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WKU golf

WKU opens new golf facility in honor of late Phillip Hatchett

New building includes putt-view and launch bays for men's and women's golf teams

By ELLIOTT PRATT epratt@bgdailynews.com
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Members of the Western Kentucky men's and women's golf team stand Friday with Beth Hatchett (center), the widow of the late Phillip Hatchett, outside the new indoor golf facility on WKU's South Campus.

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The late Phillip Hatchett once dreamed of an indoor facility for his Western Kentucky golf program.

The university Friday afternoon dedicated its newest athletic facility to the man who started that vision.

"Today is a special day because that vision became reality," WKU athletics director Todd Stewart said.

Both the WKU men's and women's golf teams and Stewart officially opened the Phillip Hatchett Golf Facility on Friday at WKU's South Campus. The new building bears the name of the longtime WKU golf coach who died in a June 2018 cycling accident in Logan County.

The new facility includes a state-of-the-art putting green that projects slopes and ball tracking, two golf bays and club fitting and repair tools.



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The ceremony welcomed over 100 supporters and donors of the golf program, including Hatchett's wife, Beth.

"Certainly, we knew what he wanted and what he thought," Stewart said. "The final version is very close to what he, if he drew a blueprint two years ago, this is what it would've been. It turned out to be very much like that. It's sad that he's not here for this moment, but we feel he is still here. His name is on the building and his legacy on our program will stand the test of time and it's nice that we can have this facility and recognize him through this."



Construction of the facility began in October 2018 and officially opened the 4,168-square foot brick facility last fall. Building costs totaled $456,000 and were privately funded through donations and program supporters. Women's golf coach Adam Gary said the putt-view technology, which was installed by a company out of Germany, is one of just a dozen in the country that belongs to a Division I golf program.

The facility provides a practice location alternative to Indian Hills or the Bowling Green Country Club driving ranges. The only other local indoor bay is at The Club at Olde Stone.



“This spring we’ve had so much rain, normally we try to get five rounds of qualifying in before the start of the season and we’ve only gotten three in,” Gary said. “A lot of times the driving ranges have been closed at Indian Hills or Bowling Green Country Club because of the weather. We have a place in Diddle we can hit in the locker room, but it’s nothing like this that is comparable to the technology we have here. We can just get so much done here in the same amount of time.”

Hatchett was a standout on WKU’s men’s golf team from 1980-82 and went on to coach the team from 2010-18. The plans for building an indoor facility were well in the works before his death nearly two years ago.



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“Six years ago when I was hired, he had already began fundraising so we were continuing every year to add to it,” Gary said. “This is a game changer for our program.”

The naming of WKU’s newest athletics building in honor of Hatchett is the latest of a few tributes WKU and Conference USA have taken to honor the late coach. C-USA in January 2019 renamed the award for the top men’s golf coach after Hatchett. In May of 2019, Rolling Hills Golf Course, Hatchett’s home course, unveiled a monument in his memory at its practice facility.

That season, Billy Tom Sargent went on to finish 11th in the NCAA National Championships, the highest individual finish ever by a WKU golfer.



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Chan Metts is entering his second season as the men's golf coach and believes the technology and facility availability will help strengthen the program for years to come.

"I'm a big believer in putting quality work in," Metts said. "You can get a lot of work done hitting a golf ball into a net, but there's only so much you can do and with our launch monitors here and our putt view system, you can really get some quality work. It's as close to simulating real golf as you can possibly have. Whether we're indoors because of weather or daylight, we have a place we can get that quality work and that will be a game changer for us."{&end}

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