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Ribbon-cutting Opens Patriot Park Soccer Complex

Perris officials cut the ribbon on the \$4-million, 9-acre state-of-the-art Patriot Park Soccer Complex Dec. they say will bring fun and exercise to thousands of City residents over many years.

"Today represents the culmination of a dream we had a long time ago," said Mayor Daryl Busch at the Dec. 12 ribbon-cutting. "We have tried to fulfill this dream and I think we're doing a great job. This is special and I am so proud what this City has done to celebrate the opening of this park."

The new complex features an artificial playing surface that incorporates coconut husks to keep it about 20 degrees cooler than typical stadiums. The regulation-size field is suitable for adult and youth soccer teams and tournaments. The Patriot Park soccer complex is adjacent to a football field and grandstands which is home to a gridiron youth league.

City officials say their ultimate plan is to create several more playing fields at the Patriot Park site.



Perris City officials—Councilmen Mark Yarbrough, David Starr Rabb, Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke, Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Mayor Daryl Busch prepare to cut the ribbon at the opening of the \$4 million, 9-acre Patriot Park Soccer Complex Saturday, Dec. 12.

Busch was joined at the chilly-morning ribbon cutting by Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke and City Councilmembers David Starr Rabb, Rita Rogers and Mark Yarbrough, Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, City Manager Richard Belmudez, Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin and Planning Commission Chairman Brady McCarron.

Professional soccer player José Francisco "Kikin" Fonseca Guzmán also joined the festivities as did more than 100 youth soccer players, who took part in a series of skills clinics, like dribbling, passing and shooting.

Burke called the ribbon-cutting "another Perris blockbuster!"

"This is a long-awaited day," she said. "I have heard from a lot of families about how much they need and want this fields. It is important for practice and play and our residents do not have to leave the City to enjoy a first-class soccer experience."

Rabb called the soccer complex "a beautiful field that will complement the football field" nearby. He said the park dedication continues the City's commitment to its ongoing Live Well Perris healthy-eating active-living campaign.

"This is a place where people come to have fun, work out and learn teamwork," Rabb said. "It reinforces our commitment to living well. I am proud to see it come to fruition."



Former professional soccer player José Francisco "Kikin" Fonseca Guzmán and Mayor Daryl Busch shake hands at the grand opening ceremony while City Manager Richard Belmudez and Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke look on.

Rogers, a member of the council Parks and Recreation Committee, said the City is committed to expanding its parks and recreation facilities and services. The City recently upgraded the soccer facility at Morgan Park and continues adding additional recreation venues, such as the Action Star Games paintball and airsoft facility, the DropZone Aquatics Park and Big League Dreams baseball and soccer complex. The City also boasts world-class skydiving, auto and motorcycle racing facilities as well as numerous sporting activities at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area.

Developing the City's recreational opportunities fulfils a long-range strategic planning goal established by elected officials and administrators.

"It's another great day in the City of Perris," Rogers said. "This is a welcome addition to our City. It's time for our youngsters to take the field and have some fun!"

Yarbrough thanked former City Councilman Al Landers for working behind the scenes with a property developer, who donated the land for the Patriot Park site. Without his efforts, Yarbrough said the sports fields might never have taken shape.

"This is a truly impressive facility," Yarbrough said. "This is world-class. You could put this in any City in the state or country and it would fit right in. It feels good to deliver quality facilities to our community."



Buddies Bryan Velazquez, 18, Martin Garcia, 18, and Michael Robledo, 16, give their approval to the new Patriot Park Soccer Complex.

Ashley, a lifelong Perris Valley resident, said he remembers as a kid playing on fields of "cement and maybe a little grass."

"Now you see this beautiful soccer field," Ashley told the crowd. "You are going to reap great benefits now and in the future. It's a wonder to behold!"

Guzman, a former member of the Mexican national soccer team and a current analyst for Televisa Deportes Network, was all smiles as he posed for photos, shook hands and signed autographs. Asked for his overall impression of the Patriot Park site, he said succinctly: "This is very good."

Local soccer coaches and players echoed that sentiment.



Michael Robledo shows his prowess at keeping a soccer ball in the air during a skills camp at the opening of the Patriot Park Soccer Complex.

Ozzy Castro, regional commissioner for Perris American Youth Soccer Organization, said the City staunchly supports youth sports. He hailed Patriot Park Soccer Complex as a facility that will be used throughout the year.

"The City has been great," he said. "This shows they've heard our voices and responded. Perris may be a small City but this facility is first-class."

Elva Mendez, 13, took part in the opening-day festivities and skills tests.

"It's nice to be able to interact with other players and learn what they know and what we don't know," said Elva, who attends Tomas Rivera Middle School. "It's nice of the City to make another soccer field for us. This is what we have been asking for."

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