

Hoosier Happenings

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The latest news from the world of Indiana University athletics

Field OF Dreams

Jordan Field was the home of IU's football and baseball teams for years, and it helped expand the athletic footprint at Indiana



Photo reprinted from 1916 *Arbuzas*

By Ken Bikoff

When Indiana opened its new North End Zone facility earlier this year, it marked a major upgrade for the Hoosier football program. Complete with the largest weight room in college athletics and more bells and whistles than a clown convention, the NEZ is state of the art when it comes to the best amenities for football players and other athletes.

The North End Zone also proved to be a major investment for the athletic department. When the dust settled on the construction of the facility, more than \$40 million had been spent to bring the Hoosier football program into the 21st century. IU's football complex is now the envy of just about every school in the country, and the commitment shown by the Indiana administration should help prove to fans and recruits that the Hoosiers are serious about turning around their football fortunes in the near future.

The North End Zone facility certainly is a far cry from the humble beginnings of IU's football squad. Once upon a time, building a stadium for football wasn't a priority for Indiana. In fact, Hoosier football wasn't really part of the equation when it came to the athletic programs, and the university certainly wasn't ready to shell out big bucks to build the Hoosiers a home.

IU football — and baseball, for that matter — had to make do with the resources available on campus, and they were far from opulent. The programs had to perform on what was little more than a glorified pasture, a multi-purpose area that wasn't exactly respected by students and faculty for being a pristine place of athletic glory.

To get to the bottom of the story behind the home of IU's main outdoor athletics — football and baseball — in the first half of the 20th century, we actually have to go back to the 19th century, and

we have to wander a bit off the campus that has become so familiar to alums through the years.



Indiana may have a proud basketball tradition, but it was baseball that first carried the Hoosier name on the athletic field. IU first hit the diamond in 1867 when students coming home from the Civil War carried the game back to Bloomington. Indiana first played on the original Indiana University campus at Seminary Square, which had opened in 1820 as the State Seminary. Eight years later, the name was changed to Indiana College and finally, in 1838, the name was changed for good to Indiana University.

Whatever the school was called, it was located at Seminary Square, and part of that 11-acre plot was University Athletic Field. It was there that Hoosier athletics were born. The Square, which currently sits between South College and South Walnut and is bounded by E. 2nd Street (near the current site of a Wendy's and a Kroger Grocery store), saw the first Indiana baseball and football games, but it would take a while until the Hoosiers started regularly challenging other schools.

In 1883, Indiana University history would be forever changed when a fire broke out on the Seminary Square campus, destroying a number of buildings. Following the fire, the citizens of Monroe County donated a total of \$50,000 to the university, but instead of rebuilding on Seminary Square, the administration purchased a wooded portion of land from Moses F. Dunn east of downtown Bloomington. The university was starting to make a progression from a seminary to a secular educational institution, and changes in the curriculum reflected that shift in attitude.

That same year the Hoosiers finally took their first dip in the intercollegiate pool when they battled nearby Indiana Asbury College, which was located in Greencastle, Ind. A year later, the Asbury College administration decided that instead of being named after the first American bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the school would be better served by being named after a major donor, Washington C. DePauw, and thus DePauw University was born.

The lesson, ladies and gentlemen, is that in 1884 as much as in 2009, money talked.

By the way, standing in right field for IU's first intercollegiate baseball game was a junior by the name of William Julian Bryan. Six years after that game, Bryan married Charlotte Lowe, and they took on each other's last name. In 1902, William Lowe Bryan would be named the 10th president of Indiana University, but we'll get back to him in a bit.

Two years after the fire, IU appointed David Starr Jordan, a biology professor, as its first non-clergyman school president. Jordan, who was just 34 years old at the time, was a pretty interesting character. In addition to being the youngest president IU has ever appointed, he also was a world-renowned ichthyologist — he studied fish — and had no fewer than 28 species of fish named after him. Three genera of fish are named after him, he was an expert witness in the famous Scope's Monkey Trial in the 1920s, and he has a number of schools named after him in the state of California. He left Bloomington to become the president of Stanford University in 1891, but not before making a major impact on the IU campus.

It was on Jordan's watch in 1885 that Indiana's football team first suited up for a game. The game was played at University Athletic Field and

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“(The University) is expected to sell all the lots within a short time,” the *Telephone* reported. “They will largely be the property of members of the University faculty and substantial and attractive residences will be constructed. Among those who have already purchased lots are Dr. Swain, Profs. Rogers, Bergstrom, Fetter and Rhetts, and Judge Reinhard and Theodore Louden.”

It quickly became clear, however, that IU wasn’t about to build a late-1800s version of a subdivision so close to campus.

With all the new land, IU realized it could move the athletics that were

covered by the Rose Well House, a gift in 1908 from alumnus Theodore F. Rose. The Rose Well House was constructed using the portals of the Old College Building, which had been a part of the Seminary Square campus. After the campus moved to its current location, the Old College Building was sold to the Bloomington School Board to be used as a high school. The portals are one of the few remnants of the Seminary Square campus to make their way to the current IU campus.)



The new athletic field was ready for use during the fall of 1897. The Hoosier football squad was the first to use the nameless facility, battling Rose Polytechnic (which would later become the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology) to a 6-6 tie. A two-plank board fence was the only seating in place at the time, and seats for the game were free. The Hoosiers went 6-1-1 on the season, beating such powerhouses as Bedford, the Indianapolis Manual Training School and DePauw along the way.

Baseball finally got a chance to play on the field in the spring of 1898. A diamond was laid out on the football field, and the Hoosiers celebrated the opportunity to play in better conditions than were afforded by the University Athletic Field. Unfortunately, there was the problem of the Jordan River. When the river was diverted, no effort was made to try to improve drainage on the field. When the spring rains came, they not only soaked the ground from above, but the water from the river would seep into the ground, making the entire area a muddy mess for weeks afterward.

