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Renown to Rubble: The Rise and Fall Of Pitt Stadium 1925-1999

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This paper traces the evolution of Pitt Stadium from 1925 to 1999 and highlights critical figures and events in the financing and construction of the venue, details renovation efforts, and presents information, which led to its abandonment and subsequent demolition. Pitt Stadium, like other campus stadia, was built to open untapped reservoirs of alumni donations, increase revenues, and enhance “brand awareness” to improve student enrollments, the overall campus experience, and help the school “climb” the ladder of institutional reputation. Yet, image attacks regarding the perceived professionalization of college football, internal tension, the Great Depression, poor scheduling, and lack of spectator and player amenities contributed to the failure of the building to pay off its debt and subsequent dissatisfaction among various stakeholders. Although the University ultimately abandoned Pitt Stadium when it was no longer commercially viable, the school’s attempts to use on-campus athletics to secure important recognition as a major university are instructive for other institutions considering similar ideas.

Keywords: Stadium, College Football, University of Pittsburgh

Prior to the opening of Heinz Field in 2001, Pitt Stadium served as the home of Pittsburgh Panthers athletics and as an important social anchor for the University of Pittsburgh, City of Pittsburgh, and institution of college football from 1925 to 1999 (Borghetti, 1999; Rooney, 1958). Like other urban campus stadia, Pitt Stadium was built to create an air of “institutional supremacy” for the school as it sought to improve student enrollments, open untapped reservoirs of alumni donations, and increase revenues during its transition from the Western University of Pennsylvania (WUP) to the University of Pittsburgh (Ingrassia, 2012; Sack, 1974; Schmidt, 2007). Interestingly, Ingrassia (2012) suggested concrete stadiums were the most prominent demonstration of the cultural demand for and financial potential of college football to help elevate university status during the 1920s and beyond. In the case of the University of Pittsburgh, the 1919-1923 seasons produced \$296,260.96 in profit. This revenue paid off debts to build a new practice field and Alumni Hall, among other expenditures intended to improve the team and attractiveness of the university in comparison with major institutions in today’s Big Ten Conference and Ivy League (Stadium Report, 1924a).

Discussion between Pittsburgh Chancellor Samuel McCormick, Col. Samuel Church of the Carnegie Institute, Andrew Carnegie, and Chancellor John Gabbert Bowman suggested the University should be measured against Ohio State, Michigan, Chicago, Illinois, Northwestern, Syracuse, Harvard, and Columbia (Alberts, 1986). Thus, the design and construction of Pitt Stadium copied both Ivy League and Big Ten institutions, which Wallace (1929) labeled as the autocrats (i.e., old traditional programs/founders of football) and middle group schools (i.e., intersectional leaders, mostly state universities gaining in national recognition). A third group (i.e., climbers), which Pitt was considered to be part of, “consciously and comparatively... installed football on a grand scale and gone out after the business advantage of prestige, money, and publicity” (p. 11). As part of this pursuit, climber schools built new facilities to secure important intersectional match-ups or a conference invitation with institutions publicly recognized as major universities to achieve similar status (Alberts, 1986; Wallace, 1929). In-state rival Penn State was similarly labeled as “climber” school because, like Pitt, Penn State spent a great deal of money on a football investment strategy to improve their institutional status against schools in the Northeast (Schmidt, 2007; Stout & West, 2017).

The present study traced the evolution of Pitt Stadium from 1925 to 1999, highlighting critical figures and events in the financing and construction of the venue, efforts to renovate the stadium, and campus issues which make it memorable. Along the way, we provide information that helps admirers of Pitt Stadium understand what ultimately made it necessary to abandon the facility. Finally, we will present that the University left Pitt Stadium because it was still trying to ‘climb’ against the emerging standards provided by prestigious middle group and autocrat peers. In recent years, the local media and some alumni re-opened discussions of a possible return to on-campus football for Pitt (Rossi, 2014). However, during separate 2015 and 2017 interviews, Chancellor Patrick Gallagher and Athletic Director Heather Lyke stated there should not be any talk of building a new on-campus stadium, despite on-going capital improvement plans and nostalgia for Pitt Stadium (Barko, 2015; Werner, 2017). Overall, such information provided in this research study should provide interesting information to institutional leaders aiming to climb

into a new conference or divisional affiliation through renovation or new construction and why resistance from the current Pitt administration remains in opposition to a new on-campus facility.

Method

The paper is organized chronologically and primary sources (e.g., architectural drawings, financial statements, letters of correspondence, newspapers and contracts) from an archival visit with the University of Pittsburgh are the major source of information used. Working with archivists and special collections managers, we collected data from a previously organized catalog on the history of Pitt athletics, which included nearly 400 artifacts on Pitt Stadium. Archives are preferred by historical researchers because they provide a directory of era-relevant individuals, foundation for organizational decision-making, index for building changes (e.g., vertical files), and classify or categorize the importance of initiatives based on local and national environmental pressures (Hamilton, 2002; Seifried, 2010a, 2017; Thomas, 2004; Yates, 2014).

