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Big dreams for fields

Wiffle ball site to open

Wiffle ball fields make pitch for children with big dreams

Indoor facility plans grand opening day in Medford

By **KEVIN CALLAHAN**
Courier-Post Staff

MEDFORD

Pat Douglas coaches young kids, has young kids and was a young kid.

So, the Marlton resident knows so many kids have dreams, too. Dreams of playing in the big leagues.

Douglas can't deliver their dreams of playing one day at Citizen Bank Park or Fenway Park or Yankee Stadium, but he can help them continue dreaming.

Douglas and his partners are opening an indoor Wiffle Ball facility with scaled-to-size fields that resemble Citizen Bank Park, Fenway Park and Yankee Stadium.

"I think the name is fitting," Douglas said of his enterprise, Big League Dreams, which will hold a grand opening celebration party on May 22. "Kids can pretend to be playing in big league parks with a Wiffle Ball park."

Inside the 40,000-square-foot facility that used to be the Medford Ice Rink are three Wiffle Ball fields built to the likeness of Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia, Fenway Park in Boston and Yankee Stadium in New York. Just smaller.

Small enough to whack a Wiffle Ball off of the Green Monster at Fenway Park or to dead center at Yankee Sta-



KEVIN CALLAHAN/Courier-Post

Pat Douglas' indoor wiffle ball facility in Medford has three fields which resemble Fenway Park, Yankee Stadium and Citizen's Bank Park.

dium or off the jutting left field wall at Citizens Bank Park.

Douglas, a former college baseball player who has two sons — Shane, 12, and Aiean, 7, came up with the idea when his older son told him four years ago he was tired of going bowling and going roller skating and wanted to play Wiffle Ball.

The fences are distanced on the fields for 5- to 7-year-olds, 8- and 9-year-olds, and 10-year-olds and up.

"We recorded how far the

age groups could hit a Wiffle Ball and decided where the fences would be," Douglas said. "We wanted it challenging, but we wanted home runs."

The facility, which also has batting cages, is geared to birthday parties. In addition to the fields, which are covered with turf and painted with foul lines and base lines, the facility has private party and gathering rooms.

Big League Dreams offers adult and youth leagues,

baseball training sessions, summer camp, team building and corporate events.

Douglas, a 1980 graduate of Willingboro High School, was a director of operations with Siemens before leaving last year to start up his field of dreams.

"I always had a dream of starting my own business," said Douglas, who also worked for General Electric.

Douglas is in business with partners Steve Naylor of Woodbury and Stephanie Passaro of Marlton.

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