

www.ragincajuns.com

Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns® web site is back and better than ever

AFTER ABOUT A FIVE-MONTH HIATUS, Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns® web site is live again.

But just about the only part that stayed the same is the URL: www.ragincajuns.com All the rest is prime time.

UL Lafayette hired XOS Technologies to provide server space and web site design. The Florida-based company has more than 480 clients who represent more than 900 university and pro sports teams, including the Florida Gators, Ohio State Buckeyes and LSU Tigers in Baton Rouge, La.

John Dugas, event management coor-

dinator for UL Lafayette's Athletics Department, has been working with an XOS crew for several months to fashion the Ragin' Cajuns' new web site.

Cox Communication is the site's main sponsor.

Dugas said the university wants to provide a first-rate web site for Ragin' Cajuns fans.

And, a university's presence on the Internet is especially important to young men and women, he continued. "The college-age kids now are on the Internet so much. Your web site creates your image. If you send them to a site that doesn't look top notch, that's the impression they have, even if they come for a campus visit."

Here's a preview of some www.ragincajuns.com features:

■ KEEPING TRACK

There's an all-sports calendar and schedule that covers every sport – right on the home page, all the time. Better yet, fans can easily download the information onto their computers' Microsoft Office Outlook calendar. Icons on the calendar will indicate when related information or features are available, such as game notes or streaming video.

"We'll make it easy for fans to know what's going on," Dugas said.

■ CAJUN CLIPPINGS

This service enables www.ragincajuns.com users to receive, via e-mail, all press releases and game reports as soon as they're posted by UL Lafayette's Sports Information Department.

■ PICTURE THIS

"We're going to have more photographs than just about any other university athletic department," Dugas said. "For football games, for instance, we will have hundreds of photos

– and not just action shots on the field. Photographers and videographers hired by the university will take photos and footage of game-related events, such as tailgating. Those images will be posted soon after a game has ended. "When people wake up on Sunday morning, the photos will already be there."

Fans will have a chance to submit photos they've taken of certain events. Dugas gave an example of how that will work: "On game day Saturdays nights during football season, I'll activate this feature and for the next few days, people can submit their own photos. That's really neat because they can put them on the web site and then tell their friends, 'Hey, I'm on ragincajuns.com'"

Some select, high-resolution prints will also be available for purchase through an agreement with pictopia.com

■ STREAMING VIDEO

The only feature of www.ragincajuns.com that has a fee is a premium content area that provides streaming video of certain games. (There will be an online contest to name this service.)

"Most places charge \$9.95 or \$12.95 a month for streaming video, but we just didn't feel comfortable with that," Dugas said.

So UL Lafayette's premium content area will cost only \$7.95 a month. "Football, men's basketball and baseball home games will all be streamed through closed circuit broadcasts that are already in place. For volleyball, soccer, women's basketball, softball and tennis, we have purchased equipment to film and stream select games. For away games, we will carry those conference games of schools that are also XOS clients."

The monthly fee includes on-demand video archives of games.

Game stats will be streamed at no cost.

■ SHOP AT THE BOOKSTORE – ONLINE

For the first time, University Bookstore on campus will offer a variety of UL Lafayette merchandise for sale on www.ragincajuns.com Customers can pay online with a credit card.

■ THE LATEST INFO

Information about completed Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns' sports events will be posted promptly. "For instance, if a baseball game ends at 10 o'clock, an article about it will be on the site about 15 minutes later," Dugas said. "It will be very quick."



Fans can download a comprehensive sports schedule onto their computers' Microsoft Office Outlook calendars.

some data from UL Lafayette athletics' previous web site and from the Athletic Network web site, in addition to preparing new content.

The Athletic Network – www.athlet-icnetwork.net – is a popular web site that keeps track of current and former Ragin' Cajun athletes and support groups. It began as a volunteer project that was created, in large part, by Dugas and his father, Dr. Ed Dugas, a former professor of health and physical education. The web site was designed by Firefly Digital and hosted on that company's server.

The presence of UL Lafayette athletics on the Internet began in 1998 when Fenstermaker and Associates of Lafayette donated space on its own server.

"For Fenstermaker and Associates to provide that to the university – at no cost – for almost 10 years is just amazing," said David Walker, UL Lafayette's interim athletics director. "We appreciate everything it did to help Ragin' Cajun athletics get online and stay up and running."

Dugas explained that as the Internet became more popular, demands on the Fenstermaker server became too great. "It got to the point this fall that we were really slowing down its operation."

So the Athletics Department began using the Athletic Network like a temporary web site until it could obtain bids from web site management companies and evaluate them.

UL Lafayette President Dr. Ray Authement said that volunteer efforts of fans such as Ed Dugas have been a huge reason for the success of the university's athletics networking. "Ed is officially retired from UL Lafayette, but he devotes himself almost full-time to the Athletic Network. It's difficult to convey how much that means to the university or how grateful we are," he said.

John Dugas noted that he has taken special pride in working on the new www.ragincajuns.com "I grew up coming to sporting events here. Since my father was a faculty member in kinesiology, I would spend all my summers at Earl K. Long Gym when I was growing up." Like his father, he's a devoted Ragin' Cajuns fan.

John Dugas noted that the XOS support team has seemed impressed by UL Lafayette. "They have a lot of clients who are tigers and lions and such, but there's only one 'Ragin' Cajuns' and we have a very distinct culture in this area. I think this new web site showcases it very nicely." ■



This is a mock-up of the www.ragincajuns.com home page.