Primary and secondary sources (e.g., journal articles, books, and newspapers) from a variety of databases (e.g., Lexis-Nexis, Hathi Trust Digital, and Google Scholar) provided additional opportunities for the triangulation of evidence to address potential concerns regarding survival bias- the preservation of a source/record depends on survival of the source that developed it (Forbes & Kirsch, 2010; Kirsch, 2009; Kraus, 2008). Triangulation was critical to verify and substantiate results and to improve interpretation when conflicting data existed (Seifried, 2010a, 2017; Vikstrom, 2012). Triangulation also helped avoid a biased perspective because the use of multiple heterogeneous sources compels researchers to overlap information. The overlapping of sources is important because it helps identify and verify different motives and perspectives concerning the development of researcher conclusions (Seifried, 2010a, 2017).

Finally, the researchers conducted a source criticism (i.e., made use of internal and external focused questions to certify the authenticity of sources) (Decker, 2013; Kipling, Wadhvani, & Bucheli, 2014; Seifried, 2010a, 2017). Questions asked in this source criticism followed other canonical sources (Decker, 2013; Kipling, et al., 2014; Seifried, 2010a, 2017) which suggest to inquire about potential author bias of sources based on surrounding political, economic, social, and religious environments, credibility of authors (e.g., expert/non-expert and participant/non-participant), purpose of the source, and potential falsification. General representativeness and atypical evidence are highlighted within the subsequent sections through citations to both contemporary and archival artifacts to establish that an agreed pattern broadly existed (Yates, 1989). Finally, implicit coding of the data sources, placed within a timeline, occurred through the grounded lens of autocrat, middle group, and climber school activity while reading/viewing, scrutinizing, and filtering information (Seifried, 2010a, 2017; Yates, 2010).

University Football before Pitt Stadium (1890-1923)

To put the University's decision to build a large permanent football venue into its proper historical context, it is necessary to briefly describe the facilities used by WUP. From 1890 to 1903, games were scheduled randomly in a variety of locations like Observatory Hill, Exposition Park, and Recreation Park—unmanicured, semi-permanent, wooden facilities located in what was then the suburb of Allegheny, Pennsylvania (Borghetti, 1999). Early games played in these facilities were student-organized, had no coach, and lacked any planned competition schedule, (Gubi, 2011; Miner, 2006; Tutka, 2016). Additional evidence from Miner (2006) shows “during

its first few seasons, the team played against everyone from local prep schools to semi-professional athletic clubs” (p. 216). Overall, this information suggests WUP football was not initially established for commercial use and that WUP was a minor school.

Football, however, matured quickly at WUP in an effort to model other urban football-playing institutions in the Northeast (i.e., autocrats) who were advancing the sport commercially to attract gate receipts, reconnect with alumni, and recruit students. Daily newspapers and popular magazines like *Harpers Weekly* often featured football to increase knowledge and subsequent popularity of both the game and the publications themselves. This was strategic and mutually beneficial because football games became social happenings by the late 1890s motivating many members of the media to report not only on the game but who attended as well (Miner, 2006). WUP faculty and alumni also recognized the attractiveness of the game and gave more notice to the sport’s potential uses (e.g., recruiting students, reconnecting with alumni, and generating revenue) to help improve the institution’s status amongst other schools (Miner, 2006).

To enhance the quality of the football product, autocrats and middle group institutions often hired full-time coaches to join their faculty throughout the mid to late 1890s (Craig, 2011). In 1903, WUP began their climb by hiring University of Kansas head coach Arthur Mosse and increasing athletic expenditures (e.g., building an athletic dorm, establishing a training table for meals, and leasing Exposition Park) (Alberts, 1986; “WUP Candidates,” 1904). George Hubbard Clapp, an 1877 engineering graduate of WUP and a pioneer of the aluminum industry, organized recruiting efforts with trustees to collect \$2,000 from them by stating, “nothing could help to advertise the school and the community at large so much as to have a first class college team” (Clapp, 1904). An informal conference held by alumni at WUP in July 1904, notably concluded athletics “creates college spirit...it gives the institution a name and fame in the community...it makes all its alumni and students proud of their University” (Sciullo, 2008, p. 13).

