

The Jack Allen Recreation Complex in Decatur, AL celebrates another banner year in 2010 in terms of revenues generated by lodging, dining, and retail sales. The premier soccer fields attracted state, national, and international events producing over \$2.2 million in economic impact, an increase of approximately 19% from 2009.

In just five short years, the first class soccer facility has hosted soccer players and fans from around the world and has generated an economic impact of over \$8 million for Decatur and Morgan County. Decatur, with a population of approximately 56,000, is situated along the Tennessee River in northern Alabama where it is known for its outstanding fishing opportunities.

Recently, over 500 student-athletes and coaches traveled from the United States and Canada to Decatur to compete in the 2010 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Women's Soccer National Championship. The 15-game tournament pumped approximately \$560K into the Decatur and Morgan County area where local restaurants, hotels, and retail stores were all directly impacted. NAIA Women's Soccer National Championship in 2010 marked its second time in the state of Alabama. The Jack Allen Recreation Complex hosted the prestigious event in 2009 and will also serve as host venue in 2011.

The Jack Allen Recreational Complex served as training grounds for World Cup contenders in August, 2010. Twenty-one players and 14 support staff members of the Black Maidens traveled over 6,500 miles from the West African country of Ghana to Decatur in preparation for the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup. This was not JARC's first appearance on the international soccer scene. JARC hosted exhibition matches between the Mexican women's national team and Belmont University and University of Alabama in Birmingham in 2008 and the women's teams from Mexico and Argentina traveled to Decatur for a match in 2007.

Construction of the Jack Allen Recreation Complex began in 2003 and was completed in 2005. Decatur Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Dunlap attributes the success to not only the facility itself, but to the vision of the City Council, the many partnerships formed in the beginning during the design and construction phase, and to the many outstanding employees who oversee the day to day operations and continue to maintain its high level of quality.

Considered by many athletes as the top complex in the state of Alabama with fields comparable to the ones at Disney Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, the complex includes 11 international size, lighted soccer fields with certified, laser

graded turf and internal drainage on three tiers covering 27 acres. The two championship fields contain wireless scoreboards, top notch aluminum fencing, and grandstand seating.

A press box, complete concession building, restrooms, a controlled point of entry to collect admissions, wireless public address system, internet access, and meeting space available up to 25 people are just a few of the other amenities located in the complex.

The soccer fields all have lighting equal to 50-foot candles which is television quality lighting. The championship fields are lit to 60-foot candles. All fields are laser graded with a 1 degree slope from side to side ensuring "perfect pitch" for soccer balls. Grass is *certified* SportsTurf with built-in computer run irrigation (*sprinkler*) system.

The championship fields have also received accolades for its quality and workmanship from outside of the soccer realm. In 2009, the Jack Allen Recreation Complex received the President's Award of Excellence from the Alabama Turfgrass Association. The award, given annually, recognizes the state's premier sports field, landscape, sod farm, and golf course.

The fields have also served as venue for additional athletic events other than soccer. An Ultimate Frisbee Tournament was held in 2010, and in 2006 and 2007, the Re/Max World Long Drive Championship and the exceptional Driver Championship took place.

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