

GROTFIELD STADIUM BADLY IN NEED OF UPGRADE

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 23 July 2009 11:11 - Last Updated Tuesday, 04 January 2011 20:36



THAT MUST HURT: To the left is a shot of the Grotfield Woodchuck's home field, taken from a Guthrie 1 MediChopper as it carried away a player injured by an enormous splinter.

TINY TOWN SATELLITE OF GROTFIELD, USA — Kids coming home from school with splinters in their foreheads. Formaldehyde poisoning. Confusion.

This is what the parents of the children of Grotfield Senior High School Football team face every day. And it's worse for the kids playing soccer on the field.

"Every summer since Billy's been on the team I dread it," says Trudy Farbst, a mother of five living in LingLing Park, a mobile home community in Grotfield. "He's had splinters that we can't get out with tweezers and I've had to use the BBQ tongs on one that got deep in his bee-hind."

Farbst's story is a common one for mothers of the boys (and one girl, nose tackle Shannon Tyler), who play for the Grotfield Woodchucks, the school's football team.

The field was never meant for long term use, says coach Ben Albright.

"It's just a lot of old plywood and particle board painted green," he said. "The striping was done by an outfit from Elimira that doesn't exist any more. That was our pride and joy."

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The number 57 is displayed at midfield in honor of Grotfield's legendary Native American linebacker Rue Argen Taylor, who died in a freak accident in 1983.

"We were practicing on the field -- back then, it really was a field," said Coach Albright. "It belonged to a farmer who was leaving it fallow and it was full of chuckholes. Rue broke his leg in one of them and got an infection at the clinic. Died in a week. Damned shame. Scouts from SUNY were here to watch him. He was something else."

After that, the administration at Grotfield pushed for a new playing field and the now defunct Grotfield Lumber Co. donated the raw material. The district is the poorest in the county.

Superintendent Phyllis Kinder-Kline said it is time again for the community of Grotfield to come together as a whole and refurbish the playing surface. Ms. Kinder-Kline is on summer break and could not be reached for further comment.

Despite the playing field or perhaps because of it, the Woodchucks have a perfect home record.

"Most teams would rather forfeit than play here," said Coach Albright. "We think that's just plain un-American."

We do too.

— C. Penbroke Handy

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