Rec Center Pool Reopens

University Communications
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The three-month wait for swimmers at the UA is over. Campus Recreation's pool at the Student Recreation Center has reopened after a major overhaul to repair more than two decades worth of cracked plaster, algae buildup and outdated equipment.

The pool, which reopened a few weeks ago, got an extensive facelift that includes new tile work, potted plants and a logo on the floor of the pool that leaves no doubt where you are when you're in the water.

The pool closed in November. The first phase of the project was to let the chemicals in the water expire so the water could be drained and used to irrigate campus landscaping. With the water gone, the inspection began on the cracked plaster.

"We were holding our breath to see what was there," said Lacey Nymeyer-John, the aquatics coordinator for Campus Recreation, who was among those put in charge of completing the project.

"During my undergraduate studies from 2004 to 2008, I was a UA student-athlete on the swim and dive team. On occasions, I would come to the Rec Center pool and use the facility. I have always seen the pool as a beautiful facility but lacking some finishing touches," she said. Nymeyer-John won a silver medal as a member of the 4x100 U.S. team at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, and was the NCAA Woman of the Year in 2009.

"Although the previous staff and director got the project started and the money secured, I was handed the job of making the final preparations for the job," she said.

"It was easy to see that the pool plaster needed to be addressed immediately. There was severe algae buildup and places where the plaster was actually chipping away. We also wanted to use color to bring new life to the pool deck, so we planned to change the color of the pool tile and paint the south facility wall a deep indigo."

The pool also sports a traditional block A in the shallow end. Nymeyer-John suggested including the design, which mimics the A in the new Kasser Diving Well at the Hillenbrand facility on campus.

"I think it gives some identity to the facility and the Rec Center by stating that we are the UA and proud of it!"

A number of plants and new furniture accent the patio area. Pool lights also have been replaced and drains that essentially were hair magnets have now been brought up to code.

Pool construction pictures are on Campus Recreation's Aquatics page.
The logistics of closing the pool were made difficult because the facility is heated and is heavily used year-round. A number of people are there nearly every day. Nymeyer-John said there was no ideal time to close for the renovation.

"Project length was a concern, so we tried to schedule the construction around the winter months and holiday vacations, when the traffic at the pool would be at its lowest. However, by the end of January we were anxious to get people swimming again and promoting programs to the University and Tucson communities.

"Many patrons were also antsy to get back to their water routines, but they were very understanding of the facility's need for this makeover and patient with the minor setbacks in the construction process."

During the closure, several community facilities opened their doors to accommodate Rec Center members, including the Lohse Family YMCA and Arizona Athletics, which rents pool space at the Hillenbrand Aquatic Center for sports clubs to practice.

"It is not easy to accept a whole new wave of users to one's facility for such an extended period of time, but their generosity speaks highly of their willingness to support the health and wellness of our community," Nymeyer-John said.

"We are grateful to be connected to such a health-conscious community and happy to now have the opportunity to give back. We are creating new programs and using our updated facilities to better serve the University and Tucson community, and do our part in making people's lives better."

Campus Recreation [3] will celebrate the reopening with a "Luau Poolooza" [4] party on Friday from 4-7:30 p.m. Entertainment will include a synchronized swimming exhibition and fire dancing, as well as games, prizes and refreshments from one of the newer campus eateries, Fuel [5].

Comments? Send them to lqp@email.arizona.edu [6]. E-mails must be sent from UA or UA Foundation e-mail accounts.

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