

WHS football team calling South Tahoe home



Whittell's field is not suitable for any sports this fall.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Before Whittell High School's football plays its first game tonight it has already scored in the arena of community cooperation, as has Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

They are showing what it truly means to blur the state line.

Construction equipment is occupying Whittell's gridiron as it undergoes a major transformation. It's all dirt, a complete work zone. This means no games there this season.

"I thought about our families who would be attending games. I know it's easier to be here at the lake than to go down off the mountain," Principal Crespin Esquivel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

That's how LTUSD got involved.

South Tahoe Middle School is going to be Whittell's home field for this season. Games will be Sept. 8, Sept. 29, Oct. 13, Oct. 26 at 7pm. The Warriors are expected to have a good team this year. Last season they finished 9-2 and made it to the playoffs.

"We got contacted last spring to see what we could figure out and it ended up to be pretty easy. It was an amicable resolution on both sides," Pat Harnett, STHS athletic director, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They wanted to be at a consistent site. That's why they are at the middle school. The high school site was not always available.

"There is no facility use fee. We are taking care of our neighbors."

WHS will pay for any LTUSD personnel involved with the game.



The Warriors are able to practice at home. Photo/LTN

If a facility in LTUSD could not have been found, the Warriors would likely have ended up at Douglas High. And while that would have kept them in their same school district, going across town is more like playing at home.

The team is still able to practice at home. That upper field

has grass.

What will be different at STMS is that it is artificial turf. The other thing is that the field is wider and will have to be altered. WHS plays eight-man football instead of 11. Tape has been ordered to stripe lines for their games that will be put down and taken up each night.

The goal is for the field in Zephyr Cove to be finished for the start of next season.

WHS soccer games will be played at Zephyr Cove Park this year. The track team has never had home meets.

A donation of \$3 million from the Lisa and Robert Maloff Endowment Fund is paying for the football field to be completely renovated as well as the track.

"The drainage was a huge problem. It always looked like a moat out there," Esquivel said.

Improving the water flow is a big part of the new infrastructure. While the original plan was to put in artificial turf, now sod is going to be laid. An all-weather track is coming, visitor seating and concession stand as well.