On the bright side, it was during this time that the facility was finally named Jordan Field for its proximity to the Jordan River and in honor of Jordan himself. The football team made the most of its home-field advantage, despite not playing in front of large crowds during the early days. A number of contemporary stories say the Hoosiers didn’t allow an opponent to score a point at Jordan Field during the 1898, 1899 and 1900 seasons (IU’s record book shows that some teams may have scored in games, but those could have come during neutral site games that weren’t designated as such in the record book. When in doubt, it’s a good idea to take the word of the people who were there).

IU played its first games in what would become the Big Ten at Jordan Field in 1900. Indiana and Iowa joined what had been known as the Western Conference in 1899, and they became a part of the newly-named Big Nine the following year. The Big Nine wouldn’t become known as the Big Ten until the 1917 season when Michigan — which had earlier been a member of the conference before dropping out for nine years — rejoined the league. The conference dropped back to the Big Nine during the 1940s when the University of Chicago dropped out, but it returned to Big Ten status in 1950 when Michigan State was added to the league.

But we’re getting off track.

The Hoosier baseball squad struggled to find suc-

although no actual result of the game is known, Hoosier history on the gridiron was officially kicked off. Indiana’s football program didn’t get off to a good start. Its first intercollegiate game came in 1887 when the Hoosiers battled Franklin College. Franklin won 10-8, a score that is made pretty impressive when you consider the following two facts.

First, the Hoosiers brought just 12 players to the game, which meant there was only one substitute. They didn’t bring more players because it was reported that they didn’t realize football was going to be such a physical game, which is odd considering the game had already been played on campus for two years. Second, the team didn’t bother to practice before the Franklin game, and the Hoosiers were completely unprepared to play (an accusation that wouldn’t go away for going on 125 years now).

By 1893, the university decided it needed to put a fence around the University Athletic Field, and the Board of Trustees allocated \$125 (nearly \$3,100 in 2009 dollars) for the improvement. Along with the construction of the men’s gymnasium on what was then known as the “University Park” campus, the IU administration was starting to commit to building the physical education/athletic program at the university. By 1896, a men’s gymnasium complete with a locker room and a stage for student assemblies was built on campus near Owen Hall, and IU’s athletic facilities would take another step forward a year later when the administration decided it needed more land.

And as you will learn, whenever Indiana needed land during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it turned to Moses Dunn.

The July 9, 1897 edition of the *Bloomington Telephone* reported that the university had purchased 14 lots that had been a part of the Dunn Farm, extending from 3rd Street to the creek that ran near the Dunn Cemetery.

played blocks away at University Athletic Field onto the newer campus. The inconvenience of having to walk so far to see a game or use the field would be eliminated, and it would benefit more of the student body. Prof. John F. Newsome, a teacher in the Department of Geology, was placed in charge of building the new field. He selected a site east of the current Memorial Union, just down the hill from the new Men’s Gymnasium. The administration, however, wasn’t about to allow good materials go to waste now that it was leaving the University Athletic Field.

The Aug. 24 edition of the *Telephone* reported that the “fence around the base ball park at the old college campus has been removed and will be placed around the new Alumni field at the new college. Prof. Roy Perring has charge and states that the work of grading the new field will commence about Sept. 1st.”

Grading the new field wasn’t easy. In fact, it took a lot of work. For instance, Spanker’s Branch was an issue. The creek ran right through the area that was proposed to house the new athletic grounds, and before the fields could be used, Spanker’s Branch had to be diverted to the south. Spanker’s Branch, by the way, would eventually receive a different name. During a trip back to IU after taking over as president at Stanford, David Starr Jordan told a group of students at the university chapel that he didn’t have ambitions to have a building on the Bloomington campus named after him. Instead, he hoped Spanker’s Branch would someday be named after him.

From that point on, Spanker’s Branch was known as the Jordan River.

(Fun Fact: As workers began to relocate Spanker’s Branch, the University started to dig a deep well to furnish drinking water to the new campus. The well, which would be more that 90 feet deep when completed, would eventually be

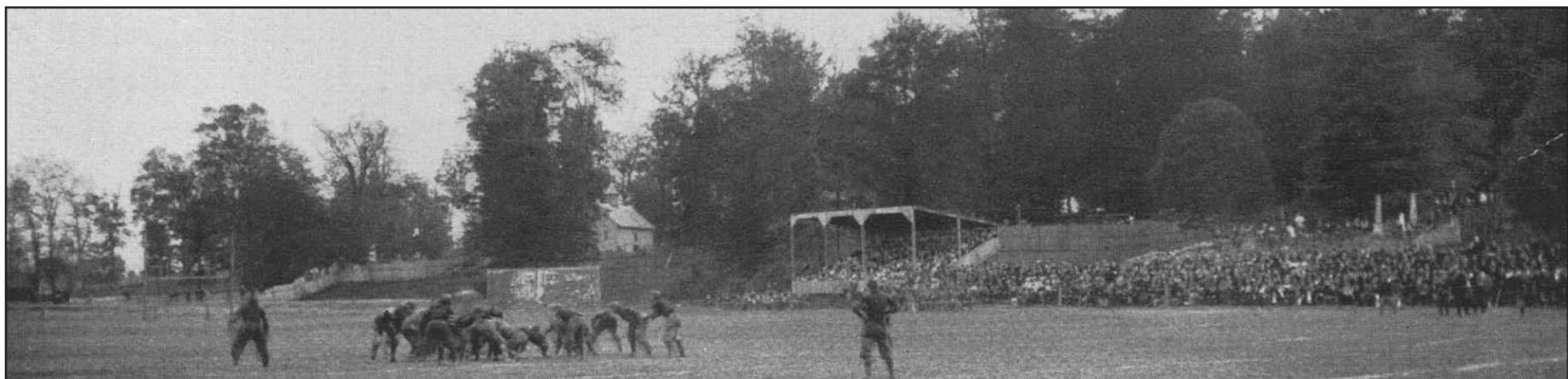


Photo reprinted from 1901 *Arbutus*

Shiny and new — Indiana had been playing at Jordan Field for only three years when the Hoosiers hosted their neighbors to the north, Notre Dame. The new grandstand can be seen covered by a roof in the background, and fans lined the outskirts of the field.

