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The Modernization of Historic Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium

BY CHAD SEIFRIED AND TIMOTHY KELLISON

In 2018, the Georgia Institute of Technology announced a five-year plan and $125 million capital campaign to improve the stadium experience for football attendees, student-athletes, and Tech athletics personnel at Bobby Dodd Stadium. Considered "one of the greatest settings in all of college football," the planned enhancements for Bobby Dodd Stadium's spectators aimed to improve premium seating, cellular and Wi-Fi service, expand tailgating space, and enrich areas associated with concessions, retail, and ingress/egress.¹ For student-athletes, Tech will spend $4.5 million to transform the stadium into a modern facility through locker room improvements that will feature a hydration station, hydrotherapy area, advanced audio-video systems, and increased shower and restroom sizes. Inside the lockers, Tech will add ventilation systems and charging stations "for student-athletes' mobile phones, tablets, and laptop computers."² Finally, Tech aimed to renovate the northeast corner of the stadium, more specifically, the Arthur B. Edge Jr. Center (headquarters for Georgia Tech's athletic department) to improve the workspace for employees, increase efficiency, and make that workplace a symbol of "excellence and innovation."³ The director of athletics, Todd Stansbury, argued the impending changes were necessary because "We are committed to making it [the stadium] better so that new generations of fans and student-athletes can continue to enjoy a first-rate gameday experiences for years to come."⁴

The desire by Tech to upgrade Bobby Dodd Stadium and the overall experience for attendees, student-athletes, and athletics personnel is not unusual or only emergent in recent memory. Georgia Tech regularly renovated the stadium, like

Interior view of enclosed Bobby Dodd Stadium at Grant Field, circa 1980. Courtesy of Georgia Tech Archives and Special Collections (Georgia Tech History Digital Portal).
many national and regional peers in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I-Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), to support growing interest in football, improve the spectacle, and provide better comfort for various stakeholders like spectators, players, coaches, media, alumni, and donors. The social historian Brian Ingrassia argues that such modernization activities provided opportunities for “well-intentioned progressives” to make football “permanent” through the creation of athletic departments and specialized athletic-related jobs. Moreover, the modernization of football as a commercial activity and the establishment of a permanent football stadium legitimized many schools because they helped to generate enrollments, alumni connections and gifts, and revenues.5

Interestingly, the construction and renovation history of Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium is not well-developed despite the fact that it is the oldest venue in the Division I-FBS. The present study provides a descriptive history of the modernization of midtown Atlanta’s football stadia from 1898 to 2017 through a review of the critical agents, innovations, and events connected with the financing, construction, and subsequent renovations. Similar to stadiums on other university campuses, Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium confirmed the importance of college football as a permanent university activity that evolved from a menagerie of activities involving various stakeholders, both inside and outside of the university. Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium renovations also included numerous innovations to exploit consumer and media preferences for the production of better products and services. Overall, the construction and renovation of Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium created an atmosphere of institutional legitimacy for the university to help it compete with other schools, both on the football field and for enrolled students. Furthermore, Georgia Tech’s history of improvements to Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium is important to recognize because it reflects the university’s efforts to leverage its popular football program to attract support from alumni, donors, and fans.

Before the development of Grant Field in 1913, Georgia Tech students created athletic and class competitions in Atlanta shortly after the opening of the Institute in 1888. Like many northern institutions, the earliest Tech football games were student-organized and non-commercial (i.e., no paid coach, competition schedule, or enclosed/controlled facility). Yet commercial and social interests regarding football quickly emerged for Tech once the popularity of the sport grew on campus and within Atlanta, the largest city in Georgia. Evidence of this
point is strong, as the Georgia state legislature shaped Tech to follow other elite polytechnic institutions (e.g., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stevens Institute of Technology, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute) in their desire to not only produce products capable of generating revenue for the Institute, but also to provide activities that socialized students. Several northern schools advanced football commercially once they realized the capacity of games “to attract gate receipts, reconnect with alumni, and recruit students.” The press also boosted confidence in the commercial potential of football for Tech and other schools. For instance, daily newspapers and popular magazines like Harper’s Weekly frequently reported on football games because they viewed them as significant social happenings. Important community leaders, businessmen—and in some instances local celebrities who took an interest in football—also helped increase readership and the potential status of an institution.

The earliest organized games for Georgia Tech against other schools were played at local parks (e.g., Piedmont and Brisbane) located in Atlanta and under the direction of school professors, townspeople, or one of the players. Notably, and in conjunction with Tech’s recognition of football as a prospective commercial product, the Institution sought membership in the Southern Inter-collegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) to improve the attractiveness of football and the institution’s legitimacy through association with other schools. Formed in 1894 for “the development and purification of college athletics throughout the South,” the SIAA created standardized rules, established eligibility criteria, and sponsored championship games to sell the public. Furthermore, joining the SIAA was attractive because it helped address broader national and regional concerns about the brutality of football. In particular, the SIAA recognized that mass plays (i.e., flying wedge) were ruining football viewing and thus, it established rules and eligibility criteria to increase player safety.

To capture more revenues beyond the potential of local parks as an SIAA member, in 1898 Tech leased an area in Piedmont Park for two years after the park announced plans to build a new athletic field. Shortly after the lease expired, Georgia Tech president Lyman Hall used a convict labor force provided by Fulton County to clear an area near Fowler Street (“The Flats”) for the simple future home of Georgia Tech athletic competitions in 1901. A year later, drawing instructor Frank Turner (class of 1899) and English professor Kenneth G. Matheson suggested to Tech administrators that the school needed to invest more
in football and "The Flats" athletic space if the university wanted to be taken as a serious collegiate football program and as an SIAA institution. To that end, Turner headed a committee that sought approval and financial assistance from the Tech administration to hire a professional football coach. During 1903, the football improvement committee presented to Tech administrators, faculty, and students their recommendation to hire John Heisman. John Heisman was recognized as one of the best coaches of American football following successful coaching stints at Akron, Auburn, and Clemson. After a Heisman-led Clemson team defeated Georgia Tech 73–0 in 1903, Turner's search committee created a fund to hire him. The fundraising effort generated $1,300 from faculty, $2,200 from the student body, and eventually compelled President Hall to offer Heisman an annual salary of $2,250 plus 30 percent of the net gate receipts of all baseball and football games in exchange for coaching both sports.9

