

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 14, No. 29

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

July 1995



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## BSB Now On Monthly Schedule

This is the second of three monthly issues of *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* scheduled for the summer. With OSU playing in the August 27 Kickoff Classic, the August issue will serve as *BSB's* Football Preview. That issue will be mailed mid-August.

# University Reveals Plans For New Basketball, Hockey Arena

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Before the year 2000, one of the world's largest universities will have a world-class basketball and hockey arena.

Or, at least that is the plan.

The Ohio State University unveiled plans for its \$75 million arena at a June meeting of its board of trustees.

Ohio State's men's basketball program grew out of 13,276-seat St. John Arena sometime around the late 1980s when then-coach Gary Williams revitalized the program. Then, under coach Randy Ayers, the Buckeyes soared to two Big Ten titles and the program's popularity shot sky-high.

And, although the program has suffered two consecutive losing seasons and attendance has lagged, there are signs a resurgence (and, in turn, a renewed need for more seating) is right around the corner.

Plus, OSU's women's basketball and ice hockey programs also stand to benefit from new facilities.

Add it all up and the time was right for a new OSU arena. The state of Ohio kicked in the initial \$15 million earlier this year to start the design process.

The result is a state-of-the-art, red brick edifice that upon completion will be the Big Ten's largest basketball arena with a seating capacity of 19,500.

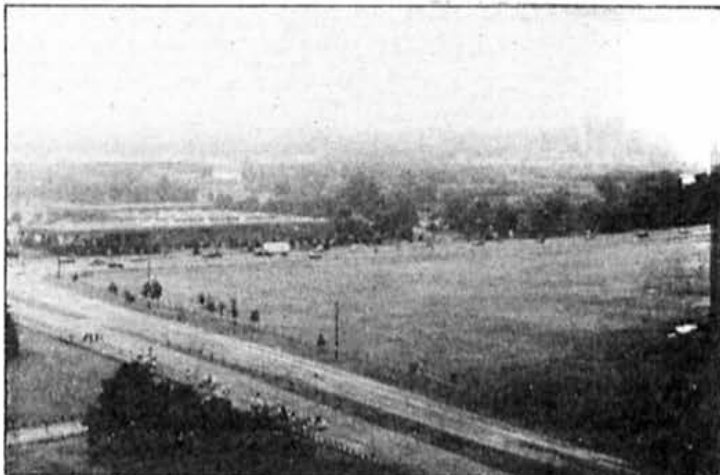
OSU president E. Gordon Gee likes the arena plan because it looks like it belongs on a college campus.

"All across the country they are building arenas that look like spaceships. This one looks like a college building, one that belongs on our campus," Gee said.

The arena is planned for a vacant field at the corner of Olentangy River Road and Lane Avenue, adjacent to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center and across from the Fawcett Center. It is part of a comprehensive facilities upgrade that also includes the new Bill Davis Stadium for OSU baseball and, down the line, a new soccer/track stadium.

The arena was designed by Moody Nolan Ltd. of Columbus and Sink Combs Dethlefs of Denver and incorporates red brick and limestone as well as rounded turrets on all four corners to comprise a castle look.

"It's unique in that I think we're trying to design it so it looks like Ohio State," said OSU athletic director Andy Geiger. "The facade is brick and a limestone look and I think these things are important because the building is going to have such a big profile. It's a gateway statement with regard to the university, so we need to make sure it looks like



**THE ARENA SITE** — This empty field at the corner of Olentangy River Road (foreground) and Lane Avenue will be the site of OSU's new arena. This photo was taken from the roof of the Fawcett Center looking toward the southwest.

• OSU basketball, hockey coaches excited about arena. (Page 6)

• University to feel financial benefits. (Pages 6-7)

• Penn State, Wisconsin also building arenas. (Page 7)

Ohio State.

"The other thing that will be special about the building is that it's a state-of-the-art, very capable, modern building. Our competition is building facilities like this. Penn State will have a new basketball arena and Wisconsin will have one very much like ours.

"We can't languish on this. We need to be aggressive. We can have a first-class arena that is capable of hosting any kind of event with the exception of an NCAA Final Four," he said.

Besides the \$15 million from the state, OSU will finance the arena with \$25 million in fund-raising (including a \$12.5 million fee for naming rights) and the sale of \$35 million worth of bonds. The bonds will require debt payments over 30 years.

"It's a mammoth project," Geiger said. "The budget for the building is \$75 million and it's going to be a challenge to keep it close to that. But I think it's terribly important that we build that building."