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Photo reprinted from 1923 *Arbutus*

A time to celebrate and mourn — Jordan field was the site of many military reviews over the years, which included hosting Armistice Day ceremonies in this photo from 1922. Note the Men's Gymnasium in the upper right corner of the picture.

cess on its new field, hovering around the .500 mark for the early part of the first decade of the 20th century. It wasn't exactly as if the Hoosiers were playing in the lap of luxury at the field. The field featured no dugouts — just benches — and the dimensions were cozy. Although no official measurements remain, Ernie Andres, a former IU baseball coach who played at Jordan Field from 1937-39, remembered in a document in the IU archives that right field couldn't have been more than 250 feet, center field was believed to be about 360 feet and left field was estimated to be 330 feet. A fence surrounded the complex, and the edges of the field were graded upward, both serving as a warning track and turning the area into a bowl.

The Board of Trustees, meanwhile, worked to improve the conditions on the field. A sum of \$500 was appropriated in 1901 to construct bleachers to finally provide some seating. In June of 1902, money was allocated to grade the ground in the northeast corner of the field, and tile drainage was to finally be laid. Surface drainage was to be added where practical, and it was ordered that the fence surrounding the field should be rebuilt.

One of the interesting features of the field was the presence of Dunn Cemetery, which was — and still is — situated just across the Jordan River from the field. It is known as "God's Acre" because it was deeded to the Dunn family in perpetuity and can never be legally taken over by the University despite the fact IU completely surrounds the cemetery, and it served as an interesting background during a baseball game in the early 1900s.

With the Hoosiers in the middle of what was described in the *Indiana Daily Student* as a heated game, a funeral procession descended on the cemetery, which is reserved for descendants of Elinor Dunn, Agnes Alexander and Jennet Irwin — three sisters who were heroines of the Revolutionary War. The game was stopped and men removed their hats, and everybody waited until the ceremony concluded. Then, it was "play ball!"

Despite the work of the Trustees, students still complained about conditions at Jordan Field. A letter from someone identified as "Knocker" appeared in the May 25, 1904 edition of the *IDS* whining about the difficulty getting to games.

"Why doesn't the University, the Athletic Association or someone repair the driveway leading to Jordan Field?" Knocker asked. "Many people prefer to attend the games in carriages and to do so at present necessitates going hub-deep in mud. It is not customary to attend games in log wagons nor to wear overalls, but nothing better can at present go over the driveway without damage."

A running track and field equipment were added

to Jordan Field in time for the Hoosiers' outdoor track season in 1904, but the rain was a constant problem. By 1905, students were starting to get restless with the state of moisture on the field. Despite the efforts to drain the field, the *IDS* complained that the complex wasn't up to standards of the day and should be moved.

"At noon yesterday the regular diamonds on Jordan Field was so heavy and soggy that it was found impossible to play the game there," the April 28 edition of the *IDS* reported. "A force of men was set to work to change the location of the parallelogram for the game with Ohio State. Jordan Field, while all right in dry weather, is a source of continuous annoyance in wet. The field is low and has practically no drainage facilities. A heavy rain soaks it through and through, and a week's time is required for it to dry out.

"Noting this state of affairs an old discussion is being revised as to the advisability of changing the athletic field from its present situation to the top of Dunn's hill. Several citizens are said to have suggested this location before Jordan Field was chosen. With far less work than has taken to put Jordan Field in its present condition, an athletic field could be made on top of the hill that would be as level as the present field, and in addition would be exceptionally well drained. No ponds would stand over it in the winter, and in the spring we would not have to wait four or five weeks after the warm weather commence to begin out-of-door practice. And then with a new \$75,000 stone gymnasium situated somewhere in the vicinity of the proposed field, Indiana would have no apologies to make to any university in the West."

Indiana eventually would get around to building the gymnasium, but it would be a while. Jordan Field wasn't going anywhere. In fact, the lack of drainage would become a source of great excitement in just a few years.



College life was a lot different in 1908 than it is 101 years later. There were no TVs, no radios, no Internet, no cell phones, no keggers, no texting, none of it. Entertainment came in playing sports and going to local dances and assemblies. In the winter of late 1907 and early 1908, ice skating became a bit of a fad in the United States, and IU wasn't about to stay behind the curve on that issue. Without a natural pond anywhere near campus, the students and faculty decided they would just have to make one themselves.

In the February 8, 1908 edition of the *IDS*, a headline screamed "JORDAN FIELD IS FLOODED." "At four o'clock this afternoon, Coach Sheldon,

with a force of men working under his direction, turned the hydrants on to Jordan Field and in the course of an hour the field was transformed into a veritable lake, ready for the next spell of cold weather," the *IDS* reported. "As soon as the next freeze occurs, students will have the benefit of a skating resort which can be reached without the aid of a cab.

"For some time there has been talk of a scheme of this kind. Jordan Field is practically useless during the winter months, and it has been felt that some advantage might be taken of the large plat of ground. Coach Sheldon has been conferring with the University officials of late and received their consent to flood Jordan Field in order that a commodious skating rink might be ready for the general enjoyment whenever the weather was cold enough to convert the watery covering into ice."

