

# The Pueblo Chieftain

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## Sports league making comeback

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### *Pueblo Police Activities League to offer softball, football and lacrosse.*

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

The cops want you to play ball with them. Not in the courtroom. On the ball field.

After a several-year hiatus, the Pueblo Police Activities League is back.

Although still in its infancy, the league - previously named the Police Athletic League - has formed a board of directors and is working to form youth leagues for girls softball and boys football and lacrosse.

According to police detectives James Martin and Kevin Buck, the group's goal is to have fields constructed as part of the Minnequa Lake Park renovation by 2010.

"We're looking for contributions, help, donations, volunteers - anyone who wants to see the project through," Buck said last week. Martin is the league's president; Buck is the secretary-treasurer.

"It's not that we don't have great activities here already," Martin said. "We don't want to take away from any programs. We just want to add and refine, get to kids who need this the most."

The Police Activities League ended its first run earlier this decade following officer Tano Roybal's retirement from the force, the new leaders said. Back then, boxing was the main sport and was taught in the Eastwood Heights neighborhood.

This isn't a "Rocky" moment, though, since boxing won't be part of the new activities.

Martin and Buck, youth football coaches for about four years, want to build on the success they've experienced in team sports. They also want to help shed any negative image the community and kids have about law enforcement.

"It's about character. You have to have character. You can be an awesome athlete, have an awesome team, win all the time, but you have to have character. That's what it's all about," Buck said. "If we can get at these kids while

they're young, help them develop character, maybe it'll reduce this," the detective said, slapping his hand on a pile of folders containing cases he's investigating.

Currently, dirt is being hauled to the south end of Lake Minnequa to start raising the area to build six to eight football fields and a couple lacrosse and softball fields.

"Because of the soil over there, we have to haul in enough dirt to raise the ground level 4 feet," Buck said.

Anyone wanting to donate or dispose of dirt free of charge, call Scott Hobson at the city planning office at 553-2244.

Total construction cost is estimated at \$1 million, Martin said. Another goal of PAL is to raise enough money to provide new equipment for its athletes.

"We want to take that 'I can't afford to play sports' scenario out," Martin said.

To learn more, a public meeting about PAL will be held 7 to 8:30 p.m., Jan. 6, at the Pueblo County Conference Room, 1001 N. Santa Fe Ave. For more information call Martin at 553-2535.