Geiger said the ice capability and the viability of the OSU hockey program as a draw will be important factors in the arena's success.

"A building that has the auxiliary

gymnasium, the ice rink and the amenities that this building has planned, we will have a very hard time sustaining the building if we don't have the ice. We need the hockey games and ice-related events to take place in the building," he said.

"Your whole operating base — concessions and ticket income and all those kinds of things — is predicated on 6,000 people coming to hockey games. I think that is a conservative estimate if we can get our hockey program up to a national championship contention level, which I don't see any excuse for us not doing given the facility. Hockey will become and has to become a real linchpin in supporting other things in the department."

As part of the funding process with the state, Ohio State agreed not to pursue high-revenue skyboxes in the initial construction of the arena. The city of Columbus hopes to corner the market on skyboxes to help finance its own arena project.

"Some day there will be skyboxes in our building, but not in a way that's competitive with what people are trying to do downtown," Geiger said. "We're going to stay out of the way of the downtown initiative with regard to skyboxes until that's resolved."

"I think it's important for us to participate with the city and be a partner with Franklin County regarding the downtown arena. If a downtown arena

Continued On Page 5



# Arena To Cost \$75 Million

Continued From Page 1

is good for Columbus, it's good for the university as well," he said.

Ohio State athletic and university events should fill about 60 dates a year at the arena. Geiger said the university will also market the facilities for at least 10 other special bookings per year, including concerts where the capacity could swell to 21,000 seats.

"Think of the concert possibilities alone, for the enjoyment of the students, faculty and staff, alumni and the general public," he said. "The building can host virtually any event."

The new arena could also serve as a recruiting tool for top-notch student-athletes in the basketball and hockey programs, Geiger said.

"We think, obviously, the recruiting image is self-evident," Geiger said, pointing to a class of eight incoming OSU men's basketball recruits (six from

Ohio) who have a chance to christen the arena as seniors.

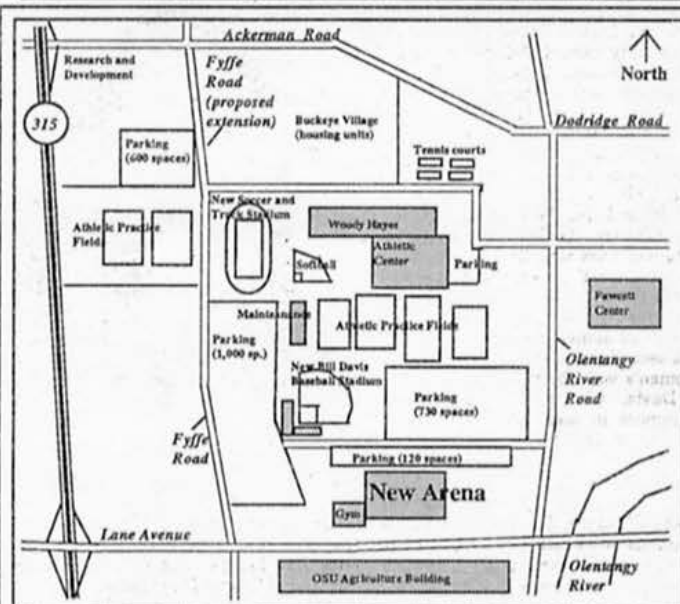
"No question it helps us there, and it totally changes what (new hockey coach) John Markell can do," he said.

The arena will feature four levels of seating from the arena floor level, up to the entry level (similar to St. John's mezzanine), up to the donor level (where skyboxes could eventually be added) and up to the upper level. Escalators will be provided on each side to move spectators from level to level.

It will also include wide concourses on every level for fan convenience as well as plenty of restrooms and concession stands that will offer fans a larger menu of food and refreshments. The OSU Sports Hall of Fame will be housed on the east end of the building's entry level, adjacent to an arena shop.

According to Geiger, the arena is projected to be open in late 1998.

## OSU Arena Location, Facts



### Arena Facts and Figures

- **Purpose:** To provide a forum for Ohio State varsity basketball, ice hockey and other sports as well as other university events, convocations and concerts.
- **Seating Capacity:** 21,000 for concerts and special events; 19,500 for basketball; 17,000 for ice hockey.
- **Cost and Funding:** Overall cost is projected to be \$75 million. The state of Ohio has appropriated \$15 million. OSU must raise \$25 million in donations, while the remaining \$35 million will be raised through the sale of bonds.
- **Name:** The arena has not been officially named. The university has set a price of \$12.5 million for the privilege of naming the arena. With that money in hand, OSU would only need to raise another \$12.5 million to meet its \$25 million fundraising target.
- **Significant Features:** Adaptable for a wide range of events; integrated into the campus architecturally; four tiers of seating provide intimate ambience for spectators; auxiliary gymnasium (with two full courts) provides on-site practice space when arena is occupied; Fyffe Road extension and location should provide easy access to and from Ackerman Road and Lane Avenue exits off state Route 315.
- **Timetable:** Construction is expected to be completed by late 1998, with first use for basketball and hockey during the 1998-99 season.