Neither the football nor baseball teams made much noise during the next few years, and Jordan Field continued its role as a multi-purpose ground. The area wasn't reserved for varsity athletics, and military teams drilled on the grounds. Members of the community also made use of the field. A letter from July 5, 1907, from Alex F. Kirsch (a local businessman) to John W. Cravens (the University Registrar) exists in the IU archives asking if Kirsch could use Jordan Field for the annual charity baseball game between the Clothing Clerks and the Drug Clerks in town.

By 1914, less than 20 years after the opening of the complex, students and faculty were already dreaming of bigger, better facilities for the football and baseball teams. A proposal was presented by the Department of Physical Education on June 4, 1914, to the Trustees that sought to turn Jordan Field over to the department while moving the football and baseball teams east to the location near the current site of the IU Auditorium. The plan was to create a facility known as "Bryan Field" in honor of Indiana president William Lowe Bryan, a complex that would provide a baseball field and permanent seating in a 360-foot-by-360-foot area.

"Jordan Field does not drain well and scheduled games do not allow postponement," the Department said. "It seems economical, therefore, to plot a new 'varsity field' and turn Jordan Field over to the Department of Physical Education for general activities, which have no grounds at the present."

That plan was shot down, and a new track was built around the football field in February of 1915. The moisture on the field that spring made the use of the track a fiasco due to a lack of drainage, but it was clear Jordan Field would continue into the future as a baseball and track facility.

IU, however, had different plans when it came to football.

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Remember that flat spot on Dunn's hill that was mentioned earlier? Indiana certainly noticed it, and when it came time to replace the Men's Gymnasium (the future Original Assembly Hall; see Issue 6 for details on that facility), it chose that flat spot to construct the state-of-the-art facility. Included in the plans was an outdoor field that could be used until a fieldhouse was built over the spot and a better football stadium could be constructed.

Ground was broken on the new Men's Gymnasium in October of 1915, and it was fully expected that a new football field would be ready for the 1916 season. On top of the excitement about the plans for a new football facility, the Hoosiers were expected to be pretty decent on the gridiron in 1915. Head coach Clarence C. Childs was entering his second season at the helm, and his newest hire as an assistant coach had IU fans buzzing.

In 1915, Jim Thorpe was one of the most famous athletes in the world. He starred on the gridiron at Carlisle College, and when we say "starred," we mean he was good enough to be named the greatest athlete of the first half of the 20th century by sportswriters in 1950. During a 1912 game vs. Army that saw future United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower injure a knee while trying to tackle Thorpe, the Oklahoma native scored on a 92-yard touchdown run that was nullified by a penalty. On the very next play, Thorpe scored on a 97-yard TD run. Oh, he also won the 1912 intercollegiate ballroom dancing championship, and he won Gold in the pentathlon and the decathlon at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics.

In other words, the kid was a stud. During his time off from playing professional baseball for the New York Giants and pro football for the Canton Bulldogs, Thorpe was a backfield coach for the Hoosiers. He blew away observers at Jordan Field with kicking exhibitions during practice — how about a 75-yard punt or a 60-yard drop kick? — and gave IU football some credibility. His work with the team didn't produce rapid results — Indiana went 3-3-1 on the season — but with Thorpe around and a new stadium on the way, IU football was on the rise.

The planned final football game at Jordan Field was played against Purdue Nov. 20, 1915.

"Indiana University will say farewell to Jordan Field as an intercollegiate gridiron when Purdue's squad of huskies meets the crimson-clad players in the closing game of the season," the Nov. 19 edition of the *Telephone* reported. "Next fall will find Indiana playing its intercollegiate games on the new athletic field which will be built soon just north of the present field in connection with the erection of the new \$150,000 gym."

Indiana planned for a big crowd at Jordan Field and built new bleachers that could hold an extra 2,000 fans on top of the existing accommodations for 4,000 fans. When the dust settled, Indiana had sold more than \$4,400 in tickets and set a school record for a single-game profit. IU lost 7-0 and

Childs was forced out as head coach during the off-season, but the sun was undoubtedly shining on the Hoosier football program. Little did IU know that dark clouds were gathering.

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With the football program finished at Jordan Field, the administration did the only thing it could do at that point in the year.

It flooded the field again. For the first time since 1908, Jordan Field would be turned into an ice skating rink for students during the winter, but this time the rink would be run by the Memorial Union, and the process would be carefully controlled to ensure quality skating for all. Students were invited to bring their skates back with them following the Thanksgiving break, and the campus was excited about the return of skating.

"All of Jordan Field, except the ball diamond, will be flooded in times of cold weather and thus covered with a thick layer of ice," the Dec. 8 *IDS* reported. "It is not intended that a lake shall be made, but when cold weather comes fire hose will be used to flood the field. Each day during the cold spell more water will be added to the layer and in this way the ice will be built up to a depth of several inches.

"The plan was suggested to President Bryan by George E. Kessler, who has been employed by the University to work out a new landscape plan for the campus. Mr. Kessler said that the plan has been used successfully in playgrounds in Kansas City and other cities. No damage, he said, is done to the grass and in every way the idea is good. Snowstorms will not cheat students out of skating if the plan is carried out and the rink can be kept clean and 'slick as glass' all the time."