To enhance his earnings, during contract negotiations Heisman decided it was necessary to require Georgia Tech to build a permanent athletic field open to all students, and for the varsity football team to control access to the facility through creating temporary fencing to enclose the grounds. To facilitate a planned athletic facility, the Georgia Tech Athletic Association signed a contract with the E.C. Peters Land Company for a seven-year lease in 1904, with an option to buy land near "The Flats" and North Avenue. In the contract, the Georgia Tech Athletic Association agreed to pay the lease through gate receipts from all games played on the field. Unfortunately, the land was in poor shape, unlevelled and untamed; rabbits and snakes inhabiting the area often resulted in stoppages of practices and games. In response, in 1905 Heisman convinced Fulton County to offer three hundred convicts to help level the field and clear it of rocks, tree stumps, and wildlife so that the location could be used to its full potential. Tech officials were confident the area would "make the best in the South. The field is far below the street, and sloping hills on every side would afford a fine place for all the seats needed."10

In addition to prison labor, students and faculty also helped transform "The Flats" into a semi-permanent facility. Specifically, "The Flats" were "conceived and designed by Lazarus Allen and Sid Mays" and student workshop classes were used to build a five hundred-seat wooden grandstand and fences that ran alongside North Avenue, and Williams and Fowler streets. The sideline fences were designed tall and firm to prevent unpaid spectators from receiving or creating their own view. Interestingly, rather than destroy the oak trees surrounding the field, the
Prisoners moving dirt for the construction of Grant Field in the early 1900s, as armed men guard them. Courtesy of Georgia Tech Archives and Special Collections (Georgia Tech History Digital Portal).

students built around the trees, prompting some to climb them for a free view. There were no amenities such as concessions and restrooms at “The Flats”; thus, Tech players showered at Knowles Dormitory and visiting teams dressed at their hotels. Growing interest in football coincided with the team’s consistently strong performances. For instance, between 1904 (Heisman’s first season) and 1911, Tech did not have a losing season, amassing a record of forty-seven wins, eighteen losses, and four ties. Still, the lack of amenities and Tech’s burgeoning popularity forced Tech to leave “The Flats.” From 1908 through 1911, Tech played at the new professional baseball facility, Ponce de Leon Park because of its superior accommodations (grandstand seating and streetcar access), eight thousand-seat capacity, and remarkably low rent of $150 per year.11

In 1912, Georgia Tech moved back to campus after the Atlanta Baseball Association sought to increase Tech’s rent at Ponce de Leon Park to 10 percent of the gate receipts. Luckily, the Peters Land Company sold three acres connected to “The Flats” at a discounted $3,000 price (half the appraised value) and later donated another four acres to Tech in 1913 to help initiate the construction of a new on-campus facility. Notably, this followed action by the Georgia General Assembly
in 1906, which provided $17,500 to help Tech enlarge the campus around “The Flats” area. Lastly, it should be noted Georgia Tech president Kenneth G. Matheson led a fundraising campaign to purchase additional space to improve the quality of the new field so that leaving Ponce de Leon Park would be commercially viable. Targeting local Atlanta business leaders, four more acres were secured, the space automobile parking and the new football, baseball, and track complex would ultimately occupy Grant Field.12

Banker, merchant, and real estate developer John W. Grant made a $13,000 gift to Georgia Tech in 1913 to begin the building of a permanent steel, concrete, and wood athletic facility on-campus. In announcing the gift to the public, President Matheson stated Grant “became impressed with the vital importance of healthful exercise for students... Mr. Grant was not primarily interested in an athletic field solely for the training of athletic teams, but a field of sufficient dimensions and equipment... for every student in the college.” In his statement, President Matheson also disclosed more details: “he [Grant] wishes first for the field itself to be put in first-class condition by installing cinder track, football gridirons, baseball diamonds and tennis courts; and afterwards that the matter of grandstands and fencing be considered.”13

The Hugh Inman Grant Field was designed by Charles Leavitt of New York and named in honor of John W. Grant and his wife Annie’s deceased son. The recruitment of Leavitt was well-received by Heisman, Grant, and Tech because he was a well-known civil engineer, city planner, and landscape architect. Leavitt’s previous work included designing Forbes Field for Barney Dreyfous in 1909, another reinforced concrete and steel sport facility that hosted both baseball (the Pittsburgh Pirates) and football (University of Pittsburgh). Unlike Forbes Field, Grant Field emerged in stages. The first stage—the west stands—was constructed using funds from the Grant gift, and was built with the help of both the student body and two hundred Fulton County convicts who represented $30,000 worth of labor. The initial west stands required a significant amount of blasting to help reshape the land, and seated fifty-six hundred. A year later, another fifty-six hundred concrete seats were added to the west stands through a new gift of $20,000 from John W. and Annie Grant. Overall, these gifts created an athletic complex that incorporated a quarter-mile running track, pathways for 220-yard sprints, two baseball diamonds, two football fields, and tennis courts, which, according to the Georgia Tech Bulletin, made Grant Field “the finest Athletic Field in the South.”14
The development of Grant Field was well-timed because the John Heisman era (1904–1919) was marked by considerable growth in both the quality of the football product and Georgia Tech more generally. For instance, in Heisman’s first season as head coach, total enrollment at Tech was about five hundred, but fifteen years later, enrollment surpassed twenty-five hundred; this increase in alumni led to a corresponding increase in seating requests. The football team enjoyed unprecedented success, with consecutive undefeated seasons from 1915–18, winning SIAA championships in 1916, 1917, and 1918, and receiving recognition as the national champions for 1917. Combined with Tech’s location in metro Atlanta, the Tech facility became a popular destination for visiting colleges and universities. In the 1910s, this meant home football games were held nearly every weekend between October and November. This included annual visits from rivals like Auburn, Clemson, and Georgia who gave up home games to play in Atlanta and the South’s finest stadium.15

During the 1920s, college football experienced a “golden age” as consumerism combined with new communications and construction technology to transform the sport into a hugely popular cultural spectacle. According to the historian
Raymond Schmidt, the enthusiasm for college football "was believed to have an estimated drawing power of $50 million a year, with well over 50 percent of that representing profit." Brian Ingrassia asserts that the spectacle of college football and the concomitant substantial commercial interests advanced mainly through the construction of massive concrete campus stadia that offered real amenities like restrooms and concession stands that wooden structures were unable to accommodate. Not surprisingly, forty-nine new concrete stadiums were constructed and seating capacity tripled during the 1920s. Georgia Tech joined its peers by upgrading and expanding Grant Field.  

In the South, roads for automobiles were constructed and expanded and the number of rail lines increased to help link schools to large population centers like Atlanta, which was a major hub for industry that enjoyed a " burgeoning population" capable of sustaining a "modern sport culture." Southern schools benefited because the improved transportation network reduced the cost to travel to games, subsequently increasing gate receipts for both participants.

