

The City of Dothan has partnered with the National Fitness Campaign (NFC) to help residents live a more active lifestyle. The NFC's mission is to provide free fitness opportunities for everyone in the United States. Dothan became the second city in the country to benefit from the NFC initiative to open 100 outdoor fitness courts in 2018.

The outdoor fitness court is a bodyweight circuit training system with 30 pieces of equipment, shock-resistant sports flooring and exercise stations that allow up to 28 people to use the court at the same time.

"The court makes first class equipment available to people who can't or don't want to pay for a gym membership," says Tyson Carter, athletic coordinator with the City of Dothan Leisure Services. "It works at any fitness level. Whether you're a beginner who never exercises or the most fit CrossFitter, the moves can be modified to fit your abilities. As you work out, you can graduate from the basic routine to an expert workout."

The training system is based on seven basic movements: core, squat, push, lunge, pull, agility and bend. The equipment allows you to leverage your body weight for a simple workout that can be completed in seven minutes. The system was developed by experts in the field and is shown to burn more calories per minute than most other forms of exercise. You can find videos of beginner, intermediate and expert workouts at [www.nationalfitnesscampaign.com](http://www.nationalfitnesscampaign.com).

You can develop your own custom movements for a unique workout, or you can use the free Fitness Court App to get tips from personal trainers and find longer workouts. The app tracks your progress and allows you to compete in fitness challenges.

Dothan's outdoor fitness court is in the city's largest park — Westgate Park. The nearby 3.5-mile trails for walking, running and biking made it the perfect location.

"The National Fitness Campaign wants courses located near trails to give people the full workout experience. You can do strength and resistance training at the outdoor court and the trails provide a

cardiovascular workout," says Carter.

Westgate Park includes an indoor heated pool, gym, and racquetball and volleyball courts in the recreation center. The park also has a sports complex for soccer, baseball and softball along with a playground.

"It's an amazing fitness court and it added a really nice piece to the park," Carter adds.

City leaders began working to bring the outdoor fitness court to Dothan after city manager Mike West received an email about the program.

"He often passes on ideas to the city departments to get our opinions, to see if we think it's interesting," Carter says. "As a fitness enthusiast, I thought it was an amazing opportunity. We contacted the National Fitness

Campaign office in San Francisco and asked how to start this journey."

The approval came with a \$10,000 grant from the NFC. Dothan's Leisure Services staff started contacting local businesses for donations.

"We developed our contacts, made our pitch and explained how the court would benefit the overall quality of life in our community."

The sponsorships included \$10,000 donations from Michelin, Barge Design Solutions, the Dothan Kiwanis Club and the Mike Schmidt family. The local convention and visitors bureau contributed

\$15,000. The city commission provided \$25,000 and the site work needed for the court.

"We are fortunate to have city officials and community leaders who place importance on personal fitness as well as recreational sports," says Carter.

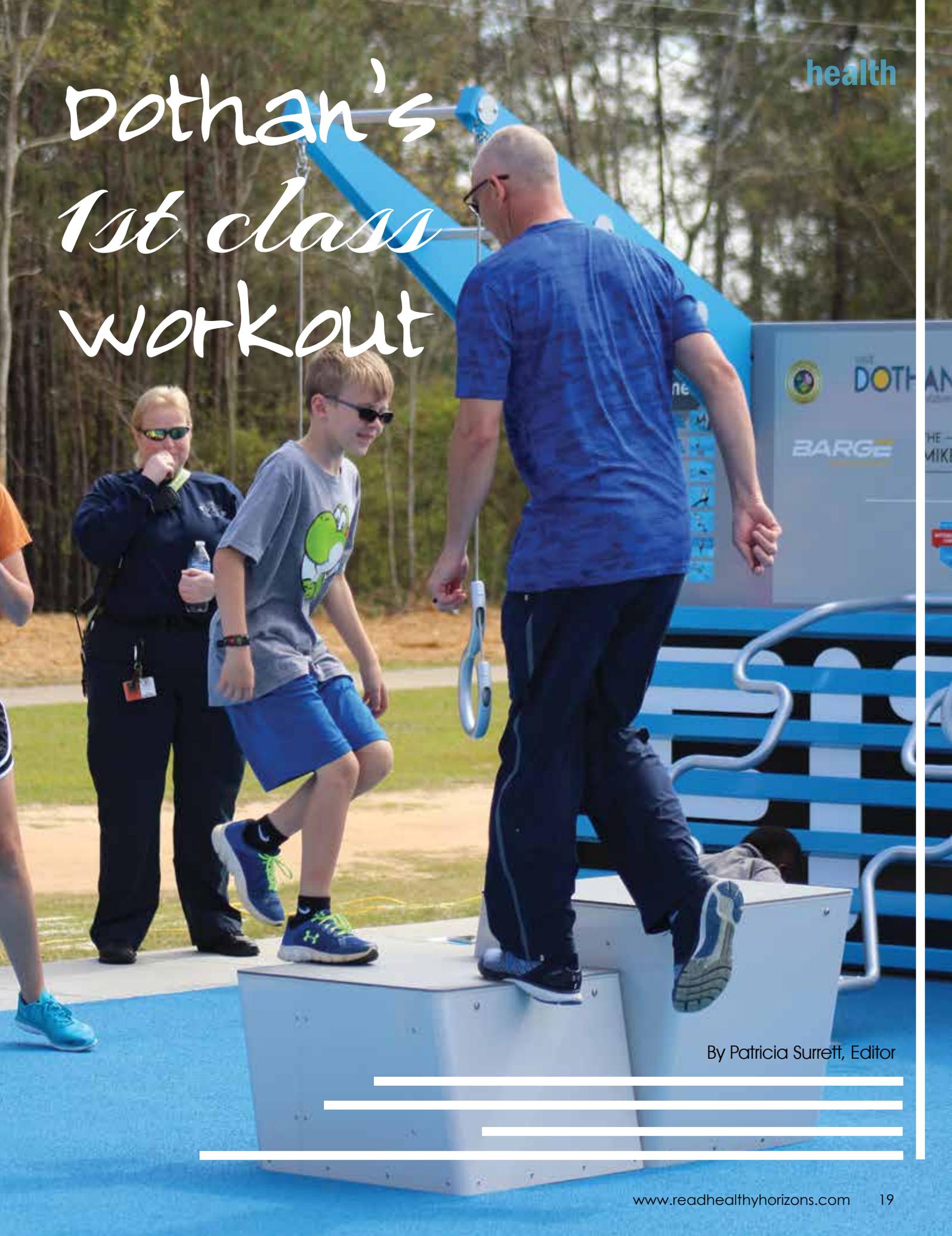
Dothan's outdoor fitness court opened March 24 with an opening day training camp.

The National Fitness Campaign was founded in 1979 by Mitch Menaged with the goal of transforming public spaces into community fitness hubs. The program began with simple paracourses and evolved into the outdoor court which was designed by experts in engineering and military fitness training.

Westgate Park is open daily from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. To learn more about Dothan's Leisure Services programs, visit [www.dothan.org](http://www.dothan.org), click departments and choose leisure services.



# Dothan's 1st class workout



By Patricia Surrett, Editor

