San Diego Padres, concessionaire team up with fitness plan

What could be perceived as more American than watching a baseball game on a hot summer afternoon, devouring a thick brat covered with mustard and sauerkraut, and chasing it down with a cold beer or soft drink? Well, how about this: watching the game while consuming Mandarin salad or a fruit and yogurt parfait. Laugh you may, but the all-American pastime is changing shape as more American adults and children try to get in — or stay in — good physical condition. Now a growing number of stadiums are offering more healthful foods not just in private clubs and upscale restaurants, but at concession stands, too.

One notable change is taking place at PETCO Park, home of the San Diego Padres baseball team, where Delaware North Cos.’ Sportservice division, the ballpark’s foodservice concessionaire, has put forth a challenge: “We want San Diego to become one of the healthiest and most fit cities in Major League Baseball, all professional sports, and America. We want to become a model of excellence that others will emulate.” — In partnership with Hofstra University here, Lackmann Culinary Services, the college’s on-site foodservice provider, introduced its latest eco-friendly initiative last month in celebration of Earth Day.

The event, called Going Green, was held April 23 and helped promote several of Hofstra’s student-organized, environmentally friendly initiatives as well as Lackmann’s own sustainable-foods program on campus. Lackmann is based in Woodbury, N.Y.

Above, from left: Hofstra foodservice department employees Norberto Duranti, Freddy Arias and Elba Cardoza

LACKMANN, HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY EVENT PROMOTES GREEN INITIATIVES

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Above, from left: Hofstra foodservice department employees Norberto Duranti, Freddy Arias and Elba Cardoza

Left: A dessert table at the Going Green lunch buffet

Below: Several vendors, including Lackmann Culinary Services, set up tables at the event.

“Usually, the last thing on most people’s minds is to eat healthy at a ballpark, but we can make sure there is a choice,” he said. In addition to the menu upgrade, Friarfit is featuring Instant Recess, a fitness break for kids and adults held at the ballpark every Sunday afternoon before home games.

Kids and Padres employees who attend Instant Recess receive customized pedometers to track their activity levels. Other initiatives also are underway. When the collaboration began, baseball hall of famer Dave Winfield, the Padres vice president and senior advisor, put forth a challenge: “We want San Diego to become one of the healthiest and most fit cities in Major League Baseball, all professional sports, and America. We want to become a model of excellence that others will emulate.”

Hopefully, other ball clubs and foodservice providers will respond, pitching in to remake the all-American experience at ballparks and, in time, reshape America.