The ability to bring more people to towns and cities also prompted efforts by many southerners to seek out opportunities to demonstrate their modernity. For example, sport historian Andrew Doyle argues that "staging mass market sporting events in modern stadiums was a highly visible way to showcase the progressive urban society of the 20th century South." The simple wood facilities or games organized in "roped-off portions of college campuses and city parks" were unattractive to potential northern and midwestern opponents because these venues could not generate sufficient revenue. To address this situation, civic leaders, university officials, and local boosters sought to finance new on or off-campus stadia because they were "gilt-edged business propositions." Examples of this activity in the South occurred in Birmingham, AL, Columbus, GA, Dallas, TX, Jackson, MS, Jacksonville, FL, Memphis, TN, Montgomery, AL, and Oklahoma City, OK.

For universities, a football stadium served as the "most visible icon of civic progress even at the apogee of the machine age" because it could communicate that a school was progressive or up-to-date technologically. This was critical for southern universities like Tech to help them attract more students and prominent southern or northern schools to fill their growing stadia. This modern, progressive image also helped Tech gain an invitation to join the NCAA and the Southern Conference. Expansion of the SIAA into a mix of thirty public universities and private colleges
produced conditions from which the larger or more prestigious football-playing institutions sought to separate themselves from lesser schools with the goal of enhancing each other’s gate receipts, national or regional media attention, and subsequent enrollments. The Southern Conference formed in 1921 to realize these goals, with Georgia Tech as a charter member. To support these initiatives the Southern Conference established a minimum stadium size standard for each member. Accordingly, before the end of the decade, Southern Conference members that built or expanded stadiums included Tennessee (Shields-Watkins Field, 1921), Vanderbilt (Dudley Field, 1922), Maryland (Byrd Stadium, 1923), LSU (Tiger Stadium, 1924), Tulane (Tulane Stadium, 1926), Virginia Tech (Miles Stadium, 1926), North Carolina (Kenan Stadium, 1927), Alabama (Denny Stadium, 1929), Duke (Duke Stadium, 1929), and Georgia (Sanford Stadium, 1929).22

Realizing these factors and already benefitting from regular sellouts produced by Tech’s successful football teams and other teams playing in the sizeable Atlanta market, in March 1924 the Georgia Tech Athletic Association proposed to expand Grant Field. The Athletic Association argued expansion was necessary to maximize revenues from upcoming home games against opponents like Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Notre Dame. Moreover, Tech was interested in scheduling more games with big-time intersectional opponents, and in reducing costs related to replacing the wooden stands added annually to accommodate large crowds. This proposition was not, however, one without controversy because the money to be used for the stadium expansion was originally committed to the building of a new gymnasium for the student body. The Athletic Association justified the shift in expenditure by arguing the likely increase in revenue would eventually provide students with a better gymnasium and potentially other campus buildings in the future. Many universities made the argument that football revenues can be used to improve campus and student programming.23

To complete the structural additions, several architects and engineers participated in the project such as Griffin-Hodges Construction Company, A.K. Adams Construction, and Robert and Company, who all notably employed Tech graduates like Lawrence "Chip" Roberts, Jesse M. Shelton, McQueen Auld, and Cherry Emerson. The proposed plan occurred over two stages, which ultimately redeveloped Grant Field into a U-shaped facility for roughly $105,480. The first stage, in 1924, involved building twelve thousand new seats on the east side of the stadium and adding another eight thousand seats to the west stands. To facilitate
the new construction, the track was moved ten yards toward the north end zone and higher-priced box seats were built at the bases of both the east and west stands in 1924. The second stage required the erection of new stands seating eleven thousand in the south end zone and shifting of the field again, this time to the south by fifteen yards. With the potential to add temporary seating to the north end zone, Georgia Tech claimed the thirty-six-thousand-seat Grant Field would seat forty-five thousand and could be paid off from future gate receipts.24

Within the stadium innards, the east stands provided coaches offices, athletic training space, and dressing rooms for football, as well as for Tech track, baseball, and basketball teams. Elsewhere, under the south stands, space was made available for the band and its equipment, while in the open north end offices were created for the alumni association and the Athletic Association business department. On the field, new prescription athletic grass was also planted and allowed to grow without disruption before the 1925 season because Tech also built practice fields to reduce the future wear and tear on Grant Field.25

Above the stands, a sixty-person press box was established for the print and radio media that was celebrated because it provided “private telephone lines to the various newspapers, running water, lavatories” and was “well-ventilated...to afford the press-men comfort and convenience.” Facilitating the “golden age” of sport in America and college football as a social institution, radio broadcasts allowed sport products to be presented to remote audiences, thus expanding the number of potential attendees and the possibility of developing a fan nation for the team and university.26 At Georgia Tech, WGST broadcasted games directly from the new press box though a soundproof booth. Along with on-field microphones, play-by-play and sounds of the game could be sent out so that remote spectators could receive information and experience the game instantaneously. Overall, The Technique concluded “the new stadium, probably the finest in the South, will doubtless seat with ease the largest crowds Atlanta can boast of, besides affording spacious quarters for developing American manhood physically.”27

Finally, Georgia Tech made some additional cosmetic changes to Grant Field that should not be dismissed. For instance, the wooden roof covering the west stands was unsafe and removed to “help our stadium from becoming obsolete in the eyes of the public.” The west roof and stands were also unattractive because they did not match the uncovered east stands; the contrast compelled the removal of the roof
Grant Field in 1929. After renovations, the initial enclosure of the stadium stands is complete. Note the press boxes above the stands and the electronic scoreboard in the south stands. Courtesy of Georgia Tech Archives and Special Collections (Georgia Tech History Digital Portal).

and some students to help repaint the stadium. Tech also removed the west stands' roof because they planned future additions to double-deck both the east and west stands and to enclose the U-shaped facility into a bowl shape. This was possible because Tech finished the end of the decade with considerable success. In 1927, the team went 8-1-1 and were crowned Southern Conference co-champions. A year later, they finished with an undefeated 10-0 season and were named co-national champions before winning the 1928 Rose Bowl. In the end, the wooden temporary stands in the north end zone became permanent as 6,148 spectators regularly filled them during these seasons.28

Despite the positive momentum for the Tech football program during the 1920s, little changes beyond the north end zone occurred with Grant Field between 1925 and 1935. First, the program experienced a series of losing seasons beginning in 1929, which gradually depreciated the value of a Georgia Tech football ticket. Second, the Great Depression greatly impacted ticket purchases and subsequently travel in the 1930s because “limits to income reduced discretionary spending on goods, which sport is classified.” Between 1929 and 1932, the national average revenue for college football fell by half, and national “attendance dropped over 30
percent" by 1933. Similar to other institutions, Georgia Tech sold only seventy-three thousand tickets for 1931, which was well short of their seasonal goal of one hundred thousand. Ticket sales remained a matter of concern through 1934.  

