



# BRIGHAM FIELD AT HUSKIE STADIUM



*New \$9.5-million NIU Academic and Athletic Performance Center in North end zone*



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**F**or Northern Illinois University football, Huskie Stadium has been "home, sweet home" since 1965.

As the Northern Illinois program entered its 40th anniversary season in the West campus facility this fall, there might be no more significant game or major event in the Huskie Stadium legacy or during the institution's 107-year intercollegiate athletics history than what will occur in the coming months in the North end zone area.

## The New Legacy: The AAPC

The \$9.5-million NIU Academic and Athletic Performance Center—planned for that North end zone—will soon no longer be an architect's rendering. At an April 22, 2005, press conference in conjunction with the annual Northern Illinois Spring Football Game, Athletics Director Jim Phillips announced that Huskie Intercollegiate Athletics will embark on the largest capital project in its history.

With \$5 million in private funds committed to the project, the AAPC moved into the public phase for solicitations. Once the \$7-million campaign goal is reached, Northern Illinois will break ground for the new all-purpose facility. Upon completion, the AAPC will boast the facilities that a sound Huskie mind and body require in a diverse, 17-sport National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I program with 400-plus student-athletes.

"The exposure that has resulted from our recent football successes has a profoundly positive impact on NIU—undergraduate enrollment applications soared, financial support rose and student and alumni pride and participation flourished," Northern Illinois President John Peters said. "In order to ensure that we may continue to enjoy the many on and off the field successes, a commitment must be made to the future of this athletics program."



## 40TH ANNIVERSARY (1965-2005)

The idea: Enhance the Huskie Stadium complex facilities beyond a playing venue and invest in the recruitment and retention of the school's most valuable commodity, i.e., the student-athlete.

"Once on campus, the facility will allow our current and future deserving student-athletes to learn and train in an environment that will maximize their academic and athletic potential," Phillips added. "The AAPC will provide our coaching staffs with a recruiting tool to attract the most-gifted student-athletes."

NIU head football coach Joe Novak understands the ramifications of such an all-purpose facility.

"It will help us make the most of our talent, it will help us retain student-athletes, and it will help us in recruiting future student-athletes," Novak said. "We've all heard the term 'front porch.' Your athletic program and your facilities are the front porch of the university. Those facilities, that's the first impression of your program, your institution."

According to the updated floor plan, the building will be positioned on a three-foot grass berm and located adjacent to the North end zone of Huskie Stadium. The AAPC will be connected via a hallway to the West Grandstand infrastructure.

The centerpiece of the main floor will be the Academic Support Center. This vital area will

feature a fully equipped technology lab with internet access. The Academic Support Center will have four areas for private study, group study, one-on-one tutoring, and guest lectures, plus additional office space for Student-Athlete Support Service personnel.

Located on the East end of the facility, the AAPC Strength and Conditioning Center will encompass 14,000 square feet—almost triple the size of the current 14-year-old Hall of Fame Speed and Strength Complex in Huskie Stadium. The new center will include the most advanced cardiovascular equipment, weight machines, and free weights. A four-lane, 40-yard indoor track will also be installed to aid training efficiency.

