

Ralston leads volunteer renovation effort

STMA member Chris Ralston, head grounds-keeper for the Class A Lake Elsinore Storm, an affiliate of the San Diego Padres, led his crew earlier this year on a volunteer effort. They reconditioned a local community park for High Tech High, a charter high school in San Diego. High Tech High began in 2000 as a single charter high school launched by a coalition of San Diego business leaders and educators. It has evolved into a school development organization with a growing portfolio of innovative charter schools spanning grades K-12.

Two years ago the school started a baseball program and without a field on site for use, they leased a park in East Claremont from the City of San Diego to serve as its home field. The volunteer coaches and parents of the players, along with the players are currently maintaining the field themselves. However, the park was in dire need of some upgrades

and that is what the Storm Grounds Crew did. "When we arrived at the field we found 2-4 inch lips around the baselines, a mound that was nearly flat and a playing surface that was like sand," said Ralston.

"We spent 4 days at the park, resodding all around the edges and the mound to bring the lips down to playing grade," he said. (The sod was courtesy of West Coast Turf.) "We rebuilt the mound and home plate and replaced them with all new bases, and added 25 tons of infield mix consisting of 50% clay and silt and 50% sand, and leveled out low spots.

"In the foul areas on both sides we added a bullpen consisting of two mounds and plates. We then cut out the old grass in front of the dugouts and replaced it with infield mix for cosmetics," said Ralston.

"We did an audit and repaired irrigation heads as needed. On the last day we overseeded the infield and collars with a perennial ryegrass and a starter fertilizer."

The Storm Grounds Crew includes Francisco Casteneda, Tyson Pulsipher, Greg Cummings, and Dave Carmichael. ■



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