To help improve ticket sales and potentially reduce travel costs, Georgia Tech helped form the Southeastern Conference (SEC). Like with the SIAA, the Southern Conference also grew to twenty-three schools, and by 1932 several institutions were looking to form a smaller conference with more regional and prestigious football-playing peers. University of Kentucky president Frank McVey framed the goals for the SEC's exclusivity by emphasizing that the new conference hoped to develop public appreciation for the members through their shared interest in controlling athletic competitions and promoting sportsmanship as part of what they saw as both an educational and commercial enterprise. Georgia Tech was also concerned about enrollments and viewed athletics as a way to help stimulate the creation of a larger student body through athletic participation and public awareness about the school during the Depression. In 1930, Tech's enrollment was thirty-seven hundred, but by 1933 it had dropped to 2,123.  

In 1935, Georgia Tech began a series of minor improvements to Grant Field, beginning with the locker room areas. Supervised by state administrator for works project engineer and 1925 Tech graduate Robert L. MacDougall, locker room enhancements included the expansion of the locker rooms and the addition of showers for roughly $14,436. During the 1939 season, Tech built a new electronic scoreboard in the north end zone large enough to hold an operator's control space. Costing about $6,500, the new scoreboard featured a direct telephone line to one assistant on the field, and provided an updated public address system to replace the older speakers previously located in the south end zone. For the student-athletes, the Georgia Tech board of regents also approved an $80,000 athletic facility improvement plan in 1940, which included the updating of training space in Grant Field. The updates involved a fluorescent lighting addition, the creation of more storage space, and expansion of locker rooms for track, baseball, and fencing athletes.  

Starting in 1939, Georgia Tech began to produce a better quality football product during a season that ended with an 8–2 record and an Orange Bowl invitation. Subsequently, Professor Arthur H. Armstrong argued "Increasing attendance during the past few years, particularly an increasing demand for season seats has
made some increase in the seating capacity advisable." Similar success in 1942 through 1944 (twenty-fives wins against eight losses and Cotton, Sugar, and Orange Bowl invitations) and improving enrollment predictions (four thousand undergraduate and one thousand graduate students) prompted similar calls to permanently expand Grant Field. In 1944, President Blake R. Van Leer unveiled a new "[$10 million enlargement] program...[that] will involve expenditures in new buildings." With respect to Grant Field, Tech planned to enlarge the facility by adding eight thousand seats to the west stands, along with "concession stands, new press boxes, and improved walkways for cameramen." Under the east stands, Tech sought to remodel locker rooms and install a new drainage system for the field. The total cost of the planned project required about $350,000; proponents sought funding from WCST radio, the Georgia Tech Athletic Association, and the Georgia state legislature.

Like many institutions, Georgia Tech delayed construction of the new stands until 1947 due to material shortages caused by World War II. In the case of Tech, President Van Leer reasoned that expanding the stadium was not as critical as solving the burgeoning housing crisis created by the soaring post-World War II enrollment of six thousand students. The revised 1947 project, designed by Bush-Brown, Gailey, and Heffernan of Atlanta, engineered by former Georgia Tech instructor, J.J. Pollard, and built by J.A. Jones Construction of Charlotte, NC, added fifty-six hundred seats to the stadium's west side. The revised $614,000 project included the replacement of existing seats with curved/contoured seating, adding spectator ramps to the new upper deck, improving ingress/egress areas, and building a new state-of-the-art press box "lined with acoustical material." Overall, Athletic Director William A. Alexander suggested the renovation of the facility "will considerably boost Grant Field's rank among collegiate athletic fields in the United States.

Robert Lee "Bobby" Dodd took over the football head coaching job at Georgia Tech in 1945, and later assumed the position of athletic director shortly after the death of his predecessor and mentor William Alexander in 1950. The construction project at Grant Field under Dodd involved remodeling the athletic training and locker room space under the east stands in 1957 for about $14,000. Again, under the guidance of alumnus Robert L. MacDougall, this minor project was just a prequel to major expansion goals Dodd had for Grant Field. For example, continued success and popularity of Tech football under Dodd in 1948 and 1949 (a
14–6 record) and willingness of the Athletic Association to support Tech athletics ultimately led the Athletic board of directors to commission architects to design a seven thousand-seat upper deck for the east side of the stadium. Dodd wanted the facility addition to be complete by the start of 1951 because the home schedules for that season (Southern Methodist, LSU, Auburn, Duke and Georgia) and 1952 (Army, Vanderbilt, Tulane, Alabama, Auburn, Florida, and South Carolina) were strong. Yet, just as during World War II, this project never started because the Korean War broke out and materials were redirected to support that campaign.38

Continued success from 1951 through 1957 eventually reenergized talk on stadium additions so that 4,105 all-steel seats were added to the north end zone in 1958 for approximately $334,000. President Edwin Harrison notably argued for that expansion and potentially future seating additions because the growing populations of Atlanta, the state of Georgia, and Tech students and alumni all sought more tickets. In 1962, Tech finally added a second deck to the east side of the stadium for what was originally expected to cost $600,000. The Capital Construction Company, co-owned by Georgia Tech football alumni, Doyle Butler and his brother Ros, won the bid to expand Grant Field’s seating capacity to 53,000, but specialized equipment, like the largest crane in the world (180 feet) pushed the price to $750,000.39

To fund the project, the Athletic Association sought to increase revenues by selling season tickets for the new seats under the second deck. As an example, Tech priced season tickets under the upper deck for $250 and the eight hundred midfield seats in the new section for $200. President Harrison believed using ticket sales to pay for the new addition was important to Tech because the school was opposed to using state or university funds they thought could better serve academic programming and research interests. Dodd conveyed confidence in the ability of Tech teams to fill Grant Field. For instance, Dodd “thought that his Tech teams for the next 10 years will be fully capable of competing strongly with the best teams on their schedules.”40

In July 1963, Dodd said that Georgia Tech should consider leaving the SEC to become a football independent, which they did in 1964. Other regional institutions were also considering such moves during the 1960s. For example, Tulane had deliberated such a move from the SEC in the 1950s. Meanwhile, the University of South Carolina contemplated leaving the Atlantic Coast Conference
(ACC). In the case of South Carolina, athletic director and head coach Paul Dietzel thought the “lure of independence” was more attractive than conference affiliation because independents “were free to make schedules as they chose” and could more easily secure games on television. In essence, “in leaving the ACC, South Carolina officials may have envisioned Columbia turning into South Bend or Happy Valley of the South.”

Tech was similar to South Carolina in that the school desired to schedule attractive intersectional football contests capable of generating big gate receipts and securing television appearances to help cover the growing costs of commercialized intercollegiate athletics. Television ownership became ubiquitous by the end of the 1950s for homes throughout the US. Sport organizations responded by better incorporating television into their facilities through lighting changes and press box additions. Schools gradually saw the enhanced brand awareness offered by televised sports as a way to help increase actual or remote attendance and to build a potentially larger fan nation.