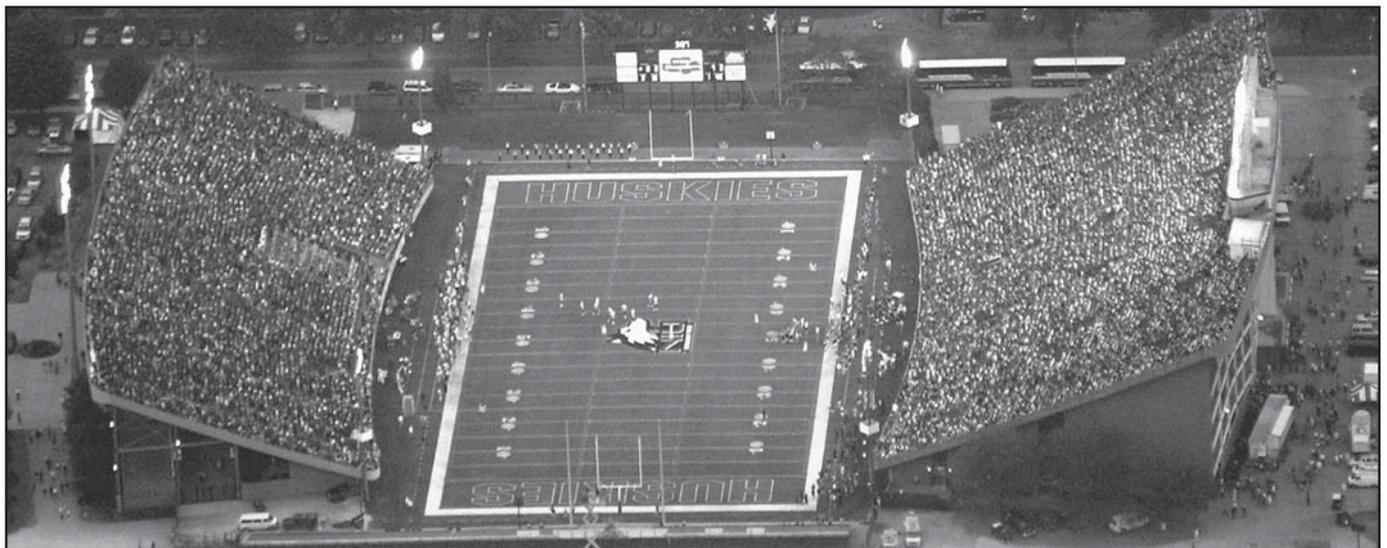
On the opposite end of the AAPC are the Athletic Training Room and the Equipment Room. Designed to provide the most efficient service to the Northern Illinois student-athletes, the training room offers exclusive areas for rehabilitation, injury prevention, hydrotherapy, and taping. The facility also has private examination rooms for the team physicians and training staff. The new equipment room area features more storage space, plus new washers and dryers.

Also located on the main floor, the Football Locker Room will enjoy easy access to both the training and equipment rooms, in addition to a centralized meeting area for pre-game and halftime pep talks, plus a bronze Huskie dog statue in the tunnel en route to the Brigham Field playing surface.

The second floor of the NIU Academic and Athletic Performance Center marks the location of the football staff offices, meeting rooms, and the Tiered Classroom which features seven levels and seating for 150 student-athletes in oversized chairs. The room can be used for team meetings or divided in half and utilized as a study hall in the evenings.

The Tiered Classroom can provide an ideal venue for

*(Continued on page 160)*



**Brigham Field Dedication Night: Maryland at Northern Illinois on a national Fox Sports Net telecast (8-28-03)**



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other university-related functions, such as coaching clinics, workshops, and speakers. In addition, the AAPC will have two roof terraces for entertaining university guests.

## Huskie Stadium: The History

Originally, the West campus football facility was known as "The House That George Bork Built" in honor of the former Little All-America quarterback who led the Northern Illinois grid program to national prominence in the early 1960s. Over the years, the players and coaches affectionately nicknamed their home "The Doghouse." In May, 1974, it was officially designated as Huskie Stadium during NIU's 75th anniversary observance.

On August 28, 2003, the facility had a new identity—one even more Cardinal and Black than the previous versions—Brigham Field at Huskie Stadium. Announced in July, it became a formality immediately prior to the home opener against the University of Maryland when the "Brigham Field" logo graphic was unveiled before a national television audience. Best of all, Northern Illinois prevailed over the No. 15-rated Terrapins in overtime, 20-13, for its third-ever success versus an Associated Press Top 25 club before a then stadium record 28,018 spectators.

All in all, a fitting tribute to Robert J. Brigham, an institutional icon who carried the school colors for 50 years as a student-athlete, assistant coach, head coach, director of athletics, and special assistant to the president before his retirement in June, 2001. Similar to its namesake, the 28,000-seat Brigham Field at Huskie Stadium carries a storied past. To its credit, the university has continued to maintain and upgrade the institution's top outdoor all-around athletics facility. In the last decade, NIU added the long-awaited East Grandstand in 1995, installed the state-of-the-art FieldTurf playing surface in 2001, modernized the scoreboard and video display system in both 2000 and 2001, and created the attractive South end zone berm in 2002.

And physical changes notwithstanding, Huskie Stadium has certainly served as the stage for the fulfillment of numerous athletic dreams.

