

# BMX track built on former landfill

By Mike Trigg, CSFM, and Mike Pavelich

The National Bicycle League (NBL) approached the Waukegan (IL) Park District (WPD) in the fall of 2002 looking for a home for a group of local BMXers who were tired of trekking across the border to Wisconsin to find a suitable track. NBL has been dedicated to providing exciting recreational opportunity for nearly 30 years. The WPD felt that a BMX track would fit in perfectly with its “benefits-based” philosophy. Today, the track sits on the site of a former municipal landfill. Individuals and organizations came together to use the brownfield and create a premiere BMX facility for the community at Henry Pfau Callahan Park.

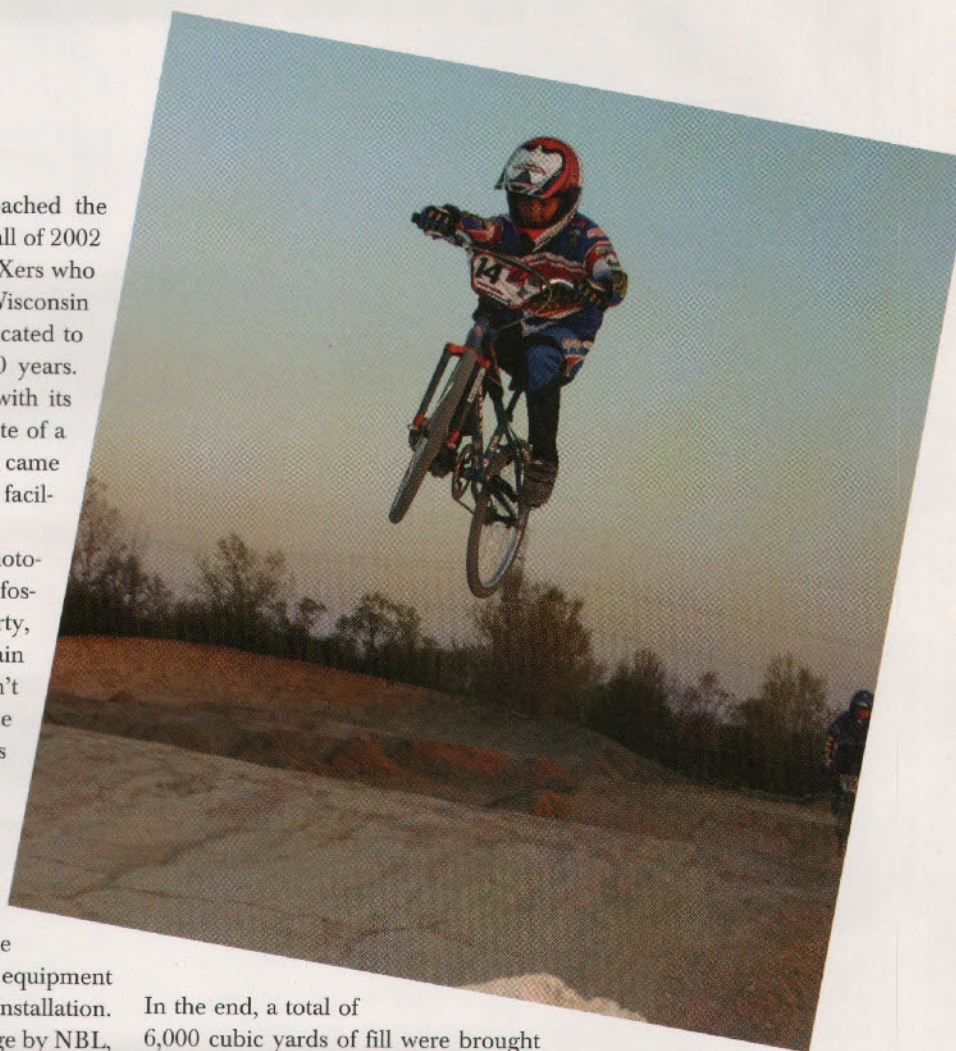
For the uninitiated, BMX is the short form of “bicycle motocross,” a sport that involves the whole family, teaches and fosters individual responsibility, respect for others and property, good sportsmanship and courage. Riders perform on terrain that features a multitude of hills and/or obstacles. But don’t confuse BMX with motocross because the sole power source is the rider. Races last under a minute, with bike speeds sometimes reaching 15-35 miles per hour.