Grant Field on gameday, circa 1952. Note the lights above the press box, which was lined with special acoustical material to improve broadcast conditions. The field was resurfaced to improve the drainage system, and within the facility new locker rooms were incorporated, as well as new spectator ramps.

Courtesy of Georgia Tech Archives and Special Collections (Georgia Tech History Digital Portal).
With respect to academics, Georgia Tech was also like Tulane. More specifically, Tech officials cited “the balance of football power has tipped in favor of the large tax-supported institutions, especially those which have not yet had to face the problem of selective admissions. Private colleges and universities that still consistently rank among the grid elite can be counted on the fingers of one hand.” Next, Dodd’s argument for leaving the SEC centered on the 140 Rule, which stated all SEC members could have 140 athletes under scholarship at one time and could offer up to forty-five scholarships per year in football. By comparison, the Big Ten had a similar rule but each school could only sign up to thirty players per year. Tech claimed the 140 Rule allowed football programs to overspend and recruit, extend scholarships to more players than necessary, and “run off” those who did not meet expectations. Although all SEC programs were allowed to recruit under the same rules, Dodd believed he was obligated to honor the scholarships of his recruits regardless of their on-field performance. Other SEC programs, Dodd argued, were exploiting the 140 Rule, leaving Tech at a “major recruiting disadvantage.” Tech threatened to leave the conference if the 140 Rule was not rescinded but a subsequent vote at the 1964 SEC meetings produced a split 6–6 vote, which kept the rule in place.43

Despite the chaos surrounding the SEC and gaining independence in 1964, Georgia Tech football remained competitive and attractive from 1962 through 1966, when it was announced a new deck to the west side of the stadium would be added, primarily to attract Tech alumni, meet the anticipated growth in student enrollments, and address the needs of television partners. For the media and affluent fans or alumni, Tech rebuilt the press box, which included a club level. Like previous additions, Tech wanted the expansion to 58,121 seats to be completed before a strong home schedule and to reinforce the Institute’s belief that Grant Field was “significant contributor of the institution.” For 1967, Dodd scheduled home games against notable schools such Clemson, Auburn, Notre Dame, and Georgia—which expanded its stadium’s seating capacity to 59,200 shortly thereafter in response to Tech having done so. Finch, Alexander, Barnes, Rothschild, and Paschal (Atlanta) designed the $1.9 million project, whose construction contract was awarded to Van Winkle and Company of Atlanta. Like previous projects on Grant Field, funding came from the Athletic Association.44

Despite the significant improvements of the 1960s, the last notable changes before the start of the 1980s took the forms of resurfacing of the concrete
infrastructure, and the addition of artificial grass or AstroTurf. Regarding the concrete resurfacing, Grant Field experienced deterioration issues from water seeping into equipment rooms and concession stands after severe rains, in some cases producing knee-high water. Additional concerns were related to the threat of corrosion and cracks that water seepage represented for the reinforced steel in the concrete infrastructure. Technological developments by Surco in concrete resurfacing allowed fixes to improve and preserve Grant Field in 1968.45

Artificial turf came to prominence after the Houston Astrodome installed the surface in 1966. By 1970, the synthetic surface was popular with regional peers in the SEC. Alabama, Ole Miss, Tennessee, and Vanderbilt all played on artificial turf, while LSU installed it on a practice field. Most programs employing the surface valued the lower maintenance cost and high weather resistance. Other purported benefits included the potential for decreasing injuries and growing
agreement that artificial turf helped with the “recruitment of athletes.” Finally, it was noted that television partners and photographers often preferred the surface over natural grass because it allowed broadcasts and photos “to be more consistent...from the non-variability of green coloring.” Georgia Tech considered the change in playing surface as early as 1968, and decided to install the surface in 1971 for $350,000 and did so again in 1979.

By the end of 1970s, the lack of anticipated success as an independent and financial production (tickets sold, club seating sales, and alumni gifts) from the investments made to upgrade Grant Field over the decade led to an athletics program that was nearly bankrupt and a football stadium that was out-of-date compared to regional peers. Georgia Tech athletics’ other problems included: 1) a lack of rivalries they once enjoyed as a member of the SEC; 2) a growing number of losses and the resultant decline in payouts from bowl games; 3) some of the lowest fundraising levels in the South; and 4) a football graduation rate that was just 38 percent. In the end, Tech did not turn into the Notre Dame or Penn State of the South.

Many alumni agreed the move from the SEC was a mistake, and that there was a need to refocus on academics and to improve the quality and intensity of football rivalries. For example, Atlanta entrepreneur and former Tech football captain Taz Anderson suggested, “We lost some great rivalries we had. We played Alabama and Auburn. We played LSU; that was a great rivalry. Tennessee was a big rivalry.” Another Tech graduate, architect Mitchell Ginn, added Tech lost national prestige after leaving the SEC, as evidenced by comparing stadium attendance to enrollment and alumni growth. In 1963, Tech had an enrollment of sixty-three hundred and had fifty thousand living alumni, but average football attendance was lower in 1980—despite the fact that enrollment and living alumni had doubled. To address these academic and athletic concerns, Tech explored opportunities and eventually joined the seven-member Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) on April 3, 1978.

Due to prior scheduling commitments, Tech could not play football in the ACC until 1983. This transition period likely inspired several academic and athletic renovations to Grant Field. Beginning in 1982, Tech renovated Grant Field by installing new scoreboards that offered electronic messaging capable of improving crowd interaction opportunities and information transmittal, which made for a better overall spectating experience. Next, the Arthur B. Edge Jr. Intercollegiate Athletics Center opened in the northeast corner of the stadium to enhance
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athletic experiences and student-athlete academic services. Designed by Robert and Company, the 65,000-square foot Edge Center cost $7 million and housed the football locker room and equipment, athletic training facilities, and a display lobby showcasing Georgia Tech's football achievements. Other space in the facility supported offices for football and other sports' coaching staffs, athletic department administrators, and a dining hall. Finally, the facility incorporated the Andrew Hearn Academic Center, a 5,000-square foot space designed to support student-athlete academic services. According to Tech, the Hearn Academic Center was the first of its kind in the NCAA, and was funded without public monies. Donations from alumni were the sole source of funding, with the most notable gifts coming from alumni Arthur B. Edge Jr., president and CEO of Callaway Mills textiles, and Andrew Hearn, founder of CompU-trol computers. Overall, it is clear the Edge Center signaled the university's commitment to ensuring student-athlete success in the ACC, not only through its state-of-the-art performance facilities, but also through its academic support services. Such activity also aligned with the reputation of other ACC peers that were also recognized as top-tier academic institutions.49