The Northern Illinois superstructure was dedicated November 6, 1965, on Homecoming / "Legislator's Day" with a 48-6 triumph over Illinois State before 18,858 spectators. Little All-America QB Ron Christian completed 18-of-31 passes for 314

yards that afternoon.

Worth an estimated \$22 million in 1998 dollars, the new field was originally constructed to accommodate 20,257 spectators—15,000 on the concrete West stands.

The West side superstructure now includes the Hall of Fame Speed and Strength Complex, one gym which serves as the training home for both gymnastics and wrestling plus a second gym featuring "safety-pit" facilities for the gymnastics program, classrooms, offices, locker rooms, athletics training facilities, storage areas, ticket windows, and elevator leading to the main press box, auxiliary television press box, plus the university sky box.

The stadium's AstroTurf playing surface, pioneered in 1969, was recarpeted in 1980 and 1990 before being replaced by a new FieldTurf surface in 2001.

On September 20, 1969, the Northern Illinois-Idaho game marked the state's first major-college gridiron contest played on artificial turf. The Huskies won, 47-30. Hard-core trivia fanatics can also note that Huskie Stadium was the site for the state's first intercollegiate men's soccer match on AstroTurf as NIU blanked Marquette University by a 5-0 count on September 27, 1969.

Huskie Stadium has also been the site for numerous other memorable performances and performers. NIU's first "major" grid victim was Bowling Green State University on November 16, 1968. The Falcons—the winningest Mid-American Conference program in that decade—were beaten 7-6, thanks to a 97-yard opening kickoff return by split end John Spilis and a PAT kick by halfback Wayne Fiedler.

In keeping with the university's commitment to Division 1-A football, the capacity was expanded in 1982 to 30,998 seats, including several rows of field-level benches.

The next season saw thousands of NIU students ignore chilly conditions to celebrate the Huskies' first Mid-Am crown and California Bowl berth after NIU downed Ohio University by a 41-17 tally in the regular season finale on November 19, 1983.

Northern Illinois' initial triumph over a Top 25 ballclub came at Huskie Stadium on October 6, 1990, as quarterback Stacey Robinson established two NCAA records—rushing for 287 yards in the first half and finishing with 308 overall—in leading NIU to an eye-opening 73-18 win over Fresno State Univer-



East Grandstand (1995)

## 'Doghouse' Facts

### Huskie Stadium / West Superstructure

**Ground-Breaking:** January 30, 1964  
**Dedication:** November 6, 1965  
**Architects:** Holabird and Root, Chicago, IL  
**General Contractors:** Peterson-Roberts Construction, Rock Island, IL  
**Total Cost:** \$2,265,172 (1965)  
**Financing:** Bond Revenue  
**Original Capacity:** 20,257 (1965)  
**Expanded Capacity:** 30,998 (1982), 31,000 (1995), 28,000 (2003)  
**Playing Surface:** Natural Grass (1965), AstroTurf (1969, 1980, 1990), FieldTurf (2001)  
**Lighting System:** Musco Lighting, Inc., Oskaloosa, IA (1993)  
**Amenities:** Press Box (1965), Sky Box / President's Box (1983), Auxiliary Press Box (TV Booth) (1983)  
**Nicknames:** "The Doghouse"  
 "The House That George Bork Built"  
**First Game:** NIU 48, Illinois State 6 (11-6-65)  
**First Score:** Gerry Sandberg 28-yard pass from Ron Christian (Terry Henigan kick), 4:08 left, 1st Qt. (11-6-65)

### East Grandstand

**Ground-Breaking:** April 24, 1995  
**Dedication:** September 9, 1995  
**Architects:** Hellmuth, Obata, and Kassabaum Sports Facilities Group, Inc., Kansas City, MO  
**General Contractors:** Williams Brothers, Peoria, IL  
**Total Cost:** \$4,000,000 (1995)  
**Financing:** Bond Revenue / Private Funding

### Academic and Athletic Performance Center

**Ground-Breaking:** TBA  
**Dedication:** TBA  
**Architects:** HKM Architects & Planners, Inc., Arlington Heights, IL  
**Total Cost:** \$9,500,000 (2005)  
**Financing:** Private Funding



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sity—rated 20th by UPI and 24th by AP. The “Wishbone Wizard” guided the Huskies to school team records with 733 rushing yards, 806 yards total offense, and 36 total first downs.