• Compiled by Steve Helwage

## 'BOT' Prizes Announced

Buckeye Sports Bulletin's Buckeye On The Town contest continues with its grand prize of dinner for two at many of Columbus' best restaurants, but not for long.

The deadline for the prize drawing is July 14, so fill out and send in the form on page 20 of this issue.

Here is another sampling of places the lucky winner can expect to enjoy:

Jimmy's Place Upstairs, located at 595 S. Third St. in Columbus' German Village district, offers guests a stylish yet casual dining atmosphere in which to experience some of the freshest seafood, steak and pasta meals available.

One of the more popular items is the soft-shelled crab, and Jimmy's has garnered quite a reputation for its Cajun entrees.

Jimmy's Place Upstairs has a full-service bar (known for martinis) and banquet facilities accommodating up to 60 people.

Hours are: lunch, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and din-

ner, 5:00 to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday and 5:00 to 11:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday. Jimmy's Place Upstairs is closed Sundays.

For 31 years, Red Door Tavern has treated its guests to delicious, home-style soups, sandwiches, dinners and desserts in an atmosphere as comforting as its fare.

Now with two locations, 1736 E. Fifth Ave. (the original) and 6360 Frantz Road in Dublin, Red Door can please even more visitors (OSU game attendees take notice: the Fifth Avenue location is also open for breakfast Saturdays).

Menu favorites include Red Door's club, reuben, homemade pies and soups (made daily) and the famous Sally's Hillbilly Cheeseburger.

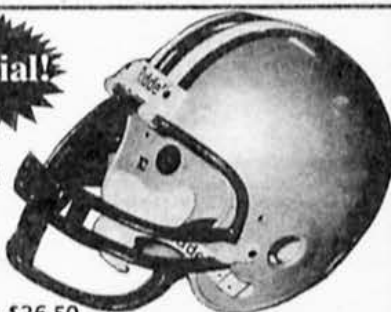
Hours for the Fifth Avenue location are: 9:30 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to midnight Saturday. The Frantz Road location is open 10:30 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Saturday. Red Door Tavern is closed Sundays.

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Ayers, Darsch, Markell Glad OSU Is Building New Arena

# Coaches Happy To Have Facility To Sell

By MIKE WACHSMAN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Remember how you salivated when mom and dad said you could indeed have some sweet confection for dessert if you finished your dinner?

Your eyes became saucers and you raced through your meal, anticipating the coup de grace.

Now you know how Ohio State basketball coaches Randy Ayers and Nancy Darsch, along with recently hired hockey coach John Markell, feel about the prospect of moving into their sweet new digs late in 1998.

When the university unveiled its plans for a new arena to supplant homey but antiquated St. John Arena, all three coaches did something akin to a cartwheel.

"It's a great facility," Darsch said. "This is an exciting time for Ohio State, and having the opportunity to play in a facility like this gets you pumped. There's nothing like the idea of a new facility to get you going."

Markell, saddled with the burden of the OSU Ice Rink, believes a state-of-the-art facility is just one thing that will propel Buckeye hockey to the upper echelon of his sport.

"Anytime you move from a facility such as ours to something like the new arena, it can only help the program," he said. "It may not be much, but next year's freshmen will get to see a hole in the ground. The next group will get to see more. Every little bit brings us closer to it."

"We have a chance to have the best hockey facility in the entire country. It will be Olympic-sized, which is larger

than NHL rinks. Only Minnesota has a rink that size right now. The possibilities are endless for what we can accomplish with this thing."

Ayers, ever the veteran, thinks there are also practical reasons for shutting couches and coaches into new digs.

"I like the fact that we'll be able to hold some receptions," he stated. "For example, we recently had our former-player golf outing, but right now there is no meeting place to host any type of reception. When we bring recruits in, it's primarily in our offices and in our locker room. You'd like to be able to get them in a different environment."

"I think the arena helps us, from a PR standpoint, tremendously."

