

**HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**    AUGUST 18, 2016 1:03 PM

# MLB, local group working to renovate youth ballfields in Mascoutah



BY NORM SANDERS  
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Thanks to a grant of nearly \$47,000 from the Baseball Tomorrow Fund, a project funded by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, youth baseball and softball teams playing at Scheve Park in Mascoutah are getting some field upgrades.

Combined with an earlier \$40,000 fundraising effort, the fields will be resurfaced with DuraEdge, a soil mix product that provides a playing surface that can limit rainouts.

There also will be a new field built in the southwest corner of park. That will bring the numbers of fields at the park to seven, with the project expected to be completed by next spring. The park annually hosts 350 baseball and softball players.

“DuraEdge is the same product the Cardinals use and basically every league minor-league organization has on their fields,” said Nick Seibert, president of the Mascoutah Athletic Commission and also the longtime baseball pitching coach at O’Fallon High School. “Several local high school teams use it, too. It can rain an inch and if you have about two hours of sunlight you can start playing again.”

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Nick Seibert

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The grant from MLB and the MLBPA will be used for other park facility needs, including fencing and backstops.

“We’re upgrading the fencing on three fields and that fencing had been there for 30 years,” Seibert said. “We’ve begun the process on tearing out all the fencing and hopefully we’ll have all of it up up by the end of the fall.”

Seibert said Scheve Park gets a lot of use, with everyone from the local Khoury League teams to Team Mascoutah select baseball’s 7-under through 13-under teams and a Team Mascoutah select softball team.

In addition, the park has been used for junior high baseball and men’s and co-ed slow-pitch softball.

Seibert, who coaches a youth softball team, said the Mascoutah Athletic Commission began with six members and has blossomed to 25. The organizational focus was originally on baseball and softball, but that has changed to include football, soccer and others as well.

“As we saw a necessity on other projects for sports in Mascoutah, we’ve expanded our mission statement to include all sports,” he said.

Seibert said MAC founder and project manager Mark Beer researched the grant and applied for the assistance. Further fundraising efforts are planned, including seeking money from other foundations and government entities.

“Scheve Park is 100 percent volunteer,” Seibert said. “Everything that is done there is done on a volunteer basis. To get dollars like that , and the fact we can donate all of our labor, we can get a couple hundred man hours and get a lot of stuff done.

“We’re pursuing other grants all the time and we accept donations.”

Among other project supporters include the Mascoutah Khoury League, Mascoutah Noon Lions Club, South Mascoutah Jaycees, Mascoutah Evening Lions Club, Mascoutah Township, Mascoutah Equipment Company Inc, Mascoutah Tuesday Women’s Club, Wehmeyer Seed Company, Team Mascoutah Athletics, and the Mascoutah Softball League.

To make a donation or to help with the project, contact Nick Seibert at 618-566-0007 or Mark Beer at 618-531-4541 or visit <http://themacsports.org/>.

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