Two days after the 128th playing of the Williams vs. Amherst football game Nov. 9, 2013, another major re-configuration of the Ephs’ Weston Athletic Field began.

The new version of the Weston Athletic Complex was completed in September, just 10 months after the start of construction, and dedicated today, October 11.

This latest re-imagining of the 13-acre site that has been in use for 129 years, by architects Clough Harbour & Associates, LLP, with construction project manager Whiting Turner Contracting Company, has resulted in an environmentally sensitive complex featuring two new lighted turf fields and facilities for track and field, as well as a fully equipped team support building, concessions, a grandstand, and other amenities that improve the visitor’s experience as well as the athletes’.

The running track has been removed from around the grass surface football field and relocated farther south, running east-west instead of north-south, and a new field for football and lacrosse is located a little farther north, closer to Latham Street, than its predecessor.

The field that field hockey, men’s and women’s lacrosse, and sometimes men’s and women’s soccer had played on since the fall of 2004, Renzie W. Lamb Field has been replaced by a new turf field for field hockey, near the 18th fairway of the famed Taconic Golf Club.

In 1988, when the home seating area had moved to the east side of the complex, the home grandstand was elevated slightly above the Plansky Track and the football field. A three-story press box topped the home stands. Moving the home stands to the east allowed baseball to continue playing at Weston until the spring of 2003.

“In 2006 we began to meet to discuss how to address the issues facing Weston Field,” noted Williams Athletic Director Lisa Melendy. “We had some outdated facilities and some logistical problems that needed attention. So our initial project aimed to improve these in a fairly straight forward manner.” The project was put on hold as an economic recession hit and major construction projects on campus were halted.

In 2009 the Weston project was re-visited, and architectural firms were invited to submit proposals; three finalists were selected. “Once we unleashed the creative powers we were amazed at what we saw,” said Melendy. “There is no doubt this project is infinitely better than the one we were previously going to build.”

Momentum for the project was then kick-started in 2012 when John A. “Jack” Luetkemeyer, Jr. ’63, P’89 made a transformative commitment to the reimagined Weston Athletic Complex. Jack’s leadership inspired other generous donors and was done on the occasion of his 50th Reunion.
“It has been an amazing experience working on this project over the past eight years,” stated Melendy. “I am so pleased for the athletes who will get to practice and compete in this facility. These newly constructed facilities allow our coaches to do the kind of coaching that will best serve our students. With everything they need close at hand, our students’ precious and limited time can be maximized.

“This facility will also provide a much improved fan experience with appropriate amenities,” added Melendy. “We hope this space can be used as well by the broader Williams College and Williamstown communities.”

The Farley-Lamb Field surface is called Natural Turf Revolution and it features long strains of imitation grass and it is lined for football, lacrosse, and soccer games. The field is lighted and it will be plowed in the winter to allow the lacrosse teams to begin preparations for their spring seasons that now begin in late February.

The new football and lacrosse field is named in honor of former Eph football head coach Dick Farley, a member of the College Football Hall of Fame, and Renzie Lamb, the longest serving men’s lacrosse coach at Williams and a former Eph football assistant coach.

Farley compiled an impressive 114-19-3 (.849) record in 17 years at the helm of the Ephs. In 1989, he fashioned the first perfect season in Williams’ storied football history and followed that remarkable year with four more perfect seasons: 1990, 1994, 1998, and 2001. Farley was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2006.

Lamb was the head coach of Williams men’s lacrosse for 36 years (1968-2003), posting an overall record of 260-183-2 (.587) that featured 17 Little Three titles, six Snively Division titles, and five ECAC-New England crowns. Lamb also served as assistant football coach for the Ephs for 30 years.

The home side of the Farley-Lamb Field features a 1,400-seat permanent grandstand on the west side of the field, just inside the historic gargoyle main gate. Underneath the main grandstand are an equipment storage area, restrooms, and a concessions stand.

At the top of the 1,400-seat grandstand is a press box with coaches’ boxes and broadcast booths wired to the Internet. Above the press level is an alcove for TV cameras and coaches’ video cameras. This camera alcove also opens on the west side and can be used to film the 70-yard grass surface practice football field behind the grandstand, where the Ephs can practice for games played away on grass surfaces.

On game days the grass practice field will be used for tailgating; in the spring it will be used for track and field throwing events.

A new multi-use scoreboard was erected and placed in the northeast corner of Farley-Lamb Field.