All three agreed that recruiting, a critical area for any coach, might become easier when kids cast their eyes on a lavish new arena.

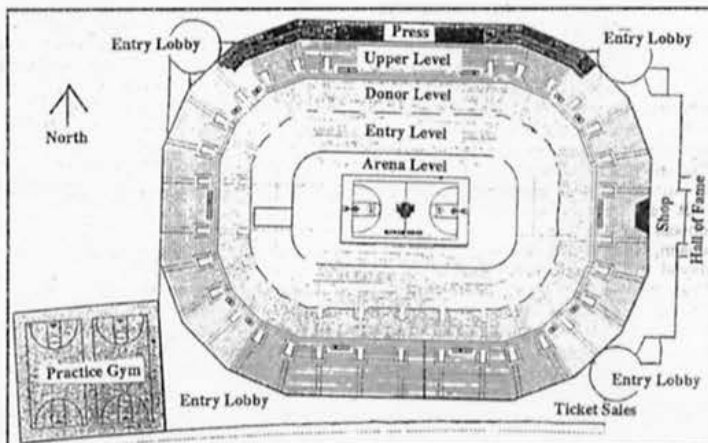
Ayers admitted the prospect of playing in the new arena helped with many of the Buckeyes' eight newcomers.

"We used it a little bit this year with the six in-state players that we signed — that they'll have a chance to play in that arena their senior year," he said.

Darsch also touched on the recruiting benefits, but from an aesthetics standpoint, there are a couple of things that stand out.

"I really like the look of the arena from the outside," she said. "It has a very traditional look and feel. The concept of having a (separate) practice floor is great, especially if it's going to be used for some other things. The lobby (with the Hall of Fame) will also be a big attraction. It's a place people will certainly want to see."

Markell hit the ground running



**ARENA BLUEPRINT** — Pictured above is the basketball configuration for OSU's new arena. It will consist of four levels (arena level, entry level or mezzanine, donor level and upper level). A practice gym is located in the southwest corner.

when named as Buckeye mentor after a couple of seasons apprenticing under former coach Jerry Welsh.

He understands his program has the furthest to go, so he'll take any help he can get.

"I'm probably going to benefit the most from it," Markell said. "Randy and Nancy both feel comfortable playing in St. John, and it's a great facility and great atmosphere. Our rink has a smaller capacity, so the chance to play in something like the new arena is a great opportunity."

And while Ayers and Darsch already

have established programs, albeit ones that are trying to reclaim their place among the league's elite, Markell is basically starting from square one.

"This is a heck of a challenge for me," he admitted. "Everyone says this is a great hockey town, and now we'll get to see if that's true. Some people say right now, 'Well, it's the rink.' We're getting a new one. Then they'll say, 'Well, it's the product.' That will be there, too. People don't want to see losing hockey. I certainly wouldn't. So if the facility and the team are both there, there's no reason not to turn out."

## OSU To Feel Financial Benefit Of New Arena

By JEFF RAPP  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The financial chart has been set for some time now on the \$75 million Ohio State arena project.

Approximately \$35 million of the funding will come through the selling of bonds and another \$25 million will need to be generated through private fundraising. That leaves \$15 million, which already has been appropriated by the state to get the ball rolling.

But now that the designs have been drawn and ground is about to be broken, all the grunt work put in to jump-start the project will pale in comparison to what is ahead.

The athletic department is now

facing an unprecedented amount of fund-raising and financial planning.

"We're still analyzing and drawing financial budget projections," senior associate athletic director Paul Krebs said, "but the important thing at this point is the numbers give us reason to believe we can move forward and make this an economically viable project."

"Our goal is to operate at a profit or at least at break-even."

Eric Kunz, assistant vice president for budget and space planning at the university, is heading a financial subcommittee for the project. He said the other eight representatives come from all angles of the university, including student affairs, student development and the faculty senate.

Plans are preliminary and the pace

will remain methodical so as not to overlook any important issues involved with making the arena, set for completion in 1998, a financial boon instead of a burden.

"I submit this type of care and concern shows the university is viewing this very seriously," Kunz said. "We're not going to launch out with the project regardless of the consequences. We can make the athletic department a much improved entity, but if this is done wrong, it could be damaging."

Kunz has a main goal of not allowing the venture to exceed \$75 million. Any figure beyond that would call for an even greater effort in private fundraising. The university currently is working with a construction budget of \$52 million.

Kunz said the bonding aspect is currently slated to be a 30-year enterprise. Athletic director Andy Geiger said the university's debt on the bonds can be retired with an annual payment of just \$2.5 million. Geiger wants that money to come straight from special revenue-generating events such as concerts.