And 1993 saw LeShon Johnson become the second national rushing champion—joining Mark Kellar in 1973—to call Huskie Stadium home.

In 2002, Northern Illinois registered its second-ever victory against a Top 25 opponent with the classic 26-17 triumph over the AP’s No. 16-ranked and previously unbeaten Bowling Green State in the “Duel in the Doghouse.” The unforgettable afternoon on November 9, 2002, was witnessed by a crowd of 25,822 spectators, a regional Fox Sports Net television

audience, and one of the largest print media contingents to cover a MAC regular-season football contest.

When the 79,000-square foot multi-use AstroTurf field was last recarpeted in 1990, it marked the beginning of a series of improvements for this decade.

The turf, padding, base repair, and eight-year maintenance contract cost approximately \$655,000. The project was approved by NIU’s Board of Regents and funded by bond revenue monies. In 1991, a handicapped-accessible seating area was added to the South end zone stands and the strength complex was completed.

In 1992, Northern Illinois selected the renowned sports architectural firm, Rosser Fabrap International of Atlanta, GA, to develop a multi-phase expansion plan.

Improvements for 1993 included new state-of-the-art, energy efficient metal halide lights, a revamped public address system, and two meeting rooms.

The dual-level lighting system—installed by the famous Musco Lighting, Inc. of Oskaloosa, IA—generates 100 foot-candles for television games and gears down to only 50 foot-candles for practices. The light poles also featured new fixtures and wiring.

Additional Phase I upgrades included completely renovated locker rooms and the new Premier Club seating section with 1,200 chairback and 800 benchback seats. The 1994 campaign brought the 2,000,000th person through the stadium turnstiles. In 40 seasons, 2,987,711 fans have watched Northern Illinois football at Huskie Stadium.

And in the spring of 1995, Phase II construction began on the East Grandstand which was approved by the school’s Board of Regents on April 13. The project drew praise for not utilizing state tax dollars or special student fee money. The funding came through a combination of private support and amortization, plus maintenance and repair funds within the current bond system.

Designed by the architectural firm of Hellmuth, Obata, and Kassabaum Sports Facilities Group, Inc., of Kansas City, MO, the East Grandstand features 10,400 aluminum bleacher seats, supported by a steel-beam superstructure. It includes 54 rows of seats and measures 67-feet high, 104-feet deep, and approximately 300-feet wide.

In addition to matching the West side in terms of raised seats approximately 6-to-8 feet above the FieldTurf surface, the architectural design also parallels the opposite side. The pre-cast concrete “lip” at the tops and sides of the East Grandstand, plus the brick walls on the East facade and along the North and South sides, match those of the West superstructure.

The East

Grandstand also includes a handicapped seating deck which stretches between the 35-yard lines, and eight portals for access into that part of the stadium. Underneath, the East Grandstand concourse has six washroom facilities—four for women and two for men—along the exterior East wall, a main food commissary for concessions in the middle, and concrete paving.

Williams Brothers of Peoria, IL, served as the contractor for the project after having also handled the Premier Club seating and lockerroom renovations prior to 1994.

The 2000 football season brought the ultimate in fan amenities to Huskie Stadium. A new South end zone scoreboard that featured an 11-by-15-foot video display system—developed by Daktronics, Inc., of Brookings, SD—and uses red, green, and blue LEDs (light emitting diodes) to illuminate video and messages in 16.7 million colors. The scoreboard also has an enhanced, directional Dodge Electronics sound system. Twenty television monitors were installed at various stadium locations—concession areas and concourses—so fans won’t miss a play. In 2001, a larger video display board was installed on the south end of Huskie Stadium.

Other proposed upgrades include: a public concourse on the West side; expansion and renovation of existing skybox and press box space; the addition and / or renovation on the West side for increased support areas ranging from restrooms and concessions, expanded office space, sports medicine and equipment centers, plus additional locker facilities.

In 2005-06, NIU will sponsor 17 intercollegiate sports—seven for men and ten for women. Huskie Stadium’s sports medicine and locker areas are utilized by 11 of those programs—football, baseball, soccer, tennis, and wrestling on the men’s side; gymnastics, softball, soccer, tennis, plus indoor and outdoor track and field on the women’s side.



