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Breaking News

New Elcho gymnasium is ready for action, but details prevent a game there for now

To coin a cliché: The new Elcho school gymnasium is all dressed up with no place to go.

After a careful walk-through, state inspectors signed off on the completion of the new gym—a centerpiece of the school district's \$18 million construction and renovation plan—this week, but due to quirks in the prep basketball schedule it's unlikely it will be used for any boys or girls basketball action this season.

I want the first impression people have of the new gymnasium to be an exceptional one, District Administrator Bill Fisher said. We want to make sure everything is operating perfectly and we have a few tweaks to work out yet.

School officials have long pointed to the possibility of holding one of the final games of the season in the new gym, but the girls are coming off an outstanding season and are predicted to go deep into the playoffs. After a first-round bye on Tuesday, they will hit their home court on Friday. It's unlikely players, coaches or fans will want to stray from the familiar confines of the long-standing gymnasium for the important tilt.

The new gym will have a different look and feel. That's for certain, Fisher said. Nothing is scheduled in it yet.

Earl Doc Smith of EDS Builders, the project's construction manager, said that while work remains throughout the complex, the gymnasium is substantially ready, along with the adjoining commons area.

It's really a tribute to the contractors who have done their best to make sure it is ready when they want to play, Smith said. We couldn't have gotten to where we are without them.

With a capacity of 1,200 spectators, the gymnasium is huge and stunning. It features the purple and gold colors of the Elcho Hornets along with a hardwood floor purchased locally from Robbins Flooring of White Lake. A three dimensional hornet's nest, designed and painted by art teacher Kim Schoenrock, nestles high in a corner.

The project will move the main office and entrance from the south to the north end of the school complex with secure doors; and revamp music and band areas into an area that previously housed a second small gymnasium and multi-purpose room. The existing library will be downsized, with a portion turned over to an early



The new Elcho School gymnasium is almost ready for action.

childhood center.

New construction also includes the commons/cafeateria with seating for 300 to 350 and an adjoining kitchen; technology education and a mix of classrooms.

The 1938 elementary structure remains in use for this school year. Once it is removed, the area will be redeveloped into a playground for youngsters up to grade two.