Despite recognition as the area’s best ballpark, Exposition Park presented a number of drawbacks when recruiting potential autocrat and middle group opponents. For example, seating capacity was only 8,000 and the primary tenant was professional baseball (i.e., National League—Pittsburgh Pirates) (“Ideal weather conditions,” 1909). Expectedly, the seat orientations were not desirable for a football field configuration nor were the number of restrooms adequate for the larger football crowds. In particular, women criticized the number of restrooms, which the *Pittsburgh Press* suggested kept “away thousands of the fair sex” who held “promise of becoming ardent fans” (“Beautiful Forbes Field, 1909, p. 6). The area was also prone to flooding from the nearby Allegheny River, which delayed, cancelled, or produced sloppy, boring, and uncomfortable games due to poor field conditions and damaged or destroyed seating (Seifried & Pastore, 2010). Finally, the facility was not permanent or on-campus like those increasingly offered by autocrat and middle group schools (Tutka, 2016). This ultimately prevented WUP from fully capitalizing on its potential access to the city’s urban elite. Furthermore, the small capacity and poor condition of the facility could not attract the prestigious opponents WUP believed could help their goal to become a major institution.

During the 1890s, institutions throughout the Northeast and Midwest sought to host games on campus to maximize profits, avoid costly leases, and to reconnect with alumni. Football was considered “a main vehicle through which colleges garnered alumni support. Furthermore, their relationship was symbiotic. The more competitive the team, the more alumni support; the more alumni support, the more competitive the team” (Miner, 2006, p. 216). The recognition of alumni is important, as evidence from 1900 shows football was primarily for the urban elite;

“most paying college football fans, especially those who filled out the stands on crisp autumn Saturday afternoons, were alumni who, by having attended and graduated from a college or university, constituted a select demographic. [. . .] less than three percent of Americans of college age attended college or university.” (Miner, 2006, p. 216)

In 1908, WUP changed its name to the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), and in 1909, the campus relocated to the affluent Oakland section of town, partially to be closer to alumni and other urban elites (Alberts, 1986; Miner, 2006; Oriard, 2001). The University had outgrown its prior location in suburban Allegheny on the north shore of the Allegheny River (Van Trump, 1969). Furthermore, Pitt was building a good reputation through its Medical Department, Maternity Hospital, Ear and Eye Infirmary, and the Colleges of Dental Surgery and Pharmacy. All were recognized as some of the more modern programs but not the best in the United States. A well-respected mining major and one of the largest osteological collections in the country also compelled the University to seek out a new campus. Within, the high priority buildings were expectedly medical and mining related but athletic buildings were also listed among the priority one facilities (“Instructions and Regulations,” 1908). Notably, Pitt’s new campus emerged during the “era of the planned campus which after the turn of the century was becoming a necessity— institutions of higher learning were becoming too large to be subject to the haphazard accretion of buildings common to the nineteenth-century college layout” (Van Trump, 1969, p. 112).

In line with efforts to frame Pitt as similar to other autocrats (e.g., Harvard, Yale, and Pennsylvania) and middle group schools (e.g., Ohio State and Illinois), the University’s football team began playing in Forbes Field, a new urban ballpark built by Pirates owner Barney Dreyfuss in a location adjacent to campus (Borghetti, 1999). Permanent facilities like Forbes Field were desirable because they increased revenues and publicity, while simultaneously decreasing the likelihood of injury to urban elites and thus, the potential of catastrophic litigation (Ingrassia, 2012). Pitt also effectively used the permanent facility to engage with alumni who were helping to grow their endowment. Before 1910, Pitt was advertising that their endowment reduced tuition costs to students by nearly one-third and helped produce important research. However, Pitt felt more could be done to help them compete with the likes of autocrats (e.g., Cornell and Pennsylvania) and middle group schools (e.g., Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin). These schools were earning considerably more (e.g., enrollments, gifts/endowments, legislative support) through their “well-equipped” modern facilities (Catalogue of WUP, 1903; Ingrassia, 2012; Lindaman, 2010; University of Pittsburgh Bulletin, 1912).

During the occupation of Forbes Field (1909-1924), Pitt achieved great success. As an example, in 1910, Coach Joe Thompson led Pitt to an undefeated (9-0) and unscored upon season (282-0). In 1913, Karl Davis, the graduate manager of athletics and alumni secretary, established a formal relationship with university trustee and 1894 graduate Alfred R. Hamilton. An executive with Berwind White Coal, Hamilton offered his summer residential estate in Windber, Pennsylvania, to the football team beginning in 1913 as pre-season training grounds. Hamilton also helped recruit additional alumni support for scholarships and jobs for student-athletes (“Alfred Reed Hamilton,” 1926; Athletic Report, 1914; “Chancellor’s Report,” 1916). As a result of these benefits, Joseph Duff coached the institution to 14-3 record over 1913 and 1914. Interestingly, enrollment increased from 1,300 to 4,500 during this time, and football received special recognition from *The Owl* as a source for the school’s enrollment growth and positive alumni relationships (The Owl, 1924). Such success and commitment of alumni also

attracted Glenn “Pop” Warner to serve as head coach in 1915 and produce recognized national championships in 1915, 1916, and 1918 (Borghetti, 1999; Bynum, 1993; Sciuillo, Jr., 2008).