**Yesterday (From Left): Ted Emery, George "Chick" Evans, Leslie Holmes, Howard Fletcher, and Fred Rolf "dig in" on Ground-Breaking Day January 30, 1964.**

---NIU Archive Photos

## MAC Football Stadium Capacities

School	Stadium	Capacity
1 Temple	Lincoln Financial	68,532
2 Akron	Rubber Bowl	31,000
Buffalo	Buffalo	31,000
4 Eastern Michigan	Rynearson	30,200
Western Michigan	Waldo	30,200
6 Central Michigan	Kelly / Shorts	30,199
7 Miami (OH)	Yager	30,012
8 Kent State	Dix	29,287
9 Bowling Green State	Perry	28,599
<b>10 Northern Illinois</b>	<b>Huskie</b>	<b>28,000</b>
11 Toledo	Glass Bowl	26,248
12 Ohio	Peden	24,000
13 Ball State	Ball State	22,500

## Huskie Stadium Records

YEAR	OVERALL	NIGHT	ATTEND.
1965	2-0-0	0-0-0	31,445
1966	5-1-0	1-0-0	75,595
1967	3-2-0	2-0-0	76,692
1968	1-5-0	0-2-0	80,398
1969	2-3-0	1-1-0	68,390
1970	1-4-0	1-2-0	59,739
1971	3-1-1	2-0-0	62,382
1972	4-2-0	0-0-0	41,877
1973	3-2-0	0-0-0	54,989
1974	2-3-0	0-0-0	36,410
1975	2-3-0	0-1-0	45,326
1976	1-3-0	1-1-0	51,059
1977	2-3-0	0-1-0	37,851
1978	3-2-0	1-1-0	77,300
1979	4-2-0	1-1-0	75,703
1980	2-3-0	0-2-0	68,714
1981	2-4-0	1-1-0	102,911
1982	4-1-0	1-1-0	107,890
1983	4-0-0	1-0-0	93,950
1984	3-2-1	1-1-0	107,964
1985	3-1-0	1-0-0	82,252
1986	1-3-0	0-2-0	59,548
1987	3-3-0	0-1-0	86,733
1988	5-1-0	2-0-0	60,486
1989	6-0-0	2-0-0	82,460
1990	5-0-0	2-0-0	67,167
1991	2-3-0	1-1-0	57,863
1992	3-2-0	1-1-0	57,505
1993	3-1-0	1-0-0	52,564
1994	3-2-0	1-1-0	58,279
1995	2-3-0	0-1-0	76,350
1996	0-5-0	0-1-0	64,821
1997	0-6-0	0-1-0	78,555
1998	1-4-0	0-1-0	77,374
1999	3-2-0	0-2-0	76,760
2000	4-1-0	1-0-0	78,786
2001	5-1-0	2-0-0	87,622
2002	4-2-0	1-1-0	125,715
2003	7-0-0	2-0-0	165,026
2004	4-1-0	1-1-0	135,260
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>117-87-2</b> (.573 Pct.)	<b>32-29-0</b> (.524 Pct.)	<b>2,987,711</b>



# BRIGHAM FIELD: THE NAMESAKE

**B**righam Field at Huskie Stadium. It was only fitting that Northern Illinois University intercollegiate athletics honored Robert J. Brigham, the man who carried the Cardinal and Black colors for 50 years as a student-athlete, assistant coach, head coach, director of athletics, and special assistant to the president before his retirement in June, 2001.

If anyone embodied the growth of Huskie sports in the late 20th Century—building a program from the College Division days in the mid-1940s to National Collegiate Athletic Association Division 1-A status in the late 1960s and beyond, it would be “favorite son” Bob Brigham. This Northern Illinois athletics icon was there for every step of the way.

The Brigham Field announcement was made by former NIU Director of Athletics Cary Groth prior to the 2003 opener vs. Maryland.

“It is a natural and an overdue tribute to Dr. Bob,” Groth said. “I cannot think of a more loyal and devoted Northern Illinois alum. He served his alma mater with distinction, dignity, integrity, and perseverance. You really cannot say enough about his many contributions to NIU intercollegiate athletics and this institution. We all felt this was the most appropriate way of recognition.”