Following a generous gift by Edna Wardlaw to honor her late husband William, the 70,000-square foot William C. Wardlaw Center opened in 1988 after the south end zone was razed. The Wardlaw Center provided the newly renamed Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium with a variety of amenities the facility did not previously possess, which improved its status among conference peers. For instance, although capacity was reduced to forty-six thousand seats, fourteen luxury suites or skyboxes were added to Bobby Dodd Stadium. Premium seats were designed to attract the attention of wealthier donors and business leaders willing to pay higher prices for the prestige and social value of the suites. The revenues generated from suites could in turn be used for other programmatic and infrastructural improvements at the university. Next, Wardlaw Center construction included new offices for the athletic department administrators and improved broadcast space for television partners, along with photography studios for the media. For student-athletes, a new state-of-the-art fitness and weight training complex was added, along with the installation of new artificial turf. Finally, the Frank Gordy Dining Room provided seating for up to 120 for student-athletes and to host other banquet or celebration events for the school. Like the other donors of this decade, Frank Gordy was an alumnus of Georgia Tech, but was also distinct as the founder of Atlanta's popular Varsity restaurants.50
After a decade in which the Yellow Jackets amassed a 43–64–4 record and only one bowl berth (the 1985 All-American Bowl), Georgia Tech returned to football relevance in 1990 through improved performances and recruiting classes fostered by the improved facilities. Led by head coach Bobby Ross, Tech generated a top twenty-five recruiting class in 1989 and finished the 1990 season as Division I-FBS’s only undefeated team and the United Press International coaches poll national champions. With this success, athletic director Homer Rice and members of the Alexander-Tharpe Fund refocused on fundraising. The Alexander-Tharpe Fund was initially created in 1949 to help raise monies for student-athletes and to “attract the best students to Tech”—not just student-athletes—by improving facilities, endowing scholarships, and offering career services. Regarding Bobby Dodd Stadium, Rice first expressed to President John Patrick Crecine his view that new luxury suites and multi-use club spaces were needed on both gamedays and non-gamedays to keep up with, and potentially get ahead of, peer institutions in the ACC. This observation underscored the university’s recognition that conference and regional rivals could gain advantages if Tech failed to renovate. Second, Rice argued that it was “time to rework our concessions, particularly in the West stands. Profits from the concessions can be applied to the financing of the project.” Third, Rice explained that he was confident naming rights could be sold for the president’s box and press box, possibly $1 million, each from ten $100,000 donations, and other spaces such as the recruiting booths, TV/radio boxes, and the head coach’s box.51

With respect to luxury suites and club spaces, many universities throughout the South began to renovate their own historic venues to incorporate those special seating opportunities and did so primarily through financial assistance emanating from their athletic associations or foundations. Luxury suites and club seats were attractive because the revenue they produced specifically provided “universities with an exclusive, high-dollar revenue stream that that flowed entirely to themselves; it was not diluted through NCAA control, conference revenue-sharing mechanisms, or the peculiarities of individual game contracts.” Athletic associations and foundations were important because universities also often used sporting contests to assist general university and athletics giving campaigns. Universities also feared future gifts might be reduced if their school did not provide high-profile donors, alumni, or businesses the opportunity to be courted and the chance to promote their commitment to the school. Other tangible benefits capable of publicizing their businesses, like signage and naming rights, were also increasingly desired by such donors.52
Georgia Tech's answer to the concessions, luxury suites, and club-seating building boom involved construction of both the Bill Moore Student Success Center and the Homer Rice Center for Sport Performance. The Moore Center opened in 1992 following the efforts of both Rice and President Crecine to create a world-class academic support facility and football stadium capable of recruiting the best administrative staff, coaches, and players to Tech. Alumnus Bill Moore donated $5 million for construction of the facility on the west side of the stadium. General renovations to the east concourse included improving restrooms and concession stands. Inside the Moore Center, new offices were built for the Tech administration and financial aid. Next, the Roy Richards Festival area provided a unique set of concession stands with the "motif of Underground Atlanta" and a décor that would "lend to a new atmosphere of excitement and comfort." Also incorporated into the Moore Center—more specifically the Richards Festival space—was the Georgia Tech Letterwinners Club. Finally, the Moore Center importantly added the Fifth-Down Club and thirty-two executive suites, which included the building of four president's suites and two pressrooms. Like the Wardlaw Center, Tech envisioned the Moore Center being open about 150 days a year to benefit outside groups seeking unique social and business activity experiences because of the nature of the venue and its location.53

By the start of the 1993–94 academic year, Tech's graduation rate had soared to 85 percent because of the Hearn Center, but calls to modernize Bobby Dodd Stadium and Tech athletics continued. As an example, the artificial turf installed in 1988 was replaced in 1995 with prescription athletic grass for $1 million. In a memorandum to Crecine, Rice wrote that grass maintenance costs would only add $100,000 a year to the athletics budget. Furthermore, Rice argued the new surface was necessary because artificial turf "hinders our recruiting process in football and is used against us by our [ACC and regional] competitors who all now have grass. The injury factor, although not documented, will be used against anyone maintaining an artificial surface." Other changes were made to expand the capacity of the Hearn Academic Center after $271,000 in pledges were collected and matched by the Georgia Tech Foundation's $200,000 commitment. Although these were minor changes, major changes to Bobby Dodd Stadium were on the horizon because space for expansion was available.54

Adjoining the Edge Athletic Center, the $8 million Homer Rice Center for Sport Performance provided twelve executive suites for Bobby Dodd Stadium following
an initial gift, this time $800,000 from an anonymous donor. The primary purpose of the 44,000-square foot Rice Center was to enhance student-athlete performance, provide additional space for the football staff, and offer extra seating amenities for students. The Rice Center opened in 1996, and importantly offered "recreational and fitness opportunities to the entire Georgia Tech community in an area of the campus where currently facilities of this nature do not exist."

Within the Rice Center, the George W. Mathews Jr. Athletic Heritage Center was established to preserve and promote the history of Georgia Tech athletics. Inside the Heritage Center, memorabilia and trophies sit amongst interactive displays and video kiosks to entertain and educate visitors about Tech and its athletics history. George W. Mathews Jr. played football under both William Alexander and Bobby Dodd; he later founded the Internet Corporation, which provided the funds to build the Heritage Center after Mathews's retirement in 1994.55

Regarding athlete performance, the original proposal for the Rice Center suggested Tech was interested in building and utilizing sport medicine and exercise physiology labs. Specialists at the facility use modern sports and medical technology to collect data on individual athletes to understand their unique "blueprint" to customize a workout regimen specific to their sport, position, or job role. Overall, six clinics work together to achieve this objective for Tech Athletics and to service the Atlanta-area community. The clinics support sports medicine, sports physiology, and vision departments, along with sports psychology and motion analysis. Finally, a nutrition clinic sits next to the Edge Center's athletic dining hall.56

