University of Louisiana at Lafayette head football coach Mark Hudspeth puts a hard hat on his son, Major Hudspeth, before a groundbreaking ceremony for a new athletics complex Wednesday in Lafayette.

**A step in the right direction**

New training complex gives edge to Cajuns

As coaches and university administrators dug their shovels into a mound of dirt outside the Leon Moncla Indoor Practice Facility, it was clear from the way the smiles spread across the faces of those in high places what they believed was on the horizon.

If you build it, they will come. It being a state-of-the-art athletic training complex that will make the Cajuns instantly competitive from a facilities

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standpoint. They being prospective student athletes who see the Ragin' Cajuns stepping up their game. And the idea is that when they come, they'll have everything they need to prolong this unprecedented level of athletic success the Ragin' Cajuns have experienced lately.

“..."That's going to be a huge asset, not only to our current student athletes — so we can better train them, better treat them, better prepare them — but also in recruiting future student athletes.”

MARK HUDSPETH, Cajuns coach

doesn't exactly drive the point home, does it? Well, now they've got their hammer.

“It sort of gets us back on an even playing field,” Hudspeth said. “We had to overcome a lot of things in recruiting and facilities were one of them. We've been able to do that, but now we're hoping this will allow us to get a better student athlete in the future because of the total package of what we can offer a student athlete.” And that's the end goal. By showing recruits that it means business, by giving current athletes a temple to hone their physical abilities, the Cajuns are doing everything in their power to either maintain or surpass their capabilities on the athletic end.

Baseball coach Tony Robichaux somehow managed to piece together a roster that became the nation's No. 1 team last season, coming one win away from punching a ticket to Omaha for the College World Series. It was a banner year, for sure.

But what's next? Without the facility, he'd either have to find a way to recreate the magic that was last year or resign himself to the fact that his program didn't have the resources necessary to compete every year. Especially not when those big-time teams his squad knocked off start to feel the heat from a program on the rise.

“Mississippi State got eliminated here and had to go back home,” Robichaux said. “So now they're building a $20 million addition to their baseball stadium because they can see we're getting too close. We have to continue to grow and continue to move, because every time we get close, they're going to try to keep moving ahead of us.” And that's exactly what the Cajuns are trying to do with this facility. Rather than resting on their recent athletic accomplishments, they're investing. What is now just an expansive patch of grass near the football practice fields will soon be the realization of a dream.