

SoCal STMA renovates field named for a legend By Mike Tarantino

At first the project seemed to be overwhelming, and more than the members of the SoCal Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) probably wanted to take on. But when we considered it further and finally realized what kind of support it might receive from individuals and businesses, it became "definitely doable."

Rick Covert, STMA secretary and Facilities Supervisor/Landscape at Miramar College, and Ron Lardizibal, Athletic Director at San Diego's Herbert Hoover High, talked during a walk-through at Petco Park. They agreed they wanted to continue the recent STMA tradition of volunteering each year to renovate a public field.

Lardizibal mentioned that the varsity field at the school was certainly a candidate for a local project. The field is called the Ted Williams Field, named in honor of the baseball legend, who while still enrolled at Hoover High, made his professional baseball debut in the minor leagues with the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast League.

That this was the school where Williams played baseball when he was a youngster was certainly part of the allure of taking on this project.

Padres' Director of Field and Landscape Maintenance Luke Yoder, an STMA member, and his assistant, John Turnour, echo that sentiment. "I can't think of a better opportunity to give back to the community than at Hoover High and a field named after a true legend," Yoder said.

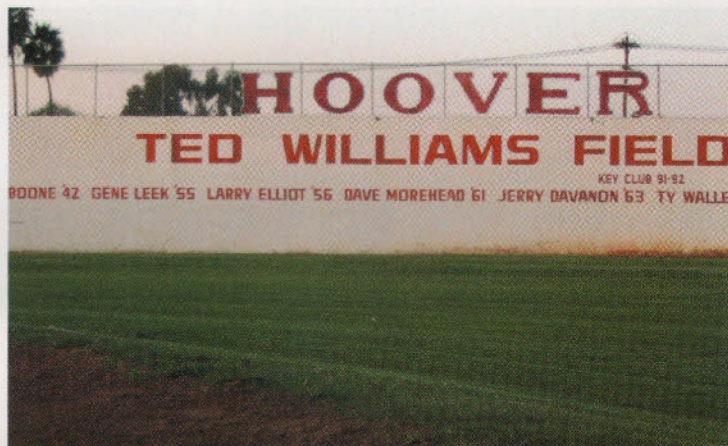
When we looked at the field in January it was clear that it was going to be a challenge. In no uncertain terms, we knew there was much work to be done.

Lack of funds meant the field had not been maintained properly. It wasn't because of lack of interest or knowledge, just money. Budget priorities at municipal and other public organizations are forced to shift from year to year because of a similarly shifting economy.

Ron Hostick, an STMA board member and Lead Groundskeeper for San Diego State University, said that some preliminary irrigation and skin work was done Wednesday and Thursday before the weekend event.



Getting it done: Mike Tarantino, middle, flanked by Ron Hostick, right, and Mike Radigan, left.



Before renovation; check out that bad infield lip.

Hostick, who is responsible for maintaining Charlie Smith Field at Tony Gwynn Stadium on the university campus, said the major part of the massive effort was conducted over 2 full days, July 7-8, with some residual work on Sunday and Monday.

Approximately 50 persons added their labor and talent. Eleven businesses from the San Diego area were present with their product and service donations. The work focused on a number of areas, especially the replacement and updating of the field's irrigation system. Sprinkler heads were replaced and new piping was laid. Sod replacement followed along with removal and replacement of the pitcher's mound.

A major job was the removal of the lip where dirt and grass meet. Over the years, the lip had grown so high that it easily had turned into a hazard for the youngsters using the field.

The businesses that are credited for participating in the event are AA Equipment, Barkshire Laser Leveling, Best Professional Products, Green One Industries, Horizon, Hunter Irrigation, Profile Products, Pro's Choice, Target Specialty Products, Turf First and West Coast Turf. About \$75,000 in products and services were donated!

Mike Tarantino is Director of Maintenance and Operations for Poway Unified School District, and president of the Southern California Chapter of STMA.

STMA partnerships benefit you

You walk by your athletic director's office, and he waves to you to step inside. In his hand is *Interscholastic Athletic Administration magazine*. He says, "I just read about STMA's partnership with the NIAAA. I didn't realize that your association is *my* association's education partner."

In fact, STMA has been the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) education partner since 2005. That partnership grew from a desire to open educational and informational channels about safety and sports field management challenges facing