Kunz, however, added that the current financial outline projects the hosting of only 10 such events so as not to rely on that income. Despite recent speculation, the projections do not involve professional sporting events, circuses, trade shows and the like.

"We're looking at all aspects of revenue generation such as concessions

Continued On Page 7



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# Penn State, Wisconsin Also Building Arenas

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Ohio State isn't the only Big Ten school in the midst of an arena project.

Penn State is in the process of finishing its new Bryce Jordan Center, while Wisconsin is at about the same stage of its building project as Ohio State.

It is no surprise that these three schools are building new arenas. Last season, OSU, Wisconsin and Penn State played their home basketball games in three of the Big Ten's four smallest arenas. Once these three schools build their arenas, Northwestern's 8,117-seat Welsh-Ryan Arena will be the only Big Ten basketball facility that seats fewer than 13,000.

For Penn State, joining the Big Ten for the 1992-93 season meant major upgrades were in order for both its basketball program and its arena. The Nittany Lions had played in archaic, 6,846-seat Rec Hall since 1928. Suddenly, with the big boys of college basketball such as Michigan, Indiana and Purdue making regular stops, Rec Hall wasn't big enough to handle the crowds.

The \$55 million Jordan Center, named for former Penn State president Bryce Jordan, will seat an estimated 15,000 for basketball and 16,500 for other special events. When completed, it will be the fifth largest arena in the Big Ten. The Jordan Center, located across Curtin Road from Beaver Stadium in State College, is targeted for completion on Nov. 28.

Contractors are rushing to meet that date after delays pushed the project back several months.

"It's moving along as we have expected it to after the initial delays," PSU president Joab Thomas said recently.

Penn State is hopeful of christening its new arena with its Big Ten men's basketball home opener after students return for the spring semester on Jan. 8, 1996.

"We need that extra month (of December) to test all the systems," said Bill McKinnon, associate vice president for business and operations at Penn State. "You have to make sure all the heating, ventilation, fire alarm systems and those sorts of things work. You can't get occupancy without that."

PSU officials are walking a tightrope, hoping they won't have to refund any ticket money to the estimated 8,200 additional patrons for games scheduled at the Jordan Center should they need to be moved back to Rec Hall at the last minute.

The university estimates that the Jordan Center will have a total statewide economic impact of nearly \$100 million during its first five years of construction and operation.

At the same time the arena is being built, Penn State's basketball program is making waves in the Big Ten. The Nittany Lions finished 21-11 and in the NIT's Final Four under 12th-year head coach Bruce Parkhill this past year.

Like Ohio State, Wisconsin plans to complete its arena and open it for games in late 1998. But Wisconsin is at least one step ahead of OSU when it comes to fund-raising.

Grocery magnate, Milwaukee Bucks owner and U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl has announced he will contribute \$25 million to be used toward the construction of a new "basketball-first" sports arena on the Madison campus. The donation by Kohl, a 1956 Wisconsin graduate, is the largest single private gift in the history of the university.

Ohio State is offering naming privileges for its arena for \$12.5 million, a figure in line with what Cleveland-area planners received from Cleveland Indians owner David Jacobs and Cleveland Cavs owner Gordon Gund for the naming of the two new Gateway building projects last year.

Wisconsin's plans call for a \$72 million, 18,000-seat arena near Dayton and Lake streets, adjacent to the Southeast

ing services foresees the new arena and the Fawcett Center as "the perfect brother-sister act."

The Fawcett Center, which houses a 70-room hotel, cafe-style restaurant, 12 meeting rooms and a 500-seat auditorium, has been a pet project of the university for a year and a half. A new and modern entrance sign is highly visible just north of the Olentangy River Road-Lane Avenue intersection and the \$1.7 million in renovations to the building will be completed in September.

"I've talked with Paul Krebs on the matter and we both feel there will be a lot of synergy between the new arena and the Fawcett Center," Whitbeck said. "People are going to need hotel rooms, food and additional parking, so we're expecting a lot of new clientele."

Increased use of the Fawcett Center and other nearby establishments is only part of the goal to cash in on the arena.

"I think it's going to uplift the whole region," Geiger said. "The presence of a building of this size and capability is a huge asset for the university. The building can host virtually any event."

