Keeping score
Cajundome unveils new electronics and prep slate

The Cajundome's new $3 million scoreboard and sound system are unveiled Wednesday afternoon along with a new package of high school basketball games to be played in the arena.

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This isn't the same old Cajundome anymore.
After 23 years in operation, the Lafayette arena was in need of an upgraded sound system, and on Wednesday a new LED scoreboard and sound system were unveiled.

The first hint of what was to come was the set of earplugs provided for each visitor attending the noon announcement. The second was Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A'Changin'" opening to the day's presentation.

Installed just in time for today's festivities celebrating Joseph Savoie's installation as president of UL Lafayette and presented in the middle of homecoming week, the system should elevate the experience for athletic events, concerts, wrestling and other events in the Dome.

"It's been a long time coming," said replacement of that technology.

Included are 9.5 x 16-foot video screens, 33 percent larger than the old screens on the scoreboard, and what was termed the largest sound system of its kind in the United States, according to Cajundome Commissioner Mark Moreau.

"The technology cost about $3 million," said Cajundome Director Greg Davis. "The money came from the State of Louisiana giving us a rebate on its share of Lafayette Parish hotel and motel taxes. We've used that money to build the Convention Center, and that potential has grown. It was $1.3 million per year, and has grown to $2.7 million.

"It started in 1996 with the second year of the Louisiana IceGators, and we've added the WWE, the Louisiana Ragin'." Davis said. "It (the technology) has a life of 20-25 years.

"The arena is 23 years old, and we feel this technology will propel us into the future," Davis said. "It (the technology) has a life of 20-25 years.

When it opened on Nov. 10, 1985, the main purpose of the Cajundome was to provide a new basketball home for UL's Ragin' Cajuns. The Cajuns remain the primary tenants, and on Wednesday the corner scoreboards already read UL 102, UNO 97.

"I see from the scoreboard that we've already beaten UNO, so that's a good start," UL coach Robert Lee said. "This new system truly separates our arena from any in the Sun Belt Conference, and from most in the country. If I was a recruit, it would make me want to sign here.

"We'll try to make sure the Cajuns have more points than the visitors every time we play here.

Davis added that the new touches should "make the experience more tremendous than it's ever been" for teams playing in the LHSAA's Top 28 State Tournament in March. "Most people would have to go to the New Orleans Arena to experience this kind of thing."