The weather, however, didn't cooperate until January. Fluctuating temperatures frustrated students. Then equipment started breaking down. Under the baffling headline of "O Skinnay! C'Mon Over N' Go Skatin'!" the Jan. 8, 1916 *IDS* reported the following:

"Latest reports from the new Union ice rink on Jordan Field, which are being watched anxiously by skating fans, assure a breathless world that the pump, which developed an acute attack of gastritis soon after it was put to work flooding the field, has full recovered and is now again on the job. The pump was placed in Jordan River Friday afternoon and had barely started operations when it became ill. An expert pump doctor was called in, who succeeded in bringing the ailing machine around over night.

"At 8:30 o'clock this morning a stream of water was again playing on the field and chances for good skating soon were on the rise. After a consultation in which the best lights of the Mathematics and Physics departments were consulted, the authorities in charge of the Union's new enterprise announced that with a little good luck the rink would probably be ready today."

Despite the high hopes, the rink wouldn't actually be ready for another week. Finally, the Jan. 14 *IDS*

reported the good news.

"The Jordan Field ice skating rink is ready for use and was tried out this morning by a number of students," the paper reported. "The entire field has not been flooded, but at least two-thirds of it is under four inches of ice. The rink is the first to be made at Indiana University and will be run under the management of the Union. (Editor's note: The previous sentence appeared in the story, but it's just plain wrong. The same paper had reported in 1908 about a skating rink being built and used.) An admission of ten cents will be charge in order to defray expenses. Local hardware merchants are ready to supply the demand for skates, according to their displays and announcements."

The ice remained rough for a couple of days and limited skating, and the crumbly edges of the ice created some dangerous conditions. But in those pre-litigious days, nobody seemed worried about the safety aspect of the rink, and the students and faculty got to enjoy some fun during the winter.

Unfortunately, events in the world weren't nearly as fun. "The Great War," later to be renamed World War I, was raging in Europe, and the United States was doing its best to stay out of the conflict while readying its military. In addition, the U.S. was fighting Pancho Villa on the Mexican-American border, and IU students were entering the military to help with the fighting.

In other words, it wasn't exactly the greatest time to be building a football stadium.

The project was put on hold sometime during the spring, and the Hoosiers would return to Jordan Field for the time being.

In July of 1916, a major change was made to Jordan Field. The baseball diamond was repositioned to help stem the tide of baseballs being lost in the Jordan River, something that had been a long-time problem.

"A new baseball diamond has been laid off on Jordan Field for the baseball work of the school for high school coaches," the July 16 *IDS* reported. "The new baseball court faces the south bleachers instead of facing the carriage gate as formerly. The change is due to the propensity of valuable baseballs to find their way into the Jordan River or its valley and water has as baneful an influence on a baseball as the summer sun has on snow. Probably one ball a day is lost in the River. Good baseballs come at about seventy-five cents a head wholesale, and the mathematical fan can easily figure up the shrinkage.

"The varsity baseball team practices about five days each week for approximately twelve weeks each spring, twelve times five being sixty. Now, three-fourths of sixty is forty-five which means that about forty-five dollars worth of baseballs are lost in the season. Jordan Field has been in use since about 1897 (sic). Now if the arithmetical fan will multiply forty-five by nineteen the result will be about five hundred ninety-five dollars. The little river behind the bleachers might have been covered with a portion of that fabulous sum. But the United States isn't going to fill up the Grand Canyon because a tourist tumbles in it occasionally, so roll on Jordan!"

The change shifted the diamond so that the Men's Gymnasium overlooked center field, and the third-base foul line ran along the edge of the power plant that existed in the area where part of the Union now stands.

IU football returned to the field without fanfare, and the baseball team continued to plug along without any wild success. Jordan Field was used as a drill ground during World War I, and annual Armistice Day festivities were held there following the end of the conflict. The football team, meanwhile, continued to play at Jordan Field through the end of the 1923 season.



Skating on the field

Photo reprinted from 1916 *Arbutus*

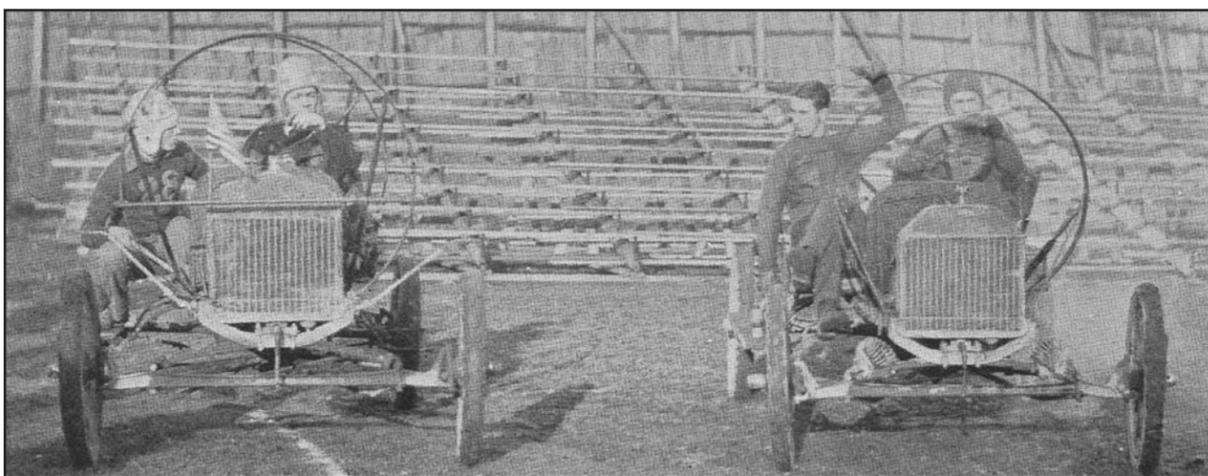


Photo reprinted from 1923 *Arbutus*

Start your engines — The band turned to the new sport of auto polo for a fundraiser in 1922. Future famed journalist, Ernie Pyle, is pictured second from right.