In between the two fields is the 26,000-square foot team support building. It contains team locker rooms, locker rooms for coaches in season and for referees, a sports medicine area, laundry facilities, offices, and public restrooms. Two of the spaces are named in honor of former Eph athletes: the Matt Donner visiting team locker room, and the Michael M. Reily ’64 Room, which is a multipurpose room with a deck overlooking Farley-Lamb Field.

The visiting team locker room on the first floor of the building has been dedicated to Matt Donner ’58, a member of the 1957 football team that went 6-0-1. Donner was known for his exemplary sportsmanship and always making a point of thanking the visiting team for coming to compete against the Ephs.

On the second floor of the building is the Michael M. Reily ’64 Room, which can house social functions or meetings for up to 200 people or a lunch/dinner for 100. The room contains a large bronze plaque and memorabilia honoring Reily, as well as a fireplace, a large screen TV, and several trophy and display cases.

Accessible from the Reily Room is the Peter Willmott ’59 Terrace that overlooks Farley-Lamb Field from the south end zone. Reily, a standout football player for the Ephs as a center and a linebacker, was an All-American as a sophomore.
who contracted Hodgkin’s Lymphoma and was unable to compete his senior year. He died shortly after graduating in June 1964.

Knowing that Reily would not be able to compete his senior year, then-assistant coach Frank Navarro and equipment manager Charlie Hurley folded up Reily’s practice and purple and white game jerseys and put them in a Wilson football box. Written on the outside of the box was “Do Not Issue.” This solemn act unofficially retired Reily’s #50 from Williams football, and in November 2007 Tim Layden ’78 wrote a 9-page feature story about Reily, “The Forgotten Hero,” that appeared in Sports Illustrated magazine.

Williams College officially retired Reily’s #50 in a ceremony in 2011, making his the only retired football number at Williams.
The wooden Bob Peck Grandstand that sat on the visiting side of the football field at the 50-yard line for 15 years has been situated at the turn at the northwest corner of Lee Track.

The Bob Peck Grandstand was dedicated on Nov. 13, 1999, when it was moved from the old baseball field to the grass football field. Bob Peck served as the Ephs’ director of athletics from 1971 to 2000, and his generosity provided for the refurbishing of the grandstand in 1999.

Williams purchased the land on the corner of what is now Latham and Meacham streets in 1884 for its baseball and football teams. Prior to acquiring the land for what was then known as Weston Field, Williams’ baseball and football teams played on the land currently occupied by the college’s facilities building and the parking area for the Lansing Chapman Rink and Towne Field House.

Williams named the 1884 site Weston Field in honor of former Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts Byron Weston (1880-83) from nearby Dalton, Mass. Weston donated $5,300 to the College, which was put into the grading and drainage of the field. By 1893 Weston Field had grown to its current size of 13 acres.

Weston was not an alumnus of Williams, but rather a good neighbor and the founder of the Weston Paper Company (1863), which is now a division of the famed Crane Paper Company in Dalton. Byron Weston received an honorary degree from Williams in 1886.

Weston Field played host to baseball, track and field, football, field hockey, lacrosse, and tennis in its first 129 years.

The original track at Weston Field was unusual by today’s standards, composed of cinders and measuring a third of a mile. The cinder running track encircled both the football and baseball fields. The Eph track team had its first meet on the cinder track in 1901.

In the spring of 1988, the cinder track was removed and a new all-weather quarter-mile track, named for long-time Eph coach Tony Plansky, was installed around the football field.

This fall, on September 9, the Eph field hockey team played Keene State in its first game on Williamson Field. The team won 1-0 when freshman Alex Bennett scored off a pass from junior Emma Grauberger at 64:14. The Eph defense did not allow a Keene State shot on goal in the contest.

Football opened the 2014 season on Farley-Lamb Field on Sept. 20 against NESCAC foe Bowdoin College, blanking the visiting Polar Bears 36-0. Eph senior running back Alex Scyocurka scored the game’s first touchdown on a 15-yard run with 4:57 left in the first quarter.

In 2015 the men’s and women’s lacrosse teams and the men’s and women’s track and field teams will christen their new home facilities.

A highlight of the inaugural season on Lee Track will be the hosting the NESCAC Men’s and Women’s Track and Field Championships on April 25.

Photo credit: Tim Nagle-McNaughton '18

Farley-Lamb Field