## Big Ten Basketball Arenas

### Existing Facilities (listed by capacity)

School	Arena	Opened	Capacity
Indiana	Assembly Hall	1971	17,357
Illinois	Assembly Hall	1963	16,321
Iowa	Carver-Hawkeye Arena	1983	15,500
Michigan State	Jack Breslin Center	1989	15,138
Minnesota	Williams Arena	1928	14,300
Purdue	Mackey Arena	1967	14,123
Michigan	Crisler Arena	1967	13,562
Ohio State	St. John Arena	1956	13,276
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Field House	1930	11,500
Northwestern	Welsh-Ryan Arena	1951	8,117
Penn State	Rec Hall	1928	6,846

### New/Proposed Facilities (listed by completion date)

School	Arena	Cost	To Open	Capacity
Penn State	Bryce Jordan Center	\$55 million	1995	15,000
Wisconsin	Kohl Center	\$72 million	1998	18,000
Ohio State	??????	\$75 million	1998	19,500

Recreation Facility. The UW project is similar in scope to OSU's \$75 million, 19,500-seat project.

Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson included the arena plan in his 1995-97 capital budget for state building projects. Thompson said if everything falls into place, construction could begin by spring 1996.

The financing plan includes \$45 million in private gifts and donations (including Kohl's \$25 million) and no more than \$27 million in state revenue program bonding.

"Herb Kohl's generous donation will make a new UW arena a reality, and the people of Wisconsin greatly appreciate his gift," Thompson said.

Like Penn State, Wisconsin's hoops program appears to be on the rise. In 1994, the Badgers made their first NCAA Tournament appearance in 47 years. After a down 1995 year, successful Wisconsin-Green Bay coach Dick Bennett was hired to continue the resurgence.

Wisconsin has played in the barn-like Wisconsin Field House (capacity 11,500) since 1930. When its new building and OSU's new arena are completed, they will rank 1-2 in the Big Ten in capacity.

**ANOTHER CONFERENCE** school that may be considering a new arena in the near future is Indiana.

The Hoosiers currently play in the Big Ten's largest basketball facility in 17,357-seat Assembly Hall, built in 1971. The problem is Assembly Hall is not a true basketball facility. The sight lines from the upper deck, one observer recently said, "leave fans thinking they are watching a bunch of ants playing basketball."

The university and its boosters recently sold chunks of the old Assembly Hall floor to help offset a \$600,000 arena renovation project.

And, in an effort to keep up with the Joneses (OSU and Wisconsin in this case), Indiana — as the Big Ten's preeminent basketball program — is expected to explore the possibility of a bigger hoops arena in the coming decade.

## Arena Helps Fawcett Center

### Continued From Page 6

and signage, but we don't have a definitive model yet," Kunz said. "The financial model we do have is built strictly upon university events and events currently held in St. John Arena, with only a minimum number of outside events."

Approximately 19,500 seats can be used for basketball in the arena, as many as 17,000 for hockey and upwards of 21,000 for concerts.

"Through our research, we've found that once you reach a certain capacity, the cost of the building superstructure becomes restrictive," OSU communications director Malcolm Baroway said. "The cost increase of the next 5,000 seats as compared to the first 20,000 was significant and we were at the high end of our range."

If the yet-unnamed arena can draw NCAA tournaments and other high-profile events, the university wants to be ready. One facility that will definitely come into play is the Fawcett Center, located just across the street at 2400 Olentangy River Road.

Diana Whitbeck of university hous-

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## Diamond Club Assists With Fund-Raising Task

## Baseball Stadium Project Moving Ahead

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It has taken more than six years, five Big Ten championships, four straight 40-win seasons, approximately \$3 million in donations, two athletic directors and one restrained coach, but The Ohio State University is finally catching on.

It's just about time to dig into level ground and build a new baseball stadium.

The project has been on the athletic department board since it was first proposed to former athletic director Jim Jones by the original members of the Diamond Club in early 1988. President Bruce Heine, who lettered for OSU from 1966-68, and fellow former players Mike Hanlin (1978) and Bill Wentz (1959-61) founded the Diamond Club at that time in anticipation of program enhancement under newly hired coach Bob Todd.