Expectedly, these achievements increased fan interest, but Forbes Field’s maximum capacity of 29,600 proved inadequate according to the local media, opponents desiring larger gate receipts, and the University Athletic Council’s newly formed Stadium Committee (Stadium report, 1924b; Welsh, 1921). Students and alumni were guaranteed tickets and because those numbers were growing rapidly, the University was unable to accommodate all ticket requests for the local community and opponents (Borghetti, 1999; “Pitt-Penn State officials,” 1924). As an example, in 1915, Davis had the unenviable task of informing non-alumni local citizens that they would not receive seats due to unprecedented demand for games versus Washington & Jefferson College and Penn State (Barbour, 1915). In the case of Washington & Jefferson, approximately 40,000 spectators overflowed the small capacity of Forbes Field causing injury and litigation concerns regarding entry, exit, and in-game behavior (“40,000 see Pitt victory,” 1915).

In 1919, Warner pressured Pitt to build a new stadium by requiring that stipulation in a proposed contract before he would re-sign with the school (Miner, 2006). Warner disliked the “gloom” he associated with Forbes Field because of his inability to use it for practices, lack of capacity, and persistent mud and water issues that plagued the field (“Showcase pleases coaches,” 1919; Welsh, 1923). He and other media supporters desired for Pittsburgh to build an athletic field the equal of Yale, Michigan, and Stanford and suggested enough donors were available to make the vision of Pitt as a major university a reality (Welsh, 1921). Identifying and successfully securing pledges from donors also became a point of institutional pride for Pitt to measure the school’s status against other autocrat and middle group schools (Ingrassia, 2012).

Another point of contention that prompted the University to search for a new permanent home emerged from the rent Barney Dreyfuss charged the University. In a 1924 letter produced by the Stadium Committee, all members suggested they were “irked” by the “costly lease [\$23,000] on which the rental was raised 300 percent at the last renewal and which expires at the conclusion of 1924” (Stadium report, 1924b, p. 2-4). They were also likely bothered by the eventual loss of Warner after the 1923 season. In 1922, Warner announced he was leaving to coach Stanford University, which the previous year opened its own large 60,000-seat reinforced steel and concrete venue (i.e., Stanford Stadium) (Miner, 2006; “Stanford lands Warner, 1922). It was apparent that “stadiums are just as much a requisite of up-to-date university... as a gymnasium or physics laboratory” (Quantrell, 1922, p. 1).

Construction and Early History in Pitt Stadium (1924-1937)

The increased demand caused by the school’s unprecedented success and the relative affluence of many citizens in Pittsburgh (e.g., in banking, steel, and technology) pressured the University to explore the prospect of either buying Forbes Field and renovating it or building a new permanent on-campus facility. The Stadium Committee rejected the idea of purchasing Forbes Field because the cost of purchasing and renovating (\$1.75 million) the venue into a football-first facility would be too great (Williams, n.d.). In 1923, the Stadium Committee endorsed the purchase and development of the 9-acre Bailey Estate into Pitt Stadium. The initial estimated cost of the 69,400-seat, 11.2-acre urban project was \$1,500,000. To cover the cost, the university issued 15-year mortgage bonds at a 6 percent fixed interest rate in October of 1924, which could be purchased in the amounts of \$500 or \$1,000 (Borghetti, 1999). The Stadium Bond Committee (Harrison Thomas- chair, George Applegate, Harry Bell, Cleveland Campbell,

and Fred Stout) utilized the Union Trust Company of Pittsburgh to issue and market stadium bonds (Williams, 1924). Bondholders received the right to purchase tickets over the life of the bond and were recruited by class of 1917 alumni such as Carlton Ketchum and Norman MacLeod (List of bond holders, 1934). Interestingly, Yale was the first institution to employ this strategy. Other schools quickly followed so that the “dangling of choice tickets before donors” became common during the 1920s (Ingrassia, 2012, p. 143-144). Proceeds of the bond sale were applied to the purchase of land and construction of the stadium and all other fees were donated as “personal contributions to this factor of civic improvement” (Union Trust Company, 1926).

