

Robinson, H-F bring in the new baseball facility with a bang

By DAVID P. FUNK
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Shai Robinson made the first game April 28 on Homewood-Flossmoor High School's upgraded baseball field a memorable one.

With a runner on first and the Vikings down a run in the bottom of the seventh inning, the senior shortstop launched a shot over the fence in left field for a walk-off home run. It was the Illinois State commit's fifth round-tripper of the season, and it gave H-F a 7-6 win over Lockport.

"Before the at-bat, I just told myself, 'If you get a fastball, just crush it.' Second pitch of the at bat, I got that pitch and I crushed it," Robinson said. "It felt amazing, especially playing our first game out there, especially playing a (Lockport) team that we had just previously lost to (two days prior) on a walk off (6-5). They got the feeling that we got the previous day."

The new field is impressive, and the program is proud of it.

Upgrades include installation of artificial turf everywhere except the outfield, restoration of the bullpens, new fencing, a new brick backstop



David P. Funk/H-F Chronicle

The Homewood-Flossmoor Vikings baseball team finally got onto the new and improved field and bullpen in late April. Construction updates were delayed because of the weather.

and net and a new scoreboard. Everything except the scoreboard is in place.

"The facility is huge for us. It allows us to get out here and have practice time, allows us to play through rain.

In Chicago and the Midwest, it allows us to fight through the elements. Whenever you have the ability to fight through the elements, it just allows you to have success," coach John McCarthy said. "The biggest thing is

just practice, having everyone be able to get out and practice and be able to get better."

One benefit, Robinson said, is infielders like him can expect a consistent reaction from balls off of the turf. There are no uneven surfaces, and the way the grass is mowed doesn't affect a ground ball the way a natural field may.

"It plays amazing," he said. "There's no bad hops. Some turf fields play fast, but this one plays slow so it allows me to get my feet set and work my feet behind the ball."

The opening of the new field was pushed back a few times due to construction delays. As a result, the Vikings played only road or neutral site games through their first 17 games in March and most of April.

"That was a little wear and tear on our bodies on those long bus rides. Now we get out of school, come to the field and warm up before the games," Robinson said. "The bus rides create bonds with the team but still, your body gets stiff and things like that."

H-F has been up and down on the season.

"Overall, we're just not very consistent," McCarthy said.

Lions Club Pool, Splash Pad open for fun starting June 4

By CHRONICLE STAFF

It's time for fun in the pool!

The Homewood-Flossmoor Park District opens Lions Club Pool at noon on Saturday, June 4.

Lifeguards will be at the ready when the pool at 1041 Ridge Road in Homewood welcomes kids, teens and adults for the season.

Hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mon-

day through Thursday; noon to 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Lap swim hours are 10 to 10:45 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday; 10 to 10:45 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. A lap lane will also be available during open swim time.

The pool will be open through Aug. 14. Pool passes are \$65 for residents and \$80 for nonresidents. The daily swim

rate is \$10 for residents and \$15 for nonresidents.

Staff at Lions Club Pool also offer water aerobics, swimming lessons, for all ages and parent-tot swim lessons.

For the little ones 54-inches or shorter, the Millennium Park Splash Pad offers great fun June 4 through Aug. 14. The Splash Pad hours are 10 a.m. to noon, 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. daily.

H-F Park District residents get free ac-

cess to the Splash Pad by presenting a driver's license, a utility bill or tax bill with H-F address. Pool pass holders and H-F Racquet Club members photo ID can get a sticker from the park district for access to the Splash Pad.

The Splash Pad can be reserved for Splash Pad parties.

For details on Lions Club Pool or Splash Pad programs, contact the park district at 708-957-0300.



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