



Just What the Doctor Ordered

The “new” Lambright Sports and Wellness Center

AN EXPANDED AND RECONFIGURED CAMPUS PLAYGROUND IS drawing rave reviews.

“This rivals poolside resorts in Vegas.”

“Whoever thought we’d have THIS in RUSTON!?”

“This is a happy place.”

Designed for relaxation and leisure, the Lambright Sports and Wellness Center opened this spring after an approximately \$12 million expansion funded by student fees. Formerly the Lambright Intramural Sports Complex – a cutting-edge complex of its type when it opened 30 years ago – the new facility literally picks up where the old one left off. Now that the new building has been connected with the old, the result is a facility that better connects with the needs of students.

“We’ve taken a huge stride toward more health benefits overall by combining intramurals and pure recreation with well-being,” said Jim King, Tech’s vice president for student affairs. “Students

who eat better and exercise regularly give themselves a better chance to perform well academically, to be more well-rounded students. This complex sort of screams at you to come have fun and feel better and improve yourself overall at the same time.”

It’s a place that’ll cure what ails you.

There’s a lot to see in a brief tour of the facility, named in honor of Tech Athletic Hall of Famer Maxie Lambright (*see inset*), the University’s former football coach and athletic director:

- A 25-yard indoor competitive pool, equipped with lanes for lap swimming; includes a zero-depth entry warm-up lane partitioned off to allow for swim classes; already this is a huge hit with Bulldog Aquatics, a club that includes 90 children – and it’s growing. The indoor pool is enclosed with glass walls with views toward Aillet Stadium and Tech Drive, and the lighting allows for an impressive view at nighttime looking in;
- While the indoor pool is more about exercise, the outdoor



MAXIE LAMBRIGHT

The architect of a “golden era” for Bulldog football, Lambright won seven conference championships during his 12 years as Tech’s head coach, captured the NCAA Division II national title in 1973 and earned a variety of five various national titles in 1972-73-74. From 1971-74, Tech went 44-4, and during 1973 and 1974, the Bulldogs won 23 straight games, the nation’s longest winning streak in college football. Coach Lambright, also the athletics director during his final eight years at Tech, retired after the Independence Bowl season of 1978. He passed away Jan. 28, 1980.



pool is all about fun. The 50-meter pool allows for training (we’re talking to you, marathon swimmers!), but its curved sides are pools within the pool, places for lounging and playing hoops or volleyball; it’s cooled in hot weather and is situated for full sun all afternoon, and evening sun until at least 7, while at the same time a protruding roof blocks the sun’s glare for those inside;

- Tech director of recreation, Bobby Dowling, calls it “a Louisiana sundeck with a Caribbean feel,” and that’s just what surrounds the outdoor pool; the sundeck/cabana look is of garapa wood, plus there are chaise lounges, soft seating and tables, cooling misting machines, and tropical plants. “Designed for leisure,” Dowling said;
- Look Ma, no gutters!; both pools are constructed so that the water is even with the surface level;
- Inside and just right for the health conscious, the new “Counter Culture La Tech” offers frozen yogurt, sandwiches, salads and more, and students can have their refreshments brought poolside. Non-Lambright members are welcome, too; Counter Culture La Tech is open to the public. Walk in. Eat. Relax. Take a tour. Enjoy!;
- No need to walk around in a damp swimsuit: new locker rooms have quick-dry machines;
- The most prominent addition just inside the entrance is a 29-foot tall, 50-foot-wide rock climbing wall of both real and performance rock surfaces. Dowling’s staff is certified to train others in climbing: it takes just four classes, offered daily, of 15 minutes each, or a novice climber can climb with the aid and instruction of a certified student;
- An outdoor deck, great for visiting and eating, and in view of the pool;
- Big screen TVs and eating areas in a large open space, also in view of the pool;
- A workout area overlooking the indoor pool will open in August. The “old” Fitness Room downstairs in the original building has been renamed the “Billy Jack Talton Fitness Room” in honor of “The Father of Louisiana Powerlifting” and retired Tech professor who started the Tech team in 1974: Tech’s men’s and women’s teams have won more than 27 national collegiate titles since. The team will move its training from Memorial Gym to Lambright: the hope is that, through fundraisers specific to the purpose, a new floor will be installed in the renamed and soon-to-be-remodeled fitness room, and the number of powerlifting stations will increase from four to 12;
- Parking lot work south of the facility and a sidewalk to connect the complex with the Marbury Alumni Center began as soon as spring quarter ended.

Most importantly, completion of the wellness center – exam rooms, counseling space and classrooms – will create the tie between the facility and the University’s academic programs, a component that “will give us a forum for a more proactive model for health,” King said. “Recreation is a big part of university life, and students’ habits are usually formed now. Our goal is to provide them with the right information to make informed choices.”

The complex still has the bowling lanes, gyms, student workout areas and other amenities that had already made it a solid recreational complex.

This dream come true for Tech should translate into increased student retention and recruitment. As it does, Lambright will continue to evolve, Dowling said, as the University comes to understand how the facility can best meet the needs of the students and community.

Meanwhile...surf’s up! 🏄

* For information on memberships, go to LaTech.edu/students/recreation/LambrightMembershipInformation