The track was designed by Mark Hildebrand, a nationally known builder of BMX tracks who has created tracks for the X-Games and Gravity Games, and is building tracks for the 2008 Olympic Games. The budget was set at \$99,000, which would include construction of an 80-space gravel parking lot, installation of 1,100 feet of track fencing, equipment rental for track construction, and water and electric utility installation.

Hildebrand’s design services were provided free-of-charge by NBL, and he also got his hands dirty by completing the majority of the earth moving on the 1,200 feet-long course as well as field testing each individual track obstacle as they were being constructed.

Construction of the three major, 180-degree banked turns (known as “berms”) started in early fall of 2004. Local contractors looking to dispose of spoils provided clean fill material. A local excavator was occasionally contracted to assist designer Hildebrand with track obstacles, sidelines, and site restoration.

The track was positioned on the site with ample surrounding green space in order to incorporate larger events, vendors, tents and additional spectators. The positioning also created a buffer zone for the surrounding neighborhood.



In the end, a total of 6,000 cubic yards of fill were brought in. At times the material needed to be stockpiled to coincide with Hildebrand’s availability. Obstacles encountered included pockets of concrete debris in the landfill, lack of fill materials, and material that was substandard and unsuitable for track construction.

Construction of the track was overseen by the WPD’s landscape architect, Steve Wikner, and complies with NBL track standards. Rough grading was finally completed in November 2004, with the track fencing added the following month. The fencing is a necessary element as it allows spectators to view the event at a safe distance. In the spring of 2005, park staff also completed site restoration and dormant turf seeding. An electronic starting gate was installed, as well as a scorekeeper/announcer’s booth.

With great anticipation the track was open to the public on June 12, 2005 with a grand opening celebration. This festive event included more than 100 racers, free giveaways, demonstrations, food vendors, and refreshments.

"I think it's important for the staff that maintains the facility to be involved in the planning stages," says Scott MacLean, manager of park maintenance who oversees the weekly upkeep of the park. Great care and thought was put into ease-of-maintenance of the track, including water access at both ends of the facility, and accessibility of mowers and trucks to service the track.

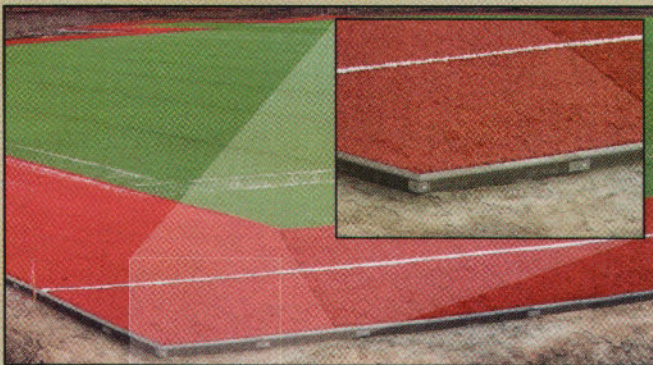
The Park District provides all turf maintenance and trimming for the track while the Waukegan BMX Club members provide supervised programs including gate practices, leagues, and BMX racing clinics. An NBL-sanctioned track offers a comprehensive program that recognizes the importance of neighborhood racing as well as state and national competition.

Weather permitting, the track is open to the public every day. Rules signs are posted with track hours, safety requirements, and a code of conduct. WMBX Club offers gate practices on Thursday nights with organized races on Sundays.

*Mike Trigg, CSFM, superintendent of parks for the Waukegan Park District, is President of the Sports Turf Managers Association. Mike Pavelich is a member of Trigg's staff. ■*



## FIELDTRIM



- > Notched (6" x 6"-8') synthetic Turf Edging
- > Limited lifetime warranty
- > Cost effective alternative to concrete curbing

For more information contact Chris Cote: (800) 289-2448



Earth & Landscape Solutions is an authorized distributor of XP FieldTrim.

XP-001

Fill in 123 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/9140-123>

## Problems with drainage?

Increase Safety, Playability, and Wear Tolerance of Turf with...

## OWIKODRAIN SYSTEMS



- Increase aeration and drainage with a narrow slot "trench-'n-fill" system at 20" o.c.
- Minimal surface disruption
- Fast, clean, cost effective operation

For a Certified Contractor Nearest You, Call Toll Free

**1-888-567-6872**

Division of GreenONE Industries

Revolutionizing Golf & Sports Turf Drainage

Fill in 134 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/9140-134>