Brigham’s ties with Northern Illinois began in 1946 after serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Actually, it was a less than auspicious start for the future NIU Hall of Famer. The man who was synonymous with the Huskies for 39 years and turned out to be his predecessor as athletics director, George “Chick” Evans, cut Brigham from the football team in his freshman year. As he did for the next half century, Brigham persevered and prospered.

In his student days, he would earn varsity letters in wrestling (1) and football (3). Brigham became a starter and eventually one of the greatest blocking backs in Northern Illinois gridiron history as a member of the fabled “Pony Backfield.” Eventually, he set the school’s single-game (242 yards vs. Washburn in 1948), single-season (786 yards in

1948), and career (1,221 yards in 1947-49) rushing records. His single-game rushing standard stood for 25 years until All-Century fullback Mark Kellar broke it in 1973.

Upon graduation from NIU in 1950, Brigham began his coaching career in football and wrestling at downstate Tuscola High School. His 46-year run at Northern Illinois started in 1955 when he returned to the DeKalb campus as an assistant football coach. Promoted to head wrestling coach in 1956-57, he would post an 82-45-6 won-lost-tied record in dual meets and produce five national individual champions—all of whom would eventually make the NIU Athletics Hall of Fame—and 11 Huskie mat All-America selections. Brigham’s best wrestler turned out to be Hall of Famer Roy Conrad who ruled the 177-pound bracket at the NCAA Division I Championships in 1960 and at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics in 1961. He served as an assistant under Hall of Fame head football coach Howard Fletcher on NIU’s 10-0-0 College Division National

Miami (FL), Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas State, and Northwestern—and then gain admittance into the Mid-American Conference in 1973.

“While ‘Chick’ (Evans) opened the door, so to speak, Bob is the one who took the program through it,” recalled Northern Illinois peer, fellow Hall of Famer, and sports information director emeritus Bud Nangle. “One of his most enduring accomplishments was convincing (Wisconsin AD) Elroy Hirsch to play the Huskies in football (in 1971). That got NIU into the so-called ‘big-time’ in football significance.”

During the Brigham tenure as AD, Northern Illinois would also enhance its athletics facilities—including the installation of the state’s first major-college AstroTurf field in Huskie Stadium in 1969. In his time, the program would receive NCAA regional tournament bids in baseball (1972), men’s soccer (1973), and men’s basketball (1981-82), NCAA national team berths in men’s golf (1976) and men’s gymnastics (1981-82 and 1982-83), plus a major bowl appearance (1983). In 1987, he

began handling the university’s compliance responsibilities as a special assistant to the president until his retirement at age 77 in 2001.

A native of Marion, IL, and a graduate of Chicago Bowen High School where he was an All-City fullback, Brigham received a bachelor of science degree in education from NIU in 1949,

a master of science degree from Illinois in 1951, and a doctoral degree from Indiana in 1963. He was inducted into the NIU Physical Education Hall of Fame in 1987 and the school’s Athletics Hall of Fame in 1989. In 1991, Brigham received the F. R. “Bud” Geigle Outstanding Service Award from the NIU Foundation.

Brigham is married to the former Gertrude Fish—a 1949 Northern Illinois grad from Western Springs. The couple—who have two grown sons, Robert, Jr., and David—enjoy retirement, travel, and, of course, follow the Huskies.



**Brigham (No. 25) in his “Pony Backfield” days (late 1940’s-left) and with Hall of Fame coach Howard Fletcher (1963-right).**

Championship team in 1963.

Named AD and chair of NIU’s physical education department on September 1, 1968, Brigham followed in the administrative footsteps of the legendary Evans, who was considered the patriarch of the Northern Illinois intercollegiate athletics program for his 39-year tenure (1929-68). Brigham’s first major accomplishment as the new AD was the elevation of the Huskie football program to what the NCAA then called “University Division” (now 1-A) status in 1969. In the same vein, he would upgrade the institution’s scheduling—which, in football, would include such “major-major” opposition as Wisconsin, Iowa, West Virginia,