The Stadium Committee recommended that the new facility should seat at least 60,000 to accommodate all alumni, students, and potential community interest in the football powerhouse. Further, they recommended that the stadium should be built with expansion in mind as college football continued to grow in popularity similar to university enrollments (Ingrassia, 2012; Schmidt, 2007). Stadia with small capacities were problematic for Pitt and other schools trying to maintain rivalries (Rogers, 1923). Specifically, attracting intersectional opponents required stadia with larger capacities because greater gate receipts could be produced and shared with the University. Gate receipts were the primary source of income for athletic departments and often used to help support other university activities and construction intended to improve the status of the university (Danzig, 1926; Ingrassia, 2012; Schmidt, 2007).

Evidence shows the bond salesmen at Pitt sought out and secured relationships with 140 businesses, elites, and the middle class in addition to alumni to support assumptions about prospective crowds. Again, the spectators of Pitt football were no longer just the 9,000 enrolled students and 11,000 living alumni but now included political and economic leaders and a growing group of “ordinary citizens with no direct connection to the university who simply longed to feel part of something grand” (Oriard, 2001, p. 84). Confirmation of this diversity is strong. For instance, the records indicate 135 bonds were sold for \$5,000 or more to roughly 50 businesses like Mellon Bank (\$50,000), Bank of Pittsburgh (\$23,500), Keystone National (\$22,500), and Peoples Pittsburgh Trust Co. (\$22,000). However, private citizens made up the rest of the bond purchases. The largest individual sale was made to Andrew Mellon (\$100,000) but between the \$500 and \$4,000-level, slightly over 1,500 bonds were sold. Among the largest institutional investors were the City’s Police Pension Fund, the Fraternal Order of Police, Standard Life Insurance Company, and Hazelwood Savings and Trust Co. (Borghetti, 1999).

Workers broke ground on August 7, 1924, and finished Pitt Stadium on September 1, 1925, but the project was not without dissenters (Borghetti, 1999). Urban residents, a series of hospitals around campus, and the University’s medical school feared the likely gridlock that would occur during football game days. In particular, Dr. Raleigh Russell Huggins of the University’s Medical School held a “healthy dissatisfaction” as he desired for more space for teaching and researching by Medical School students (Alberts, 1986, p. 118). Others also pointed out the potential financial difficulty the University would likely face if it could not schedule high profile opponents. For instance, cultural and entertainment options (e.g., Gayety Theatre and Carnegie Institute Museum of Art) competed with football through the philanthropic work of the Carnegie and Heinz families (Wilson, 1924).

To address the direct competition provided by other prospective cultural or entertainment events, fan comfort and safety were major features in the design of the stadium. According to a feasibility study performed by Percy H. Wilson (1924) of the Turner Construction, the designs of the aisle, portal and entrance spaces were far superior to those at the Pennsylvania’s Franklin Field. Further, the restroom and concession space was favorable in comparison. To help vertical

and horizontal circulation, the engineers incorporated ramps advertised as similar to the Yale Bowl. Finally, the seats were 16-17 inches wide, 19 inches high, and supported chair back distances of 30 inches to enhance comfort and sightlines. All of these figures fell into national averages of previously built facilities for autocrats in the Northeast and those that emerged in the 1920s for middle group schools such as Illinois, Ohio State, Minnesota, Michigan, and Indiana, whom the University continued to emulate (Schmidt, 2007; Washburn, 1932).

Pitt Stadium also addressed the need to create more space and revenue to support non-varsity intramurals and other athletic teams. In its recommendations, the Stadium Committee argued intramural athletics were “one of the most valuable and desirable ends to be attained in the development of college” (Williams, n.d., p. 1). Further, the Committee mentioned intramural athletics was “hampered” by lack of sufficient playing space and that equipping intramurals could only be sufficiently achieved through operating a “modern and highly profitable stadium” capable of producing surplus for the institution (Williams, n.d., p. 1). The Committee suggested Pitt Stadium would help alleviate these problems and allow the University to compete with middle group schools like Ohio State and Illinois, both of which used their intramural programs as recruiting and retention tools for undergraduate enrollment (Williams, n.d.). Overall, the Athletic Council estimated that \$280,000 could be earned per year to help support intramurals and other sports (Stadium report, 1924b).

Several local individuals and businesses were notably involved in the actual construction of Pitt Stadium. For example, the Stadium Committee selected W. S. Hindman, an 1898 graduate of the University’s School of Engineering, as the chief engineer and designer for the stadium (Borghetti, 1999). Hindman, also chief designer for the 66,210-seat Ohio Stadium built in 1922, worked with Stone & Webster, Inc. who oversaw the construction process and the Turner Construction who served as the general contractor (Crawford, 1924). Turner Construction had developed a fine reputation by building Franklin Field and other urban ballparks and stadia. Subcontractors like John F. Casey Company (excavation), the McLintock-Marshall Company (steel), and the New England Foundation Company (foundations) also contributed (Borghetti, 1999). Ultimately, parking additions at the summit of the University property and improvements to the Pittsburgh Railway brought the final total cost up to \$2,101,574.00 (Statement of University of Pittsburgh Stadium, 1926).

