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Gees-Gees bring home games to Beckwith

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EMC News - The University of Ottawa and Beckwith Township have announced the Gee-Gees' will be using Beckwith Park as their home field for the 2012 football season.

For township Reeve Richard Kidd, this is affirmation that Beckwith Park is "among the best in Ontario." "I knew that," he quipped. Seriously though, he noted the university team looked at a lot of facilities and to say a team such as this, from the city of Ottawa, nonetheless has decided to come to Lanark County, is "nice recognition."

That recognition will surely have economic development spin-offs, he noted.

"The use of our facility continues to grow locally and with people coming in they are seeing what we have to offer."

"We are very proud of the Beckwith Park facilities that we are able to provide to our residents. It is very exciting that our field of dreams will be the home of University of Ottawa football for 2012," he said in a press release.

Temporarily relocating the varsity team due to construction delays on its home field will give the University of Ottawa a chance to help build up football culture at Beckwith's "field of dreams," says the university's assistant athletic director, Colin Timm.

"The Beckwith Park field and facilities are among the best in Eastern Ontario," said Luc Gélinau, director of Sports Services for the University. "More importantly, the community leaders' enthusiasm for bringing the team to Beckwith has been overwhelming."

On average 5,000 people took in each Gee-Gees' game last season, and while 2,500 have been predicted per home game this year, Kidd challenges that notion.

"I think a lot of local people will come to see that quality



Photo by MARLA SHOOK

Beckwith Township Reeve Richard Kidd stands in Beckwith Park, a park the Ottawa Gee-Gees will call home for the 2012 football season. The announcement was made Aug. 14.

of football," he commented. Locals, as well as folks from Arnprior, Almonte and Renfrew are used to coming to the field to play, "I think they will come to watch too."

The benefits are many - not just from an economic development standpoint - but from the community perspective as well.

"They (Gee-Gees) want to be involved in the community," Kidd noted of the team and university, including involvement with local high schools, coaching clinics, fundraising and more.

The hospitality from Beckwith officials such as Kidd has already been tremendous, Timm said, and he is looking forward to working with the

township to stir up football fever.

From barbecues to offering fundraising opportunities, ticket packages and donations to the community, Timm says Ottawa U wants to do what it can to help Beckwith become a true football town.

"I think the biggest thing for them is they are getting top-quality Canadian football on a field (where) they have never had it before," Timm said. "I understand how sport plays a role in rural communities ... That's what is really exciting about this site that may not have presented itself in other areas of the city."

"We really want to use this opportunity to promote and grow football in the surround-

ing communities," said Gélinau.

While dollars from the facility rental revenue are unknown at this time, Kidd explained the bookings have not yet been finalized.

The lead up time for preparation may be short, however the township will not bear any of the costs of temporary bleacher installation, nor any other costs to prepare the facility for the Gee-Gees' season. Normally bleacher space accommodates 500, however, as mentioned, additional and temporary units will be brought in to enhance that number. Ottawa U will expand that to 1,500 with temporary bleachers.

Sideline grass seating will be made available and free shuttle busses will run from the uOttawa Minto Sports Complex to Beckwith for fans each game day.

A press box will be installed, which will sit 20 feet in the air. Each game is televised by Rogers.

The Lanark County facility is a saviour to the university, which was looking for an

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EMC Sports – In front of an enthusiastic crowd of more than 2,000 fans at Beckwith Park, the University of Ottawa Gee-Gees held their home opener on Saturday, Sept. 15, hosting the defending Vanier Cup champions from McMaster University – the Marauders. Left, Ottawa defender Kevin Hanson (#44) pursues McMaster receiver Andrin Masotti (#85), who is looking for a little blocking help. McMaster went on to beat the Gee-Gees 45-16. The next home game is this Saturday (Sept. 22) at 1 p.m. Ottawa takes on Laurier.

Photo by MIKE GAUTHIER

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Publication: Ottawa Citizen

Gee-Gees gallop to Beckwith Township for season

Slow stadium construction on campus, unsafe Lansdowne forces team to move

KEN WARREN

Say hello to the Carleton Place Gee-Gees. The University of Ottawa has adopted some out-of-the-box thinking — out-of-the-city thinking, actually — to deal with slower than expected construction of its new on-campus football stadium.

The Gee-Gees will play their home games 50 kilometres from campus this fall at a new facility in Beckwith Township, outside Carleton Place. The artificial turf football field, part of a sporting complex that includes an arena and soccer fields, is a 40-minute drive from downtown Ottawa.

The university considered other potential options closer to the campus, including a stadium in Garneau and a new soccer facility at Hillcrest High School, but none were suitable due to conflicts with other events or because of safety concerns, according to sports director Luc Gélinau.

"This is a very safe field and the team will be able to play there for all the games, and there will be no flip-flopping

The Gee-Gees could have played in different facilities in the city until their stadium

from site to site," he said. "The other thing is that Beckwith Township was very enthusiastic about having us there."

The Beckwith Township stadium currently has 400 seats, but the Gee-Gees plan to expand seating capacity to 1,500. Gélinau said the university will have to shut the fans from campus to the

season with road games against Windsor on Sept. 8, and York on Sept. 15. The first home-away-from-home game in Beckwith Township will come Sept. 15 against de-

was ready but ultimately decided the best decision was to set up shop in one place for the entire season. The Gee-Gees plan to practice on the new field on Aug. 26 or Aug. 27, becoming familiar with the turf and the surroundings. They open their season with road games against Windsor on Sept. 8, and York on Sept. 15. The first home-away-from-home game in Beckwith Township will come Sept. 15 against de-

fending Vanier Cup champion McMaster. The Gee-Gees had previously played at Lansdowne Park, but the facility is now unsafe, awaiting construction of a refurbished stadium to house a Canadian Football League franchise, a professional soccer team and the 2015 women's soccer World Cup.

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