# ATTENDANCE RECORDS

## Home / Single Game

28,221, vs Western Michigan  
(10-18-03)  
28,218, vs Iowa State  
(9-27-03)  
28,071, vs Southern Illinois  
(9-11-04)  
28,018, vs Maryland (N)  
(8-28-03)  
27,802, vs Long Beach State (N)  
(9-12-81)  
27,719, vs Toledo (N)  
(11-9-04)  
27,700, vs Toledo  
(11-12-83)  
27,385, vs Central Michigan  
(10-16-04)  
26,873, vs Kansas State (N)  
(9-6-97)  
26,685, vs Eastern Michigan  
(10-13-84)

## Homecoming Game

28,221, vs Western Michigan  
(10-18-03)  
27,385, vs Central Michigan  
(10-16-04)  
26,685, vs Eastern Michigan  
(10-13-84)  
26,420, vs Toledo  
(10-19-85)  
23,933, vs Southern Illinois  
(10-7-89)  
23,740, vs Southern Illinois  
(10-27-79)  
23,350, vs Eastern Michigan  
(10-23-82)  
22,805, vs Nevada-Las Vegas  
(10-7-95)  
20,939, vs Toledo  
(10-10-87)  
20,186, vs Central Michigan  
(10-19-02)

## MAC Home / Single Game

28,221, vs Western Michigan  
(10-18-03)  
27,719, vs Toledo (N)  
(11-9-04)  
27,700, vs Toledo  
(11-12-83)  
27,385, vs Central Michigan  
(10-16-04)

## Home Opener

28,071, vs Southern Illinois  
(9-11-04)  
28,018, vs Maryland (N)  
(8-28-03)  
27,802, vs Long Beach State (N)  
(9-12-81)  
26,873, vs Kansas State (N)  
(9-6-97)  
26,250, vs Western Michigan (N)  
(10-8-83)  
24,682, vs Illinois State (N)  
(9-9-00)  
22,357, vs Louisville (N)  
(9-9-95)  
22,184, vs Lamar (N)  
(9-12-87)  
21,370, vs Western Illinois (N)  
(9-7-96)  
21,362, vs Western Michigan (N)  
(9-7-85)

## Parents' / Family Day

26,445, vs Ball State (N)  
(9-29-84)  
26,364, vs Western Illinois (N)  
(9-27-86)  
26,266, vs Akron  
(10-2-04)  
26,250, vs Western Michigan (N)  
(10-8-83)  
24,121, vs Ball State  
(11-1-03)  
23,563, vs Ball State (N)  
(10-2-82)  
22,600, vs Bowling Green State  
(11-2-85)  
21,863, vs Western Illinois  
(11-7-87)  
18,569, vs Western Michigan  
(10-31-81)  
17,367, vs Marshall  
(10-6-01)

26,685, vs Eastern Michigan  
(10-13-84)  
26,445, vs Ball State (N)  
(9-29-84)  
26,420, vs Toledo  
(10-19-85)  
26,266, vs Akron  
(10-2-04)

## Home / Season Average

27,052 (Five Games)  
(2004)  
23,575 (Seven Games)  
(2003)  
23,488 (Four Games)  
(1983)  
21,578 (Five Games)  
(1982)  
20,952 (Six Games)  
(2002)  
20,496 (Four Games)  
(1985)  
17,994 (Six Games)  
(1984)  
17,152 (Six Games)  
(1981)  
15,757 (Five Games)  
(2000)  
15,475 (Five Games)  
(1998)

## Road / Season Average

38,720 (Six Games)  
(1991)  
36,416 (Seven Games)  
(1986)  
34,954 (Six Games)  
(1996)  
32,670 (Five Games)  
(2003)  
32,380 (Six Games)  
(1995)  
30,597 (Seven Games)  
(1985)  
29,850 (Six Games)  
(1992)  
28,843 (Five Games)  
(1988)  
28,632 (Seven Games)  
(1993)  
28,491 (Six Games)  
(1999)

## MAC Road / Single Game

36,502, vs Toledo (N)  
(9-29-01)  
35,107, vs Western Michigan (N)  
(9-3-98)  
31,007, vs. Bowling Green St.  
(10-25-03)  
30,081, vs. Marshall  
(10-30-99)