Lastly, it should be noted that the University was a pioneer with Pitt Stadium through incorporating the burgeoning communication technology of radio. In 1920, Westinghouse assistant chief engineer, Frank Conrad built a radio transmitter in his Wilkensburg, Pennsylvania garage to broadcast music after receiving an 8-X-K license. Local department stores frequently picked up the signal to play music, and in some cases sold radio units to interested community members. Westinghouse, seeing an opportunity, built a broadcasting tower on their factory roof and petitioned the Department of Commerce in late 1920 for what would be the first commercial broadcasting license (i.e., KDKA Radio). In 1921, Westinghouse foreman Harold Arlin announced the first commercially sponsored radio broadcast of any college football game for KDKA when West Virginia played Pitt at Forbes Field (Sciullo, Jr. 1991; Smith, 2001). The tradition of radio broadcasting continued at Pitt Stadium as commercial stations took more interest in broadcasting college sports and in specially built radio broadcasting spaces (Oriard, 2001). Football was attractive because of its high interest to both remote spectators and advertisers. Arlin added the arrangement with Pitt football games was particularly attractive for KDKA because “We were looking for programming” (Radio station KDKA historic marker, n.d.). Advertising-supported broadcast of events and radio facilities in stadiums became the norm

by the 1930s because radio was generally something to be “negotiated, bundled, bought, and sold like any other commodity” (O’Toole, 2013, p. 242). Advocates of radio such as John L. Griffith, Commissioner of the Big Ten, suggested “we should not retard its growth” and sought to understand its ability to “become an asset to college athletics” (Griffith, 1932, p. 44). For Pitt and other schools, radio delivered important revenue during the Depression and served as good advertising for the schools. Evidence of this point is strong, as 12 million households owned radio sets in 1930, compared to 60,000 in 1922 (O’Toole, 2013).

Lean Years and University Neglect (1938-1959)

Dr. John Bain “Jock” Sutherland, a former star on Warner’s national championship teams, was hired to replace Warner as head coach in 1924 as part of the University’s continued efforts to use football as a vehicle to promote the institution. However, like many of the other 49 institutions who built a new facility during the 1920s, Pitt was challenged to fill up the stadium during the 1930s (Tutka, 2016). To address this problem, Sutherland sought to create a better on-field product by uniquely recruiting the working/ethnic class and not elites or middle class to play for the University. To identify and attract potential recruits, Pitt increased scouting and recruiting budgets for preparatory and public high schools and increased the size of the subsidization program, which provided scholarships and jobs. The effort to embrace ethnic and working-class student-athletes at Pitt proved successful as the University received recognition as the consensus national champion in 1929, 1931, 1934, 1936 and 1937 (Sciullo, 2008). However, financial problems from a struggling economy in the 1930s remained significant. The ordinary citizens Pitt depended on during previous fundraising efforts could not afford to attend a facility they helped to build (“Big Ten forgives,” 1939; Miner, 2006; “Pitt puts self under care, 1939).

The Great Depression had a great impact on the purchase of tickets in the 1930s with other schools as well. Limits to income reduced discretionary spending on goods, which sport is classified. More specifically, the national average income dropped nearly in half between 1929 and 1932, suggesting that ticket purchases, travel by opponent fans, and subsequently bond retirement was made more difficult. Attendance dropped over 30 percent across the country by 1933 and, like other urban institutions, Pitt struggled to fill Pitt Stadium (Tunis, 1932; Watterson, 2002). With fewer seats sold, less revenue could pay down the stadium debt. For instance, the mortgage bonds expected to mature in 1939, but only \$222,530 of the \$2.1 million stadium debt had been retired by 1935 (Analysis of indebtedness, 1935; Kelley, Jr., 1927; Scott, 1927).

Besides the depressed economy, some speculated the humiliation Pitt imposed on opponents during its championship reign led several individual autocrat and middle group teams and conferences to refuse games against the University or to only do so with a high guarantee (Alberts, 1986; Sciullo, Jr., 2008). As an example, Penn State dropped Pitt from its football schedule from 1932 to 1934 because of an embarrassing defeat in 1931. This meant the University may have struggled to schedule good home competition that could fill Pitt Stadium during the 1930s (Schmidt, 2007). The lack of a conference also likely prevented the opportunity to establish traditional rivalries and the ability to market a conference game as meaningful toward a championship. Overall, “from 1927 to 1938, only ten games attracted more than 40,000” (Alberts, 1986, p. 159). Furthermore, many years were like 1934 when the University generated \$334,700 in revenue from gate receipts but after costly contractual guarantees with other schools, Pitt made only \$165,000 from football.