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By the time the end of that year rolled around, Hoosier fans were certain that the team would be moving to a new arena. Following a drive to raise \$1 million for campus improvements, including the construction of a new football stadium, work had begun on a facility along 10th Street. The ground was excavated and the concrete was poured, and the new stadium was a lock to be ready in time for the 1924 campaign.

But c'mon. This is IU. You know things didn't go that smoothly.

Structural problems at Memorial Stadium delayed the opening and forced the Hoosiers to play the 1924 season as vagabonds. One home game was played in Indianapolis and another on the freshman practice field on the site of the current art museum. Others were played at Jordan Field. IU finished 4-4 on the season and 1-3 in conference play, and the Hoosiers finally moved into Memorial Stadium for the 1925 season.

Football may have finally been finished at Jordan Field, but the facility wasn't going anywhere.



The track team abandoned Jordan Field following the 1925 season, moving to Memorial Stadium for the 1926 outdoor track season. The baseball team soldiered on, but it was clear that Jordan Field wasn't exactly respected as hallowed ground. Then again, it hadn't held that status for a while.

For instance, during the 1922-23 school year, the IU marching band needed to raise money to take a trip to West Lafayette. The 1923 *Arbutus* pointed out that, "It's pretty hard to get money out of students unless you have a novelty to offer them in return." So, naturally, the band turned to the most obvious way to draw a crowd and raise some money.

They held an auto polo event. You know, like regular polo, but using cars instead of horses. Seriously.

On Nov. 18, 1922, two teams faced off in an auto polo match. Barrett Woodsmall and Joe Breeze (what a great name!) hopped into a car they called "Apollo Jr." to take on "Methuselah," the car driven by Bill Pierce and a student by the name of Ernie Pyle — yep, THAT Ernie Pyle. The score was tied at one when "Methuselah" was forced to pull out of the match with engine troubles, thus ending the days of auto polo at Jordan Field.

Not to be outdone, over the next couple of years horse races were run at the field, and regular polo matches were held. When the 1925 silent film "Ben Hur" was released, IU students responded by holding chariot races at Jordan Field for entertainment.

Remnants of Jordan Field's life as a football stadium remained for years. The stumps of a goal post still stood in left field in 1928, and the field would occasionally be used by intramural teams. Baseball played second-fiddle to the football and basketball programs on campus, and the team was forced to make do with what they had at Jordan Field through the 1930s. Baseball just wasn't much of a priority, and improvements were minimal. The Indiana Memorial Union sprung up close to the field in 1932, a fact that would prove ominous in the future.

Jordan Field enjoyed one last moment in the big time during World War II. With travel restrictions in place due to the war, the Cincinnati Reds and the Indianapolis Indians both held spring training in Bloomington from 1943-45. One Hoosier player, in particular, benefitted from his exposure to the Reds.

Ted Kluszewski was a massive man-child from Argo, Ill., and legend has it that "Big Klu" was ripping balls during batting practice over the embankment at the end of the field which none of the Reds could hit. Reds' groundskeeper Matty Schwab saw Kluszewski pounding the ball, and he flagged down some of the Cincinnati scouts. Kluszewski was offered a contract, but he turned the Reds down to ensure his eligibility as a tight end with the football team would not be affected. After graduating, Kluszewski signed with the Reds and enjoyed a 15-year major league career.

Kluszewski is the star of one of the biggest legends surrounding Jordan Field. Gene Weiniger, an

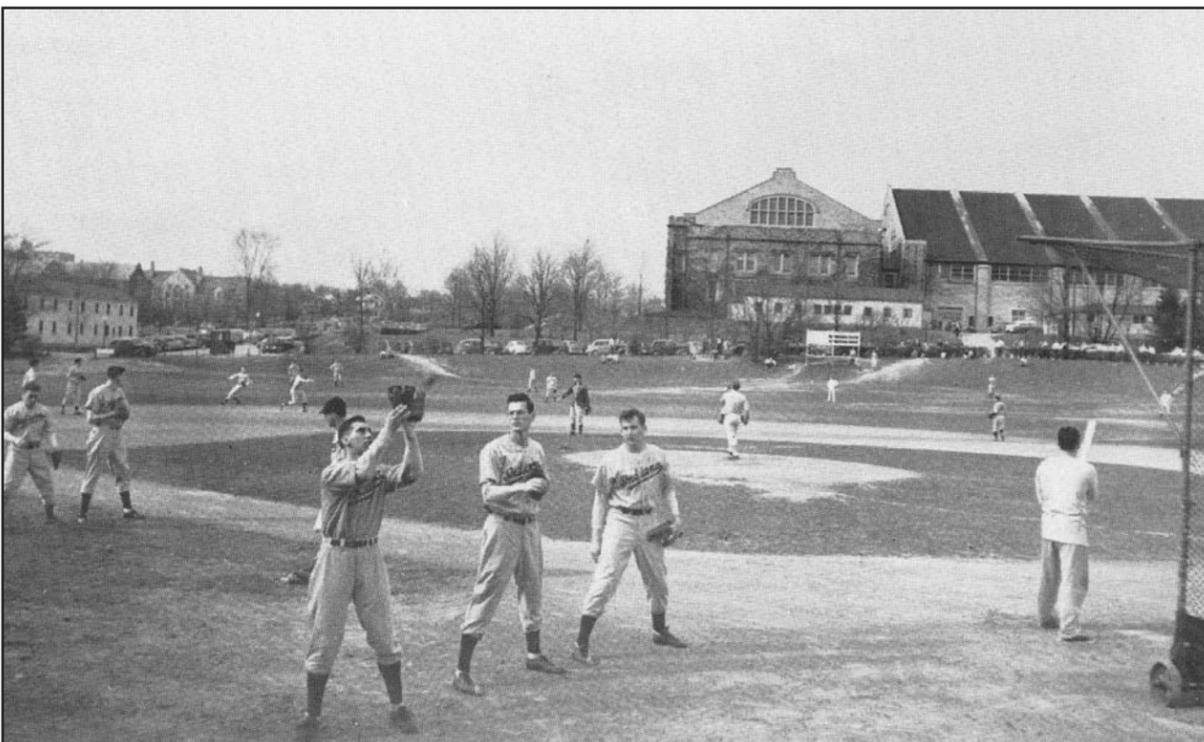


Photo reprinted from 1950 *Arbutus*

Wrapping it up — Indiana's baseball team played at Jordan Field until the early 1950s when the Hoosiers left to play at the future Sembower Field.