In order to better comply with changing television standards and technology, a new lighting system was added during the summer of 1998. Rauna Fuller, director of administration and facilities for the Georgia Tech Athletic Association, argued this was necessary because "the current field lighting has not been updated...as long as 30 years," and deteriorated wiring threatened the power in the facility. As a part of the update, Tech upgraded the volt power distribution system to 20 kV in anticipation of the rest of the university embracing the 20 kV system. Overall, "This replacement would provide an option for an alternate source of electric supply to both the east and west stands, as well as the Edge Building" to meet their needs and that of potential television partners.57 In 2001, President G. Wayne Clough emphasized the importance of television by stating, "Televised athletic events provide the only opportunity that most Americans have to catch a glimpse of
our campus and form an impression of our institution. So it is important to have a facility that not only serves the needs of our team and our fans, but also showcases Georgia Tech in a positive light.\textsuperscript{58}

Though its landlocked position in Midtown prohibited significant expansions, discussion of another renovation to Bobby Dodd Stadium to match or stay ahead of ACC peers took place in the early 2000s.\textsuperscript{59} Tech officials sought to replace the east stands and level the north stands for a new structure to hold up to eleven thousand seats. The new $60 million north end zone section would include the addition of luxury suites and would serve as a bridge between the east and west stands, while simultaneously increasing capacity from eight thousand to ten thousand seats. In January 2001, Georgia Tech selected HOK Sports as the architect and Turner Construction in Atlanta to complete the Bobby Dodd renovation project. Phase One of the project began in December 2001 with the creation of permanent restrooms and concessions, as well as new bleachers in the south end zone. For Phase Two, in 2002, Tech installed new chair backs for the east club section and a natural grass field. Changes to the grass field centered on improving the drainage system and shifting the field north to accommodate the construction of seating added to the Wardlaw Building. The third phase of the project included the 7,000-square foot Kim King Locker Room for football, a 3,300-square foot players' lounge, and new offices for the football staff. Other Phase 3 changes involved the addition of ten new luxury suites to the north end zone and a media room prior to the 2003 season. The luxury suite addition also notably prompted the updating of twenty suites on the east side of the stadium and the creation of the Heisman Club Room. The chair backs of 2,040 seats between the twenty-five yard lines were also upgraded at this time, while the south end zone seating capacity increased by 2,970.\textsuperscript{60}

With an overall capacity of fifty-five thousand, Georgia Tech was still not done improving Bobby Dodd Stadium. In the summer of 2009, SG Contracting was selected to build new offices and a marketing suite for Georgia Tech's partner ISP Sports. Designed by Populous, the offices and marketing suite required the razing of six existing luxury suites. The seventy-five-person ISP Sports suite integrated a full service bar and food service area, among other amenities. Other renovations at this time also involved the replacement of the sound system and the incorporation of a new 2,400-square foot videoboard above the south end zone, at a cost of about $4.5 million.\textsuperscript{61}
The last significant renovations, prior to the announced five-year plan and $125 million renovations to Bobby Dodd Stadium, occurred in 2016. In the south end zone, a new videoboard offered 34 percent higher resolution than the videoboard it replaced. Next, new LED ribbon boards were secured to wrap around the stadium’s interior to enhance the communication of information to spectators and to improve stadium interaction with both the event and game/facility sponsors. For attendees, Wi-Fi and cell phone service was also improved and the Stinger Seats—customized waterproof seats made of high density foam—were added to both chair-back and bench-seating areas. Finally, the number of concession stands on the north mezzanine level was increased for the benefit of attendees, as well as concession equipment to improve the number of food options available on the west side. Finally, restroom conditions were improved through the addition of baby changing stations.

As the oldest football stadium in Division I-FBS, Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium has undergone a number of alterations and renovations under the scope of modernization to become a memorable facility. Like many other college football stadiums built in the early 1900s, Grant Field was originally constructed in response to increasing popular and commercial interest in college football, and to help support the athletics and recreational pursuits of the regular student body. For football, grandstand seating was important to generate gate receipts. As was being learned throughout the US, university administrators found enclosed stadiums requiring ticketed entry could produce significant economic windfalls for their athletics programs, which they could also use to support academic programs and other university construction. At Georgia Tech, commercial interest in football coincided with rising enrollments (resulting in an influx of university alumni) and population growth in metro Atlanta and the state. This demographic change gradually made earlier Tech football sites undersized and outmoded.

After initial construction, subsequent additions and modifications at Grant Field occurred semi-regularly following national and regional trends to further capitalize on growing enrollments and the Atlanta market. Often designed and constructed by local engineers, architects, and contractors with Georgia Tech ties, many of the alterations to the stadium reflected changing spectator preferences and offered improved student-athlete-related support services or spaces. For Georgia Tech administrators, more seats meant an increase in spectators, which led to higher gate receipts. Burgeoning success in the form of winning seasons and conference and
national championships, however, prompted additional calls by various stakeholder groups for improved stadium amenities. Press box and technology updates for media partners and skyboxes for alums and local business leaders were constructed, in addition to locker room renovations, concession stand additions, and new scoreboards. These changes also helped Tech keep pace with conference and regional rivals. Later in the facility’s history, new support facilities in a renamed Bobby Dodd Stadium served not only the academic needs of Tech students and student-athletes, but also the population of the metropolitan Atlanta area through a variety of education, health, and recreation opportunities and services.

Finally, as Bobby Dodd Stadium grew, changes to the stadium became more specialized, which helped the venue develop into a contemporary college football stadium but remain unique among stadia at peer institutions. In its more than one hundred-year history, the stadium has become intertwined with a number of rich narratives, including those associated with iconic names like Heisman, inimitable traditions, and celebrated rivalries. These customs, coupled with the enduring legacy of Bobby Dodd Stadium, contribute to Georgia Tech’s reputation for having among the most historic, yet modern, state-of-the-art sporting facilities and institutions in the South.

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NOTES


8. Georgia Tech Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium Tour, May 2016; “Athletics,” *The Georgia Tech* 1, no. 3 (1894): 46. Led by J.E.P. Stevens of Macon, GA, the original proposal for a conference included Trinity (Duke), Sewanee, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Auburn, and Mercer “to hold their championship games in a tournament;” *Southern Inter-Collegiate Athletic Association* (Athens, GA, 1895), 3; Germaine M. Reed, “Charles Holmes Herty and the Establishment of Organized Athletics at the University of Georgia,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (1993): 536; “Football Reform,” *The Georgia Tech* 2, no. 4 (1895): 59. Attendees included North Carolina, Vanderbilt, Auburn, Alabama, Sewanee, Georgia, Johns Hopkins, and Georgia Tech. The convention held by the SIAA on December 22, 1894, reported fifty men were maimed and two were killed the previous two seasons. For

9. Georgia Tech Grant Field at Bobby Dodd Stadium Tour, May 2016. The lease was about $3,000 a year by 1905; Robert B. Wallace, Dress Her in White and Gold: A Biography of Georgia Tech (Atlanta, GA, 1963), 49–50. Over sixteen seasons Heisman’s Georgia Tech teams won 102 games against twenty-nine defeats and seven ties; Wiley L. Umphlett. Creating the Big Game: John W. Heisman and the Invention of American Football (Westport, CT, 1993), 69. “John Heisman Contract with Athletic Association of the Georgia School of Technology 1904 to 1907,” Administrative History of Georgia Tech Athletic Association, series 2, Contracts, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA.


