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Nike Pledges Help for Park Courts



City commissioner Jim Francesconi (from left), Charles Jordan of the Portland Parks and Recreation Department, and Gary DeStefano of Nike join kids at Grant park to introduce the company's donation of new world-class cushioned surfaces at 90 basketball courts in the city's park system.

Nike will help the cash-strapped Portland Parks Bureau by using recycled shoes to resurface the weed-infested basketball courts at 35 parks.

The donation is estimated to cost more than \$2 million and could also include the replacement of roughly 130 backboards. It represents Nike's largest one-time sports

surface donation in the world.

The project should begin in summer and be completed by late fall. Workers will resurface the courts using a material that's made from cast-off shoes. The shoes are ground up and pressed into a material that will be laid over the courts.

The same quality of surface is

featured at the Australian Open, Sydney's tennis venue for the Games of 2000 and our country's most prominent outdoor basketball court, Holcomb Rucker Park in Harlem.

Nike said it was making the donation to celebrate its 30th anniversary as a Portland area employer.

"By refurbishing the courts with a world-class, cushioned surface, we hope that the Anniversary Project will not only help young people become more physically active, but serve as a catalyst for bring families and communities together," said Gary DeStefano, Nike's president of USA operations.



Jackie Stiles. (AP photo)

Fire Player Slowed by Injured Heel

(AP) — Portland Fire coach Linda Hargrove is searching for an answer to Jackie Stiles' troubles.

Stiles, the WNBA's rookie of the year last season, has been slowed by bursitis pain in her right heel through the Fire's first eleven games. At one point, Stiles even sat out four games to rest her heel.

But since coming back June 15th, she has only averaged seven-point-five points a game, far from the 15 points per game she averaged as a rookie last

year. Hargrove says that perhaps the best way to maximize Stiles' performance in games would be to limit her time practicing, thus keeping the Fire star from having to use her heel more than necessary.

In preparation for Wednesday's game against the Utah Starzz, who are making a run at the Western Conference, Stiles only practiced lightly.

Hargrove, the Fire, and of course Stiles, hope less practice equals more points in the game.

Famed Soccer Teams to Play in Portland

A world class international soccer match between Chivas of Guadalajara and Cruz Azul of Mexico City will be played at PGE Park on Sunday, July 7 at 1 p.m., Portland Family Entertainment, the Lotus Satellite Network and Portland Oregon Sports Authority announced last week.

The match is part of the Chivas preseason tour of select U.S. cities. The tour begins in Los Angeles.

"PFE is thrilled to play host to such a world class soccer match featuring two of the top teams in Mexico," said Jim Taylor, general manager of the Timbers. "It's especially rewarding in that it's a World Cup year and fans will be seeing players that played with the Mexican National Team."

Tickets will be made available at PGE Park in addition to all Portland-area Ticketmaster outlets, including all Fred Meyer and G.I. Joe's locations. Tickets are also available by calling Ticketmaster at (503) 224-4400 or on-line at www.ticketmaster.com.

"As Mayor, I am delighted that Portland will play host to such a

major international soccer match," said Portland Mayor Vera Katz. "PGE Park is a wonderful place to watch soccer and this game is sure to bring great excitement to the Rose City."

The Chivas team was founded in 1906 by Don Gregorio Orozco and has traditionally been one of the most successful teams in Mexico's Premier soccer league—claiming 10 national championship titles - and has a large fan base around the world. Cruz Azul was founded in 1927 and was called "la maquina cementera de el Cruz Azul." The team has acquired six national championship titles.

"By bringing Las Chivas, the most popular Mexican soccer team, to PGE Park, we are strengthening and supporting our diverse communities," said Clara Padilla-Andrews, president of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.



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