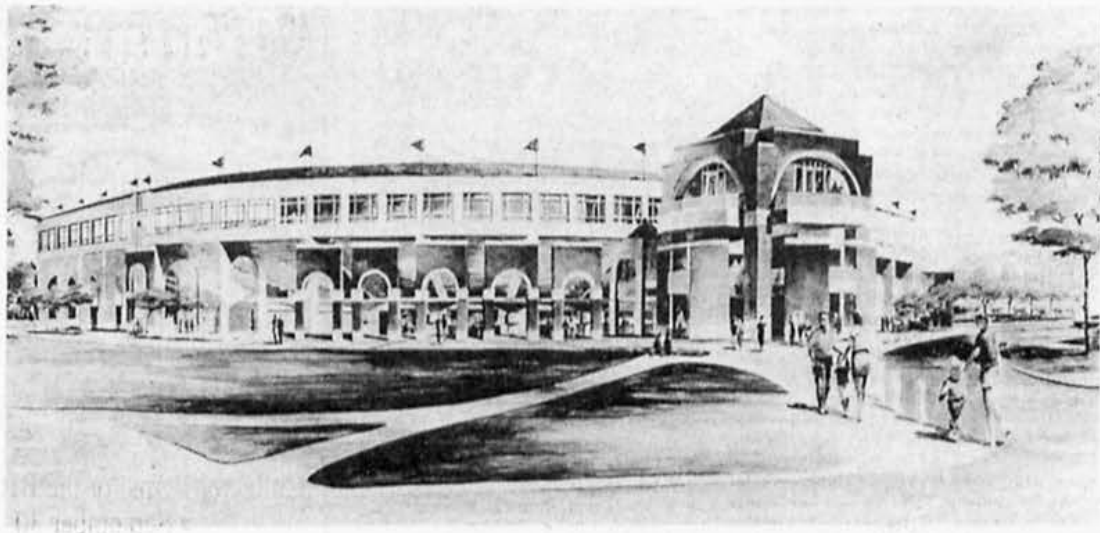
"He found we were on the same page with him probably the moment we got this idea started," Heine said. "We feel Coach Todd is one of the class people in the sport and he deserves a great facility for his program."

To show him the Diamond Club was serious, membership has grown to nearly 400. Heine said 320 are active members.

Both Todd and the Diamond Club were handed mostly promises and rhetoric from Jones instead of results and the project dragged along for years. Some progress has been made since Andy Geiger was hired to succeed Jones in the spring of 1994, but the abounding anxiety is yet to wash away.

Todd recently spoke like a man who had the last ounces of patience extracted from him when asked about the stadium.

"There's no doubt it will be a great boon to our program," Todd said. "It's the missing piece, so naturally I'm pleased we're moving forward. But, obviously, it's been a frustrating topic



**BASEBALL STADIUM PLANS** — Pictured above is an artist's rendering of Bill Davis Stadium, the new baseball stadium planned for the field adjacent to Ohio State's new arena at the corner of Olentangy River Road and Lane Avenue. Ground has already been broken on the new field and OSU officials hope if enough funds are raised to have the facility ready by the 1997 season.

around here."

Moving the Buckeyes out of high-school-like Trautman Field and into a first-rate collegiate dwelling was once considered just a pipe dream. However, blueprints are expected to turn into reality soon as the athletic department is nearing the construction of Bill Davis Stadium.

"I think we're down to days," Heine said enthusiastically, "and after six and a half years, days don't bother me."

There is still no set timetable on the project, but school officials say the stadium should be in use for the 1997 season if ground can be broken soon.

"We're very confident right now," said Mike Dolan, OSU's superintendent of facilities. "We've activated the draw-

ings and we're currently in the process of meeting structure codes through the state. Once it's approved, we're ready to go to bid."

"Andy's getting people pumped up about it and I'm very encouraged we'll succeed soon."

In January, Geiger said the school would not advance the project until all the funds were raised. At the time, \$500,000 in private funds were still outstanding and the exact site for a new \$75 million baseball-hockey arena was not determined.

Todd questioned that policy publicly, saying, "I agree in principle that the department should not go in debt to build a baseball stadium. (But) I'm sure if you look around this campus, not every building was built with every dollar ac-

counted for."

Todd has been especially irked about the lack of communication from above since Geiger's announcement.

"It bothers me that I have not really been in on the progress reports," he told BSB. "I'm kind of keeping my ear to the ground on this."

Heine said Todd's pain is understandable.

"I think he's remained patient, but he's very frustrated," he said. "I mean, if we were talking about football or basketball, we wouldn't have these guidelines."

"At the same time, I think Andy's genuinely committed to it," Heine added, "and he has a vested interest in getting this behind him because he has a major project ahead with the new

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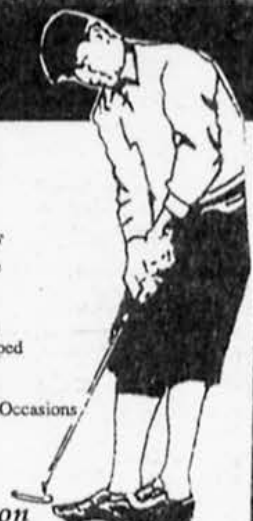
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arena."

