



*“Friday Night Lights sounds a lot better than Thursday Night Lights.”*



Home Side Stadium Entrance



Athletic Complex

# Rattler's New Cage

Photos taken August 23

As San Marcos High School football players have been preparing for their upcoming season on the campus' baseball field, their new stadium has provided shade from the summer sun.

They've watched the stadium being built, coming out of the ground like a bamboo tree, reflects Mark Soto, Athletic Director and Head Football Coach with San Marcos High School.

“They're anxious to get into it,” Coach Soto says.

The stadium's already saved some from unruly sunburns and heatstroke and saved SMCISD from spending money to rent Texas State Bobcat Stadium.

“It was costly,” says Soto, adding that the district has been renting stadium time from Texas State University for 31 years.

In May 2013 Proposition 1, to approve more than \$58 million worth of renovations and new construction, and Proposition 2, for the \$18.4 million stadium, were put on the ballot and left in the hands of local voters who gave it a passing grade.

It was a score for the district and its 7,500 students. For the first time in history, the district will own, maintain and operate a stadium.

A place they can now call home.

And like any good homeowner, local residents have expressed interest in the progress of the stadium's

construction.

Tours of the multi-purpose athletic stadium were constantly being held alongside Coach Soto in his (juiced up) golf cart.

“Friday Night Lights sounds a lot better than Thursday Night Lights,” says Coach Soto, who's a former Seguin High School football coach.

In the past, Rattler Football had to play 3-4 games on Thursdays to contend with the Texas State Bobcats home football schedule, which was subject to change and the NCAA requires that visiting teams have walkthroughs the day prior to a game, Coach Soto says.

Attendance could have been better on Thursdays, for football games and, possibly, Friday classes -- the high school students (football players, cheerleaders, dance team, color guard and band members, among others), faculty and staff were still required to be in attendance, regardless of the game's length.

“Thursday games took a toll the next morning,” Soto says. “... It makes a difference.”

Coach Soto says Friday Rattler Football games average 5,200 attendees.

The new stadium can fit 5,000 locals, presumably clad in purple and white, and 3,000 visitors.

The lights will, indeed, be shining bright, not only on the district but also in the community at large,

which continues to grow in both population and prestige.

Right now the synthetic turf is the last piece to complete this multi-purpose athletic stadium puzzle, expected to be installed by early September, Coach Soto says.

Rattler Football hopes to leave its mark on the San Marcos community, much like Bobcat Football did with the expansion of its stadium and move to the Sun Belt Conference.

“We definitely do have a culture change in San Marcos,” Soto says.

Soto has been a proponent of this change. He even served on the multi-purpose athletic stadium and student activity center design team.

Both projects will be situated on the southeast side of San Marcos High School, near its current athletic facilities. Together this will form a complete athletic complex.

To reach this goal, the partnership between the school district and community agreed to the district's tax rate increase of seven cents to \$1.42 per \$100 of assessed value. So, if a home is valued at \$100,000, the other owner will now pay \$5.83 more a month.

The district states on the bond program's website that it “will seek potential sponsors to assist with costs, provide enhancements or to even reimburse some of the construction costs.”

## NO MORE RENT

It cost SMCISD \$8,000 per football game to rent Texas State's Bobcat Stadium, plus \$2,929 in security fees and \$2,431 in workers per game. That's a grand total of \$13,360 per game. But who's keeping count?

## GRAND OPENING

The first game in the new stadium is against the Seguin Matadors on Friday, September 19 @ 7:30p.

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