

Coventry Complex Opens Tomorrow

Coventry will cut ribbon on new Clarke Athletic Complex

New facility offers ADA-compliant facility with new track, restrooms and scoreboard; will be open for Thanksgiving

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COVENTRY — Coventry High School athletics — and the community at large — will usher in a new era tomorrow evening, with a ribbon-cutting for the new-and-improved Walter C. Clarke Athletic Complex at the high school scheduled for 5:30 p.m.

The complex, which houses the Oakers' football and lacrosse teams as well as a regulation track, had fallen into disrepair over the past decade or so, but thanks to Coventry voters it was renovated beginning after a \$1 million bond was approved in November 2013.

The passage of the bond was part of a

five-bond school improvement package.

From the outset, members of Coventry's School Building Committee have been ebullient in their praise of the facility and their hopes for its future. It has been seen as everything from a place for the school to host home track meets — which it hasn't done in years — to a safe place for the elderly and others in the community to walk free from traffic and other hazards that could arise when walking on the side of the road.

Completed on time and on budget, the facility will host this year's Pawtuxet Valley Thanksgiving Classic between the Oakers and rival West Warwick, a game in which Coventry's last win came in 2004.

In the spring, the field will be home to the Coventry boys' lacrosse team, which advanced to the Division III final in 2014 before falling to Tiverton-Rogers. Meanwhile, the track and field facilities will host Southern Division track meets.

Along with a new part-asphalt, part-acrylic track, a new long jump pit and pole vault runway and areas for the shot and hammer will be used.

Fencing, bleachers, and goalposts were all replaced, the concession stand was enlarged, and the field was equipped with a new irrigation system and regraded to ensure proper runoff.

A new scoreboard, donated in part by

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File photo

Workers from Ahlborg Construction roll out the track at Coventry High's renovated Walter C. Clarke Athletic Complex. The complex will be officially opened with a ribbon-cutting tomorrow evening at 5:30.

Ribbon-cutting tomorrow nite

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Centreville Bank, will replace the old scoreboard.

"It is a state-of-the-art facility," Ahlborg Construction owner Glenn Ahlborg said in September. "I've been so proud to be a part of it."

The school department, for its part, is equally prideful. Late last week, a press release was issued. The full text can be read below:

"On Wednesday, November 19th, the Coventry Community will join the Building Committee in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Walter L. Clarke Athletic Complex at Coventry High School," it begins. "The complex will offer more than 2,500 youth every year a safe place to exercise, play team sports and participate in after-school activities.

"Funding for the Walter L.

Clarke Athletic Complex at Coventry High School was initiated by a voter-approved bond for improvements to our athletic complex.

"The Walter L. Clarke Athletic Complex, adjacent to Coventry High School, is a wonderful addition to our community! The complex features a new football/lacrosse field, a beautiful track with all of the appropriate areas to host statewide track and field events, ADA accessible bleachers, and a gorgeous scoreboard to compliment the complex.

"The overall vision for the athletic complex is to utilize athletics as an instrument aimed towards helping boys and girls become men and women of empathy and integrity who will lead, be responsible and positively impact their communities."