IU employee who worked at the IU physical plant that abutted Jordan Field, claimed that he saw Kluszewski hit a ball over the fence, across 7th Street and through a window at the Men's Gymnasium. It would have been at least a 520-foot shot, but no record of such a bomb exists. Mark Deal, IU's current associate director of football operations, says he remembers his father, Russ, telling the same story about Kluszewski. Russ is in the IU Athletic Hall of Fame and was a member of the 1945 Big Ten championship team, so the story could have a shred of credibility.

By the late 1940s, the university was looking to expand its athletic facilities. There already had been some talk about possibly moving all the facilities to an area north of the campus, and it seemed that is where the future lay when IU began building the baseball diamond that would later become Sembower Field on Fee Lane. The Hoosiers finally played their final game at Jordan Field during the 1950 season, ending the facility's days as a varsity sports complex.

Jordan Field still lived on for another decade as an intramural field. Lights were installed in the later years of its existence, but inevitably the march

of progress was banging on the fences of the ancient complex.

The Biddle Continuation Center addition to the Indiana Memorial Union was in full swing by the late 1950s, and the university decided it would be best to provide Jordan Field with the cruelest death of all for an athletic facility — that of a parking lot. During the summer of 1959, Jordan Field was paved over, and a huge piece of IU athletic history disappeared behind the gate of a toll booth. The lot still follows the contours of the field for the most part, and the grading that created the bowl shape of the field still exists to this day.

On October 11, 1980, Jordan Field received its gravestone. A marker was placed on the edge of the parking lot by the "I" Men's Association, and a dedication was read by IU president John W. Ryan during Homecoming Weekend. The marker still sits where it was placed, but the plaque has weathered and the marker is slowing being covered by a large bush.

The complex may be long gone, but the Men's Gymnasium that signaled the beginning of the end for Jordan Field still stands, overlooking the parking lot like some limestone cathedral on high.



Only notice — This marker is the only hint that IU ever played sports on what is now a paid parking lot outside the IMU.

Hoosier Happenings

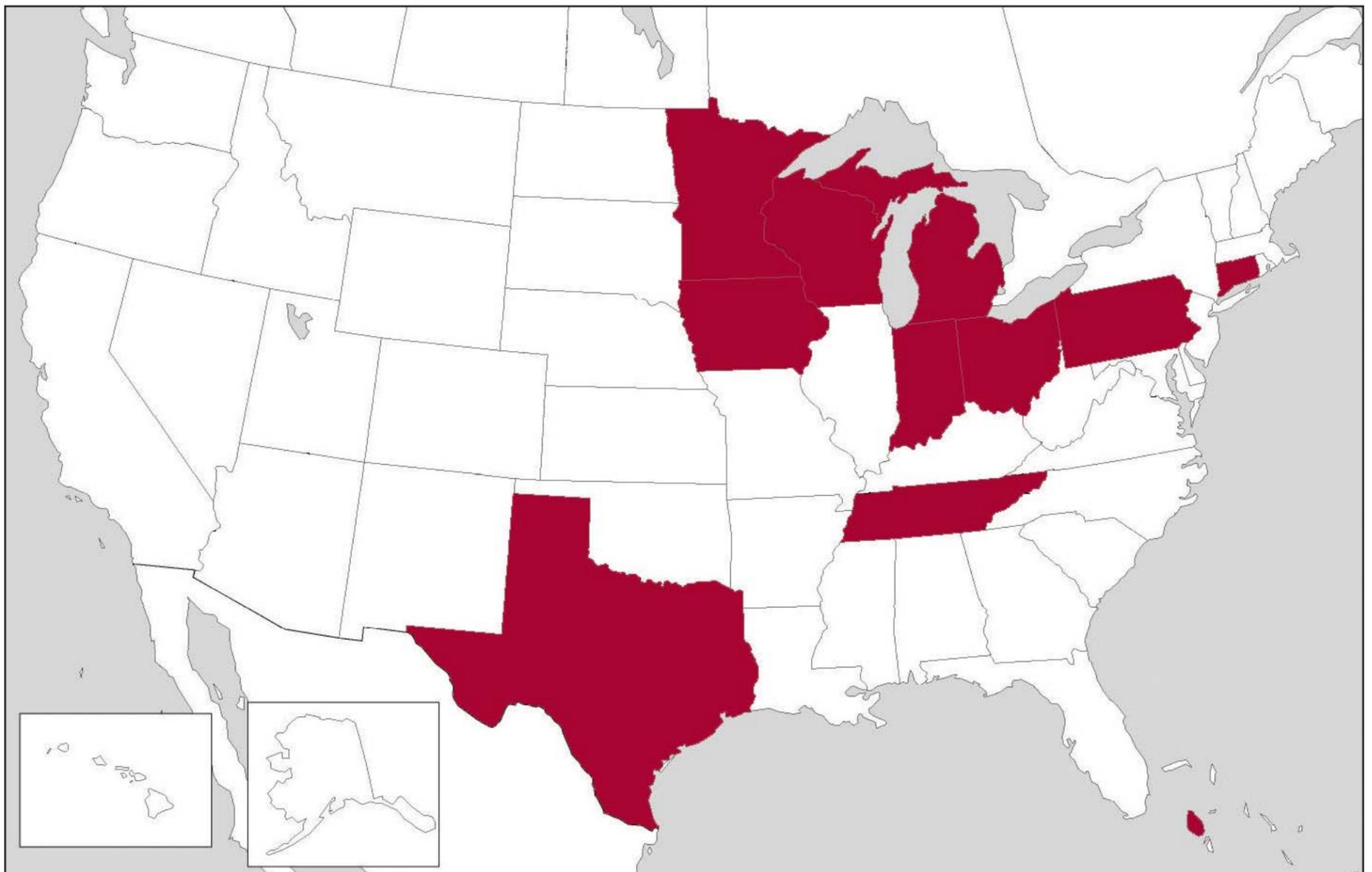
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Where are the Hoosiers?