Regional and national media also increasingly questioned the propriety of the Pitt's football program, as rumors of alumni providing empty work and substantial spending money to support student-athletes swirled (Beachler, 1982). In an exposé on Pitt football, sportswriter Francis Wallace highlighted the University paid players, which damaged the reputational aspirations of the University to realize middle group status (Wallace, 1939; Watterson, 2002). For instance, in 1928 and 1929 Pitt paid football players \$500 and \$650 respectively, while during the Depression Pitt paid \$400 and \$480 in 1933 and 1934 (Wallace, 1939). Interestingly, the American Association of University Professors and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching teamed to study eligibility and academic problems across college football before the end of the 1920s. On October 29, 1929, the day of the great stock market crash, the Carnegie Report, authored by Howard Savage (1929), described significant abuses with intercollegiate athletics and recommended to college and university presidents to de-emphasize their support of athletics by removing much of the commercial interest that characterized it. In the report, Savage suggested many athletes were not properly prepared for studies or could act as actual students; in some cases, they served simply as "guns for hire" moving from school to school. Coaches were also identified as contributing to the negative perceptions of colleges through immoral recruiting and winning-centered tactics that disregarded player safety ("Overdone college athletics," 1930; Savage, 1929; "Start drive to clean up," 1930). In addition to the aforementioned alumni impropriety, the media was regarded as problematic due to its excessive praise of athletes, which the Carnegie Report argued exacerbated the problem ("Overdone college athletics," 1930; "Start drive to clean up," 1930).

Ultimately, along with these financial and ethical concerns, personal conflicts developed between Coach Sutherland and administrators, which led the University to reevaluate its commitment to intercollegiate athletics. In 1937, the Code of Conduct for Athletes was implemented to improve the reputation of the University (Alberts, 1986). This plan would become derisively known as the "Code Bowman" after then-Chancellor John G. Bowman (1921-1947), one of Coach Sutherland's biggest internal adversaries. Bowman came to Pittsburgh as an advocate for educational reform and to help boost the reputation of Pitt following his previous employment with the aforementioned Carnegie Foundation and service as President to the University of Iowa (1911-1914) and Director of American College of Surgeons (1915-1921).

Favoring a "Cathedral of Learning" building to increase Pitt's faculty productivity and educational output, Bowman acquiesced to alumni and students shortly after his arrival to prioritize efforts on Pitt Stadium. The subsequent financial losses associated with Pitt Stadium and growing stigma associated with the school's football team and school by default prompted "Code Bowman," which overhauled standards for student-athletes and substantially cut athletic funding. Tuition waivers, athletic scholarships, work-study programs, and surreptitious extra benefits for student-athletes, which helped elevate Pittsburgh's working class and maintain the status of Pitt football, were strictly prohibited. Further, alumni and private donations to the athletic department were restricted (Sciullo, Jr., 2008; Watterson, 2002). In a 1937 letter to the Athletic Council, Bowman added that the University:

"shall be conducted primarily for the benefit of the students. They should have fun at the games. This fun should not be dependent too much on the winning of the games. I cannot express too strongly my desire that the University shall discourage the giving of special help to students who have nothing to recommend them but athletic ability. In other

words, you are charged to discourage any subsidies, from whatever source, to students merely because of athletic ability” (p. 1).

Feeling that the University could not field a competitive team under these constraints, Sutherland resigned at the end of the 1938 season. (Alberts, 1986). Head coach Clark Shaughnessy (1943-1945) later reaffirmed the policy in 1943 by declaring he was in “perfect agreement” with “Pitt’s de-emphasize policy” and that he would not “guarantee to win any games” (“Coach refuses,” 1943, p. 6; Shaughnessy, 1943). Expectedly, the University suffered unprecedented levels of failure, with 12 losing seasons from 1940 to 1954. The stadium debt retirement also continued to be sore spot for Bowman and other university officials. As an example, by 1944, \$1.4 million of the stadium debt remained outstanding (Moody, 1944).

It should be acknowledged that competition with a new professional franchise (i.e., Pittsburgh Pirates, who would be renamed the Steelers in 1940) also created some minor conflict. In April 1933, the Pennsylvania legislature passed a bill censuring Blue Laws, which previously prohibited sport on Sundays and prevented the City of Pittsburgh from hosting National Football League (NFL) contests or a franchise. The censuring of Blue Laws allowed the NFL to reorganize into a two-division format following the subsequent addition of franchises in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in 1933. The Pittsburgh Pirates received less attention than the Pitt Panthers because they played in Forbes Field and often won less (i.e., 1933 through 1971 produced eight winning seasons). However, they did take away some media attention as the only professional team in town (Rooney, 2007; Willis, 2010).

