

Budding soccer, lacrosse stars break in new multipurpose field



By Brock Weir

Aurora's newest multipurpose sports field was formally opened on a cool Saturday afternoon at Sheppard's Bush, and the artificial turf was warmed up by over a dozen budding lacrosse and soccer stars.

The new facility, located near Sheppard's Bush's Industrial Parkway South entrance, is a new sports hub that boasts not only the multipurpose artificial turf field, but seats for 500 patrons, eight natural grass soccer fields, a picnic shelter, a washroom, a snack bar, two parking lots, a fitness trail, and more.

The new field was completed at a cost of \$1.18 million to be suitable for soccer, football, and rugby, and has significantly increased the amount of play hours for many of the Town's local sports teams.

"On a grass field with lights we can typically get about 400 hours a season," said John Firman of the Town of Aurora. "On an artificial turf field with lights, we can get up to 1,800 hours of use. That is when we typically use it, but it is actually more; we don't factor in Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. when nobody is out here using it anyway. This is your evenings, weekends, and the real time when people use it that we can get up to 1,800 hours a year."

Presiding over the formal opening was Mayor Geoff Dawe, accompanied by Councillor John Abel, as well as Ron Weese, representing Sport Aurora.

"This is a great addition to our already pretty good complement of parks and fields," said Mayor Dawe. "This is a great opportunity to provide additional facilities to the Town and not only additional facilities, but facilities that can be used longer during the day and longer through the year. It is a great opportunity for us to be a little more efficient in how we are using the facilities.

"The whole area is about 100,000 square feet, so in addition to this fabulous new fields, we have eight mini soccer fields, we have the snack bar, the picnic facility, and, of course, we're attached onto the Sheppard's Bush Trail System. It's a great opportunity for you to come out and enjoy some facilities with your family and for us, as a Town, to be more engaged with our residents in terms of getting them out and active and making sure we provide them with the facilities to have fun."

On Mr. Weese's part, he said the new field at Sheppard's Bush was a welcome signpost noting the direction Aurora is headed in strengthening local sports.

"I am really happy the Town decided they were going to invest in multisport. It is a very good use of space and time, and we have very little space and time to waste. It is really a good, efficient thing," he said. "Sport is highly supportive of the work that is being done here in Town and I want to thank the Town for making this happen because it is one of the unique fields that we have in this Region. I was speaking to some of the soccer people here and she happens to be a U of T grad who played for the University of Toronto [and she said] this field rivals the field that you see at some of the best universities anywhere in this province. That is something we have to be very proud of."

Construction of the field took place between May and August.

It was ready for game play on September 10.