Tom Hof was hired as associate athletic director for development by Geiger on the strength of his involvement with such construction projects. Hof acknowledges the arena is a major priority of the department, but that the baseball stadium will not be overlooked.

"We are basically awaiting the OK from the rest of the university," Hof said. "There are a certain number of sign-offs to go. We have to work through the finance committee and let them know how much money we've raised to date, what we need, etc."

"We've made a commitment to the baseball stadium and certainly that has not wavered. We want to move forward, but we want to cross all the T's and dot the I's."

Heine said 30 former players and former OSU baseball coach Dick Finn were assigned to 15 Varsity "O" members each in June to generate added funds through telemarketing. Pledge brochures have been sent out to alumni outlining the project's "Sponsor a Seat" program.

The Scarlet Plan gives fans the opportunity to purchase season ticket box seats for a minimum of five years for \$1,000 per seat. The Gray Plan allows the purchase of season grandstand seats for \$500 per seat. In both plans, the contributor's name will be engraved on a Wall of Honor plaque at the stadium.

"It seems to be working pretty well," Heine said. "We have had a significant amount of pledges from that program. I'm sure the long-distance bills are large, but we're willing to do whatever we can."

Bill Davis Stadium, slated to stand near the Olentangy River Road-Lane Avenue intersection and south of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, will feature a top-notch scoreboard, restrooms, built-in concession stands and chair-backed seating. The layout of the stands calls for 3,000 seats expandable to 5,000. The OSU baseball media guide claims that recent renovations allow Trautman, adjacent to the WHAC along Fyffe Road, to seat 1,500.

Hof said 2,100 parking spaces will be added in the area and there is a possibility 700-800 more can be added. The latest drawings show the stadium sitting north of the arena, with a plaza connecting the structures.

Heine said the entire stadium venture was originally labeled a \$2.4 million project and the price tag has now exceeded \$3 million. He estimates the Diamond Club has accounted for close to \$800,000 so far.

Much of the other funding has come in the form of large gifts to the athletic department, most importantly the sizable donation awarded by Columbus resident Dorothy Davis. She awarded \$1.5 million through the Davis Foundation and in the name of her stepson, William, who is deceased.

"The family has been a strong donor to the university over the years and we are extremely grateful," said athletic administrator Denny Hoobler, who has been close to the project for three years.

Hof said part of the Davis donation hinges on the sale of a family home. The university is hoping to attain maximum market value, estimated to be several hundred thousand dollars.

"We're seeking out the money for it as aggressively as we can," said Hof, giving no timetable.

Dorothy Davis was unavailable for comment since department policy disallows outside sources access to potential major contributors.

Heine said the Diamond Club has been steered clear of donors as well, even though he repeatedly offered to contact New York Yankees principal owner George Steinbrenner, an OSU graduate and possibly the nation's most notorious baseball fan.

"Jim (Jones) would always tell us he was saving him for a bigger project and we were told not to contact him," Heine said. "From what I understand, Andy has been pursuing him aggressively and he has now committed between \$100,000-\$200,000."

When the stadium is built and the team moves from Trautman Field — which is now slated to be converted into a track and soccer stadium — the Buckeyes figure to have a valuable recruiting tool. They also could benefit as the host team of an NCAA Regional, a pointed goal of the facility.

Word is the NCAA is looking for a more northern regional site to cut down on the heat incurred during postseason games.

The proposal may be bidded out soon and ground could be broken in the fall if all falls in place quickly.

OSU athletic director Andy Geiger said the earliest the Buckeyes will take the field at Bill Davis Stadium is 1997.

"We will be playing baseball in the stadium in the spring of 1997," Geiger said. "It couldn't be done (for 1996). By the time you go through all of the contract bidding period and all of those kinds of things, it physically can't be done. And, we haven't finished the fund-raising. There's still more to be done."

Geiger deflected criticism that OSU is waiting until all of the funds are accounted for before starting the project.

"The difference between the stadium and the arena is the fact the arena will be self-liquidating. The baseball stadium will not be even if we sold out every game, 3,000 seats at \$5 a seat. It doesn't bring enough in to carry a significant payment schedule."

"You don't do the concessions business and you combine that with April in Columbus, it's not the same thing at all. Having 3,000 seats is one thing, but (filling it) even with a new stadium is going to be a challenge," he said.

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