## Road / Single Game

95,589, vs Penn State  
(9-14-96)  
84,922, vs Florida  
(11-4-95)  
83,708, vs Florida  
(10-19-91)  
83,018, vs. Alabama (N)  
(9-20-03)  
79,635, vs Auburn  
(9-23-00)  
77,460, vs Wisconsin  
(9-14-02)  
76,194, vs Nebraska  
(9-9-89)  
76,043, vs Nebraska  
(9-8-90)  
70,220, vs Iowa  
(9-28-91)  
69,131, vs Wisconsin  
(9-14-85)

## Overall / Season Average

28,587 (Eleven Games)  
(1986)  
27,365 (Twelve Games)  
(2003)  
26,924 (Eleven Games)  
(1985)  
26,380 (Eleven Games)  
(1991)  
24,959 (Eleven Games)  
(1996)  
24,603 (Eleven Games)  
(1995)  
24,489 (Twelve Games)  
(2004)  
23,221 (Eleven Games)  
(1983)  
23,090 (Twelve Games)  
(2002)  
22,999 (Eleven Games)  
(1993)

(N) — Indicates Night Game



# GLIDDEN FIELD

**F**or most of The First Century, Northern Illinois University's home base in football was Glidden Field.

Located on East campus, where the Art and Music buildings are now, Glidden Field dated back to the institution's origins. Originally developed as a harness racing track and fairgrounds for the annual DeKalb Agricultural Association Fair, it was part of a 64-acre tract donated to the state by Joseph Glidden—prominent DeKalb farmer and community benefactor—as “an inducement to locate” a proposed Normal school in the area.

Glidden Field was your typical College Division football stadium. “It was beautiful,” remembered NIU Athletics Hall of Famer Jack Pheanis who played and coached on it. “Great turf, soft field. They (school) wouldn't let anyone on it. Only for football games. It was the jewel of the (nearby) Kishwaukee (River).”

(NIU also played some home night games on the old, lighted DeKalb High School field, which was located where the current Clinton-Rosette Middle School is on North First Street.)

Peruse vintage campus pictures and you see wooded areas and homes bordering on the East. On the opposite side, Still Gym and Gilbert Hall created a red brick masonry border. It was cozy. It was home until progress, the university's growth, and national success arrived.

Particularly during the early 1960s when coach Howard Fletcher's Northern Illinois teams earned three consecutive Interstate Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championships and a trio of Mineral Water Bowl berths. Glidden resembled an overstuffed telephone booth on a college campus. Talk to old-timers and you hear about overflow crowds, five-digit attendance figures in a 5,500-seat capacity field, and long lines on Saturday mornings before the Glidden gates opened.

“People stood around the end zones, on the sidelines, everywhere. It was the major thing to do on campus on weekends,” Pheanis said. On the same subject, “Fletch” once remarked with a chuckle: “Yeah, I used to get a lot of help coaching on the sidelines if you know what I mean.”

Back then, being a BMOC meant living in the upper floor rooms on the East side of Gilbert Hall—probably 20-to-30 feet higher than the old plywood press box and top of the Glidden Field bleachers—and, in essence, having one of the earliest “Sky Box” suites in

Northern Illinois history.

In fact, the Huskie coaching staff also had a third-story perch on the front of Gilbert during games. “We could check the opposition formations and relay them to ‘Fletch’ on the sideline with a radio,” Pheanis said. “Except that sometimes the radios wouldn't work and we'd get the Readi-Mix concrete truck.”

The earliest references to Glidden Field appear in *The Norther* yearbook in 1903 and 1904, mentioning the facility by name as well as a crowd of “400 strong” at an early Huskie contest. As pictured in the 1907 yearbook, the Glidden Field grandstand featured a roof. The football and cinder track layout dated back to the 1920s. More bleachers were added after World War II. The end came on October 9, 1965. Northern Illinois beat Northeast Missouri State, 22-20, in the Glidden finale.

Actually, Glidden Field's football “life” was extended until the final two 1965 home dates due to construction delays on the new 20,257-seat facility on West campus.

“We all anticipated the new stadium and the new era. It was time,” Pheanis said. “But there are a lot of memories of Glidden Field that can't be taken away.”



*Coach Howard Fletcher gets carried off the field after upsetting Southern Illinois, 17-7, in 1958.*



*NIU's first “Sky Box” in Gilbert Hall*



*Glidden Field West bleachers circa 1959*