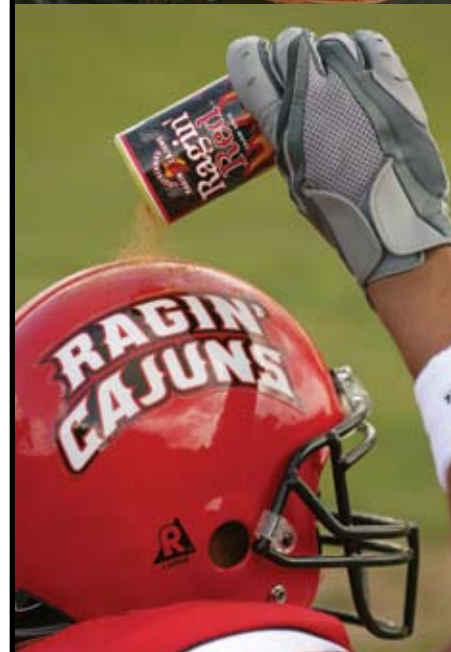
As a senior, she had 30 home runs, leading NCAA Division 1 with that season total. Only two other players in NCAA history have hit that many home runs in one year.

Gomez led the nation in home runs per game, runs per game and slugging percentage (.957).

By racking up a career high of 83 home runs, she set a UL Lafayette record. That's 26 more than the previous record. She also set school records for home runs, runs and total bases.

Gomez was one of 10 finalists for USA Softball's Player of the Year in 2006. She was featured in the "Faces in the Crowd" section of *Sports Illustrated* this spring and was named to the 2006 All-Louisiana Softball Squad by the Louisiana Sportswriters Association.

Gomez joined former Ragin' Cajun pitcher Krystal Lewallen on the Texas Thunder pro fastpitch team.



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LOTIEF'S WINNING WAYS TAKE HER TO NO. 3

UL Lafayette's Stefni Lotief has the third highest winning percentage of active NCAA Division 1 softball coaches in the nation.

To be ranked by the NCAA in that category, a coach must have a minimum of five years experience as a Division 1 head coach. The ranking is for spring varsity fast-pitch at four-year universities only.

Here are the latest NCAA statistics.

COACH, TEAM	YEARS	WON	LOST	TIED	PERCENTAGE
1. Mike Candrea, Arizona	19	1,027	203	0	.835
2. Sue Enquist, UCLA	17	837	166	1	.834
3. Stefni Lotief, La.-Lafayette	5	259	52	0	.833
4. JoAnne Graf, Florida St.	22	1,092	342	6	.760
5. Yvette Girouard, LSU	25	1,012	325	0	.757

Source: NCAA