

[PARKS AND REC]

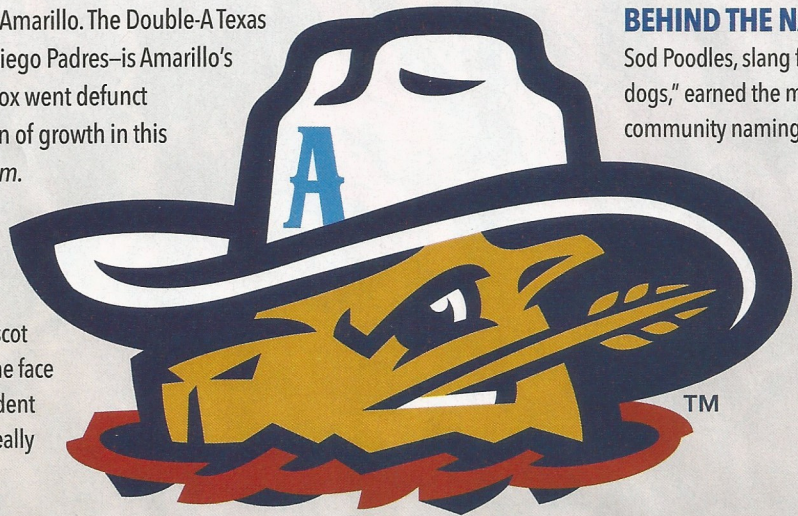
Play Ball, Sod Poodles!

On April 8, the **Amarillo Sod Poodles**—yes, the Sod Poodles—will play their first home game in a new \$45.5 million stadium in downtown Amarillo. The Double-A Texas League baseball team—the new affiliate of the San Diego Padres—is Amarillo's first professional sports team in 37 years (the Gold Sox went defunct in 1982). The Hodgetown ballpark is yet another sign of growth in this West Texas hot spot. (806) 803-7762; sodpoodles.com.

—Cynthia J. Drake

BEHIND THE NAME:

Sod Poodles, slang for “prairie dogs,” earned the most votes in a community naming contest.



THE MASCOT: The prairie dog mascot has “the sneer of Clint Eastwood and the face of John Wayne,” says Tony Ensor, president and general manager. “We wanted a really Western, tough-looking prairie dog.”

ARCHITECTURAL INSPIRATION:

Architectural firm Populous drew inspiration for the ballpark from the art deco buildings that are prevalent in downtown Amarillo. The stadium features a 360-degree walk-around track, as well as a kids' fun zone.

COST PER TICKET:

\$6 to \$18



NUMBER OF SEATS:
7,000-plus



BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE: The ballpark features 29 luxury suites, including five at dugout level—just 30 feet from home plate.



ARTIST CONCEPTIONS COURTESY AMARILLO SOD POODLES/POPULOUS