13. Franklin Garrett, Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of its People and Events, 1880s–1930s (Athens, GA, 2010), 613. Grant was president of the Gate City Loan, Saving, and Banking Company and later the director for the Third National Bank, in addition to being a Georgia Tech board of trustees member.


As one example, the University of Georgia conceded home games to Georgia Tech because Georgia valued the Atlanta market and understood that given the city's status as a transportation hub, Atlanta-based games could produce revenues greater than either Herty Field or Sanford Field in Athens. In fact, Georgia played Tech annually in Atlanta all the way through 1929, until Sanford Stadium was built.


24. Two New Sections of Stand Complete for Coming Season,” *The Technique*, September 18, 1925, 7; “Tech Stadium Dixie’s Finest,” *Georgia Tech Alumnus*, 4, no. 1 (1925): 34; “Grant Field ‘U’,” 149. Jesse Shelton worked on another local stadium, in Ponce de Leon Park. “Many Improvements Will be Made on Grant Field,” *The Technique*, December 19, 1924, 1; “Grant Field to Have One of the Largest
Stadiums in the Country by Next Fall,” *Georgia Tech Alumnus* 3, no. 5 (1925): 110; “West Stand Covers Pass in Favor of Double Decker,” *The Technique*, October 5, 1925, 7; “Grant Field, As Sections are Arranged for ’24 Season,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 21, 1924, A2.


30. Where Football is King, 12; “Report of the Secretary for the Year 1934–1935,” *Georgia Tech Alumni Magazine* 13, no. 5 (1935): 72. Football-playing prestigious peers include: University of Alabama, Auburn University, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, the University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, the University of Tennessee, and Vanderbilt University.


32. “Action is Begun for Expansion of Tech Stands,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1940, 12.


1. The Athletic Association previously produced $4.5 million for Tech athletic facility construction. “Tech Really Will Need 7,000 Seats,” Atlanta Journal, June 8, 1950, C1. William Alexander’s career coaching record at Georgia Tech was 134–95–15 over twenty-five seasons and featured, five Southern Conference championships, three SEC championships, five bowl game appearances, and recognition as the 1928 National Champions. Over twenty-two seasons, Bobby Dodd won 165 games and lost sixty-four while tying eight. Coach Dodd’s teams won two SEC championships, made thirteen bowl game appearances, and received recognition as the 1952 National Champions.


41. Darwin Fenner, Statement to Board of Administrators, December 31, 1964, box 49, Herbert Eugene Longenecker Papers, Tulane University Archives, New Orleans, LA; Board of Administrators Minutes, December 10, 1958, Tulane University Archives, New Orleans, LA; Board of Administrators Minutes, October 12, 1955. Report of Meeting between Special Committee of Board of Administrators and a Committee of the University Faculty Senate on Athletic Advisory Committee, May 9, 1956, Tulane University Archives; K. Adam Powell, Border Wars: The First Fifty Years of the Atlantic Coast Conference (Lanham, MD, 2004), 97; Henry H. Lesesne, A History of the University of South Carolina 1940–2000 (Columbia, SC, 2001), 232–34 [quotation].


44. John Logue, “New Tech Double Deck to Add 7,339 Seats by ’67,” Atlanta Journal, November 17,
1966, 6. GA Tech graduates one thousand or more students every year. Georgia Tech was 30–11–1 from 1962 through 1966, attracting over 1.5 million spectators and an average attendance of 47,169 (89 percent capacity); “Tech Gives Okay to Stadium Add,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 18, 1966, 53; Jesse Outlar, “The New Face in the Front of the Crowd,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 1, 1967, 51. Temporary seating at Grant Field increased seating capacity to sixty thousand, making it the third largest on-campus stadium in the South. Only Tulane’s Sugar Bowl (capacity 80,895) and LSU’s Tiger Stadium (capacity 67,519) were larger.

45. “Concrete Resurfacer,” *The Florida Builder* (November 1968), Grant Field: Buildings and Grounds, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA.


53. “Athletic Association Revamps Seating at Stadium,” Tech Topics 28, no. 4 (1992): B22; Office of the President J. P. Crecine, Grant Field: Buildings and Grounds, The Future of Bobby Dodd Stadium/Grant Field, p. 9 [quotation], Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA; Chris Carson, “Stadium Seating Finally Resolved,” The Technique, February 21, 1992, 1; Michele Wolfert, August 30, 1993 [Letter to J.P. Crecine], Athletics-Alexander Tharpe Fund 1993–94, box 1, folder 2, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA. The Fifth Down Club offered exclusive access to the stadium ninety-minutes before kickoff with special food and beverage service for individuals whose annual donations ranged from $1000 to $5000.

54. Office of the President J. P. Crecine, Athletics, Alexander Tharpe Fund 1993–1994, box 1, folder 2, Memorandum from Homer C. Rice, September 24, 1993, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA; Office of the President J. P. Crecine, Athletics, Association Board 1993–1994, box 1, folder 3, Minutes of the Georgia Tech Athletic Association Board of Trustees, April 20, 1994, 2, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA; “Turf’s Up,” Tech Topics 31, no. 3 (1995), B22; “Stadium Renovations,” Whistle, May 22, 1995, 4; Office of the President J. P. Crecine, Athletics, Association Board 1993–1994, box 1, folder 3, Memorandum from Homer Rice, April 5, 1994, 2 [quotation], Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA; Homer Rice to All Alexander-Tharpe Fund Contributors, September 24, 1993, Office of the President J. P. Crecine, Athletics, Association Board 1993–1994, box 1, folder 3, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA; Minutes of the Georgia Tech Athletic Association Board of Trustees, April 20, 1994, 2, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA; “Success Center Construction to Affect Stadium Seating,” The Technique, January 31, 1992, 1; “Stadium Seating Finally Resolved,” The Technique, February 21, 1992, 1. Seating near the north end zone was eliminated with the construction of the Moore Center and the Heisman Gym was razed.

55. Minutes of the Georgia Tech Athletic Association Board of Trustees, April 20, 1994, Georgia Institute of Technology Archives, Atlanta, GA; Memorandum from Homer C. Rice, September 24, 1993.


62. “Expansion and Renovation of Bobby Dodd Proceeding on Schedule,” I.