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### A Wet Beginning for Loyola's Ridley Athletic Complex

This past Saturday, March 13, 2010, amidst a relentless monsoon, Loyola celebrated the grand opening and dedication of The Reverend Harold Ridley, S.J., Athletic Complex. A sellout crowd of 6,000 was there to watch the main event of the day, the lacrosse game between two top 20 teams, our Loyola Greyhounds and the Blue Devils of Duke.

The end result, however, did not quite match the excitement that the crowd brought, as the Hounds dropped a tough one, 8-5. They may have been unable to christen their new field with a victory, but the Hounds remain poised to have a memorable opening season for the RAC, currently standing at No. 14 in the Nike/Inside Lacrosse Poll.

Senior Collin Finnerty scored the first goal ever at Ridley, especially appropriate since it came against his old school (he transferred from Duke after the 2006 season). Finnerty was Loyola's top scorer on the day, ending the game with a hat trick.

In the hours leading up to the game, students, alumni, and all others in attendance were already braving the elements. There was a SuperFans tailgate for students as well as an alumni tailgate. There were a couple of tailgates scheduled for the Evergreen campus that were cancelled due to the weather, thus forcing students to make their way to Ridley early. The precipitation proved to be no deterrent as students showed up early in droves, making for a successful tailgate,

despite the wet and cold conditions. WLOY was on hand to provide the music. Some SuperFans started a mini dance party to the beat of WLOY's tunes, particularly getting into it during the playing of "Meet Me Halfway" by the Black Eyed Peas.

Prior to the game, the day also featured speeches from Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Baltimore Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, and Loyola President Father Linnane. Rawlings-Blake thanked Loyola for its commitment to the city of Baltimore. She confessed that she initially thought the plan for the construction of the facility was "far-fetched," but she was soon convinced by the "calm" attitude of Father Ridley. Archbishop O'Brien offered a blessing for the stadium as well as those who will work and play on it. Father Linnane thanked the Loyola community for being on hand to celebrate this momentous occasion. He declared that the day marked the beginning of "a new era" in the history of Greyhound athletics programs. He made sure to specifically thank those who made significant donations towards the construction of the facility and spoke words in honor of Father Ridley, noting just how fitting it is that the complex should be named after him.

Construction on the Ridley Athletic Complex began back in spring 2006. It attracted the largest individual gift in University history, an anonymous contribution of \$5 million, which allowed the facility to be named in honor of the late former Loyola President Harold Ridley, S.J. Fr. Ridley was one of the project's first champions. The facility was basically a dirt heap as recently as September 2008, when construction crews began to pour the building's foundation. The final steel beam was placed last April, and the turf started to be laid down last June.

The lacrosse match was not the only game of the afternoon. Loyola's club rugby team played a scrimmage against Frostburg State a few hours before the lacrosse match. Loyola teams did not go completely winless for the afternoon, as the Hounds shut out the Bobcats. During halftime, the rugby field was dedicated as the Sean Lugano Memorial Field. Lugano was a former captain of the rugby team who died in the September 11, 2001, attacks.