Indiana's fall athletic schedule is in full swing, and the Hoosiers are traveling across the country to carry on the glory of old IU. Take a look at the map below to see if the Hoosiers are going to be visiting your state and check the schedules at the bottom of the page for information about when Hoosier athletic teams might be visiting your area.



Men's November athletics

Basketball

- Nov. 13 — Howard
- Nov. 16 — USC-Upstate
- Nov. 19 — vs. Mississippi; San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Nov. 20 — vs. Boston or Kansas State; San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Nov. 21 — TBA
- Nov. 28 — Northwestern State

Cross Country

- Nov. 1 — Big Ten Championships; University Park, Pa.
- Nov. 14 — NCAA Great Lakes Regional; Bloomington, Ind.
- Nov. 23 — NCAA Championships; Terre Haute, Ind.

Football

- Nov. 7 — Wisconsin
- Nov. 14 — at Penn State
- Nov. 21 — Purdue

Soccer

- Nov. 1 — Ohio State
- Nov. 6 — Penn State
- Nov. 12-15 — Big Ten Tournament

Swimming & Diving

- Nov. 20-22 — Hoosierland Invitational

Tennis

- Nov. 5-8 — National Indoors; New Haven, Conn.

Wrestling

- Nov. 15 — at Michigan State Open; East Lansing, Mich.
- Nov. 17 — at Wabash
- Nov. 28 — Hoosier Duals

Dates subject to change

Women's November athletics

Basketball

- Nov. 13 — at Memphis
- Nov. 15 — IUPUI
- Nov. 18 — Cincinnati
- Nov. 22 — Missouri
- Nov. 26 — vs. Virginia; Freeport, Bahamas
- Nov. 27 — vs. South Dakota State or UNC-Charlotte; Freeport, Bahamas

Cross Country

- Nov. 1 — Big Ten Championships; University Park, Pa.
- Nov. 14 — NCAA Great Lakes Regional; Bloomington, Ind.
- Nov. 23 — NCAA Championships; Terre Haute, Ind.

Field Hockey

- Nov. 5-8 — Big Ten Championships; East Lansing, Mich.

Golf

- Nov. 2-3 — 2009 Challenge at

Onion Creek; Austin, Texas

Soccer

- Nov. 1 — at Ohio State
- Nov. 3 — Purdue
- Nov. 6 — at Minnesota

Swimming & Diving

- Nov. 20-22 — Hoosierland Invitational

Tennis

- Nov. 6-8 — at Western Michigan Invitational; Kalamazoo, Mich.

Volleyball

- Nov. 4 — Purdue
- Nov. 6 — at Minnesota
- Nov. 13 — at Michigan State
- Nov. 14 — at Michigan
- Nov. 20 — Ohio State
- Nov. 21 — Penn State
- Nov. 27 — at Wisconsin
- Nov. 28 — at Iowa

Dates subject to change

Hoosier Happenings

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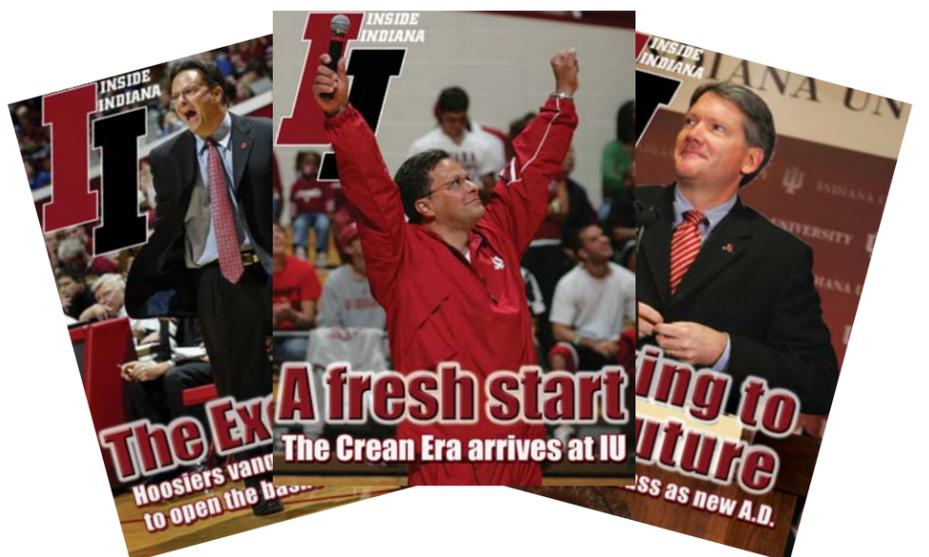


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