

Worth of women's sports recognized, coach says



Katie Strang and her teammates sign the ceremonial first pitch ball thrown by Susan Parker, left, of the Hutton Foundation on Thursday.

Better site is expected to generate ticket sales

By Dawn Witlin
Correspondent

The inaugural pitch was thrown at California Lutheran University's spanking new softball field Thursday, scoring a victory for women's sports at the college.

"It really shows a commitment on behalf of the university to women's sports," said Debby Day, coach of the CLU Regals. "For one thing, it's a huge monetary investment by building us a field. That we are worth that kind of money shows that the university is recognizing the importance of women's sports."

Located at the university's new North

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SOFTBALL

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Campus athletics complex, Hutton Field replaces the aged Gilbello Field, which was behind dorm rooms at the opposite end of the campus.

"A lot of people got lost coming to our old (field)," said Megan Allain, a CLU senior and the team's pitcher. "Now everybody can see us."

Day said she expects the team's move to North Campus will increase visibility of Regals games and will mean a surge in ticket sales.

"We may get more people who happen to walk on this side of the campus," said Day. "I think that will definitely increase our fan base."

Day said an important feature of Hutton Field is its level playing field, which causes balls in play to act more naturally.

"It's definitely improved, surface-area wise," Day said. "The infield and outfield are pristine, so the balls are taking true hops. ... We don't get as many bounces."

Sophomore Steven Ceriale said the field allows for a more unified sports department at CLU.

"It's a lot closer to the other sports teams," Ceriale said. "It's nice to have all the sports teams close together so they can support each other."

Senior Rich Culp said the new sports facilities contribute to a better image of CLU.

"I think as a whole, North Campus is a huge step in improving our school," Culp said. "The facilities are amazing. It's definitely nice to have a nice facility to watch the games at. The old facilities weren't run down, just old, so we needed a new field."

The field was built using \$500,000 donated by the Hutton Foundation, which is run by Tom Parker and his wife, Susan. The Santa Barbara couple are CLU alumni.

"We felt embraced when we were here by all the departments," Tom Parker said. "It's nice to come back and say thank you to all the people who made us feel at home and to make the next generation move forward."

The Hutton Foundation was founded in 1984 by Susan's aunt, Betty Hutton, a successful entrepreneur and avid softball player.

The Hutton Foundation has also contributed funds to CLU for other purposes, including a basketball court outside Mogen Hall dormitories.

Softball field for women opens at CLU



At left, CLU softball players encourage each other, and at right, Susie Nicoll fields a ball during practice Thursday. The field was built using \$500,000 donated by the Hutton Foundation.

