



The major renovation of John Jacobs Field was completed just in time to host the 2004 Big 12 Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The eastside façade of Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium forms an impressive backdrop as the conference steeplechasers attack the water jump.

Getting on Track

BY DEBBIE COPP

Photos by Bill Hefton
The Norman Transcript

Sooner track and field athletes are off and running—and jumping and throwing—in facilities that equal the best in the country.

The John Jacobs Field has been transformed into one of the finest collegiate track and field complexes in the country, both for competitors and for spectators. The nearly \$4 million project included major renovations and additions to every part of the complex. New are a permanent scoreboard, permanent lighting and a sound system that connects Jacobs Field and the adjacent Mosier Indoor Facility.

All of the field event areas have been redesigned, and in some cases moved, to allow meet officials to set up competition as dictated by weather conditions, while walkways allow spectators to get closer to the action. A throwing area also was created on the east end of the facility.

On the track itself, now covered with an embedded urethane surface, the oval was rebuilt to include nine lanes with European curves. Other additions include a sports medicine and hydrotherapy area, men's and women's locker rooms, men's and women's coaches locker rooms, a team meeting room, concession areas, and restroom facilities for fans.

The men's locker room is named for Owen Hewett, a former manager and long-time supporter of the Sooner track

and field teams. Hewett's friends and former teammates funded the locker room to honor the San Antonio, Texas, native.

The outdoor track facility was built in the 1950s, and was designed by the legendary Sooner track and field coach, John Jacobs. Jacobs served as OU's coach from 1922 to 1958, then continued as associate head coach until his retirement in 1968. He was named to the Helms Foundation Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1957. First proposed in 1957, the OU Board of Regents officially approved

naming the facility John Jacobs Field in May 1962.

The current renovation of Jacobs Field is its third. In the late 1970s, the oval was redone to change to metric measurements. Following the 1988 outdoor season, the OU Athletics Department, in partnership with Oklahoma Centennial Sports, the local organizing committee for the 1989 U.S. Olympic Festival, began \$700,000 in improvements. The facility served as the host of the Olympic Festival before hosting the 1990 and 1992 Big Eight Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The Sooners hosted the first meet at the renovated complex—the Big 12 Outdoor Track and Field Championships—in 2004.

The Jacobs/Mosier complex is one of the country's most versatile for track and field training and competition. Located less than 100 feet from the renovated Jacobs Field, the Mosier Indoor Facility was built in 1986 and is named for Henry B. and Ida Mosier, the couple whose major gift made possible its construction. Mosier features a six-lane, 220-yard track with a Mondo surface. Prior to the start of the 2004 indoor season, a number of changes were made to the Mosier facility that relocated field event areas and created more room for spectator seating. Mosier is linked to the Everest Training Center by a connecting structure containing restrooms and concession areas for spectators as well as team areas. The north end of the Mosier facility opens onto Jacobs Field, allowing athletes to warm up inside before competing outside, and when weather conditions warrant, competitions can even to be moved inside. 

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Cory Crosby, right, hands off to Caleb Turner as the OU men's relay team tests the new embedded urethane surface at the Big 12 Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

