

An athletic dome with indoor turf field could be coming to Holden

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A new multi-purpose domed indoor facility in Holden with an artificial turf surface that would be able to host a number of sports could open as soon as the end of this year.

M.J. Ball, the executive director of youth soccer organization River City Athletics, said the nonprofit reached its goal late last month of raising \$500,000 by the end of May to fund the facility, and the goal now is to reach \$1 million by May 1 and to receive permits and break ground on the project by July 15.

The group has raised \$810,000 as of April 10, according to Ball, who said that a construction loan will make up the difference. Ball is also the girls soccer coach at Hermon High School and executive director of Fields4Kids in Bangor, the home training facility for River City Athletics.

If constructed, this would be one of the few in-



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A rendering of the proposed multipurpose athletic dome in Holden. The facility could break ground as early as July 15, with additional fundraising and receiving the necessary permits.

door facilities with artificial turf in eastern and northern Maine. In addition to Fields4Kids, the next closest facility is the year-old Jim Robinson Field House at Foxcroft Academy in Dover-Foxcroft. Previously, there was the Mahaney Dome on the University of Maine campus in Orono, but it collapsed for the fourth time in January and will be replaced by a new facility

within the next two years.

The facility is being built on a 25.5-acre lot on Route 1A/Bagaduce Road. Ball said it will have a 210-by-330-foot playing surface and the dome over it will be 250 feet by 360 feet. The Quirk Auto Group will be the naming sponsor for the complex and dome and has committed to a 10-year partnership.

"We're hoping to have it up and running by the end

of the year or early January," Ball said. "This is long overdue. It isn't just the soccer community that will benefit. Lacrosse, football, baseball, softball, field hockey, you name it. It's needed by all sports."

The facility would be available for a variety of uses, from youth to senior sports.

Ball said the field can be broken up into smaller

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Dome

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playing surfaces, and that there will be a building connected to the dome that will provide three to four spaces for sports-minded companies to lease. Those spaces will range from 800 square feet to 1500 square feet.

"This has been years in the making," Ball said. "The biggest hurdle was finding land that was not wet and at a decent price. I can't tell you how many pieces of land I looked at over the years. But we found this one, it's just 10 minutes from Fields4Kids and it is in a great location in Holden."

Bangor-based engineering, environmental and surveying consulting firm Haley Ward Inc. has overseen the project and Arizon Building Systems is build-

ing the dome.

Arizon Building Systems, which has its corporate office in St. Louis and its manufacturing facility in Granite City, Illinois, has built a number of domes for cold-weather environments, such as the Edmonton Soccer Dome in Alberta and the Woodlands Backyard Volleyball Dome in Columbus, Ohio.

Ball said he is confident the dome will be sturdy and safe.

"It will have a three-layer dome fabric intertwined with a cable system," Ball said.

Downeast Orthopedics, First National Bank and Haley Ward are three of the naming right sponsors to go with the Quirk Auto Group.

With the advent of the new dome, Ball said Fields4Kids will be transformed into a facility with hard rubber flooring and a basketball court that can be

used for a variety of activities such as basketball, football, fitness classes, batting cages, deck hockey, pickleball and inline skating.

"It's exciting. We are already taking bookings for basketball groups and schools who are reaching out and saying, 'When you switch over, we want first dibs,'" Ball said.

Fields4Kids, located on the Beal College campus at Farm Road in Bangor, is 12,500 square feet.

Ball, who said the whole project was jumpstarted by a \$200,000 donation, said the support has been continuous and River City Athletics continues to seek donors and sponsors, who can get their logos placed around the facility.

Anyone looking to donate to the facility, inquire about advertising or naming rights, or book an event can contact Ball at 991-8940.