The rate of failure, presence of a professional football team in the community, and overall poor financial condition of the football program ultimately prevented Pitt from receiving an invitation to join the prestigious middle group of schools in the Big Ten, a goal that the University previously set after the University of Chicago dropped football in 1939. Although Pitt was recognized as ethically improved and capable of engaging a good working relationship with Big Ten schools under Code Bowman, Michigan State was chosen over Pitt after Chicago completely left the Conference in 1946 because their athletic programs were stronger overall (Alberts, 1986; “Big 10 Sidetracks,” 1945).

Like the athletics program, the stadium also experienced some downsizing in the 1940s causing harm to their Big Ten bid. For instance, in response to new safety regulations promulgated by the City fire marshal, the University removed temporary wooden bleachers along the rim of the stadium and track area reducing the capacity to 56,500 (Borghetti, 1999). World War II and postwar neglect also added problems to Pitt Stadium. Like other institutions during and after World War II, material shortages led to growing deferred maintenance (Banta, 1994). As an example, the replacement of wooden bleachers (approximately \$12.88/seat) and re-sodding of the field (approximately \$2,200) were viewed as luxuries universities could not afford in the war-imposed era of austerity (Speer, 1950). Other issues like competition from Pittsburgh’s growing Cultural District and buildings such as Heinz Hall (1927), the Stanley Theatre (1928), and Harris Theatre (1931) provided a potential better entertainment option for the limited discretionary money that local residents possessed.

By 1945, the bond debt was still \$1.2 million so the University responded by raising student athletic fees to \$25 per student; however, this amount could not pay off the annual interest of over \$116,000 (“Pitt students pay,” 1945). Rental income from occasional games played in Pitt Stadium by the Steelers (i.e., 12.5% of gate receipts) and Carnegie Institute of Technology helped to presumably offset growing financial losses, but together they were not

able to cover it or general maintenance costs, which approached \$90,000 a year (Cope, 1958; Correspondence, 1956-1958; "Repair Pitt Stadium, 1949).

Luckily, television income became a bright spot. Most colleges initially neglected to embrace television because they were afraid broadcasts would prompt people to stay at home. Consequently, many college football stadiums did not support television broadcast facilities. However, during the 1950s, television sets became ubiquitous in most American homes (Smith 2001). As a result, sport facility designers and operators became more aware of how distant fans received and perceived their events. Further, sport organizations and universities found attendance (i.e., live) actually improved as a result of television broadcast and vice versa. In essence, television created the potential for a larger fan nation through the shared experiences and images it provided (Seifried & Pastore, 2009).

On September 29, 1951, Pitt Stadium hosted the first coast-to-coast live television broadcast of any college sports event (Pederson, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2010). However, if the University received an initial boost in attendance due to television, the effect was short-lived in comparison to other teams and leagues. For instance, later reports in 1958 through 1963 show the University collecting more from television and radio (i.e., \$62,089 to \$138,887), while gate receipts dropped significantly during this time (i.e., from \$700,909 to \$366,275). Clearly, the aforementioned neglect to improve and maintain Pitt Stadium were becoming a problem, particularly with the building of a new municipal stadium (Cohen, 1967).

Exploration of Multi-Purpose Municipal Options (1960-1969)

In the 1960s, the City began exploring options for a multi-purpose stadium to house the Pirates, Steelers, and possibly the University football team under the scope of what other municipalities were doing during the "cookie-cutter" era of 1953 to 1992 (Consideration, 1956-1965; Seifried & Pastore, 2009). The City considered several plans, including the renovation of Pitt Stadium after the University bought Forbes Field for \$3 million in 1958. For its part, the University hired the architect firm Gerrard & McDonald to perform a feasibility study of converting Pitt Stadium for multi-purpose municipal use. The architects proposed a renovation costing \$13,430,000. This was much lower than the \$23,000,000 budget for the city's alternative proposal at the Northside location. A renovated Pitt Stadium would provide 79,000 total seats, as opposed to 54,000 available at the future Three Rivers Stadium. Proposed structural changes to Pitt Stadium included the elimination of the running track and a second covered-tier on one side. This deck would be supported by cantilever-style construction, typical of other cookie-cutter facilities, which housed new lobby space, concession stands, offices, press boxes, and other spectator amenities (e.g., escalators, security offices) (Gerard & McDonald, n.d.).

The University's plan (i.e., Stuhldreher Plan) suggested the number of parking spots could be increased from 9,000 to 16,000 through the addition of parking garages between Salk Hall, the Field House, and area hospitals. Next, shuttle service lines from downtown parking could be improved to help another 1,500 cars park within 10 minutes of the facility; however, they also suggested these additions would be costly. Finally, the Stuhldreher Plan suggested area restaurants, hotels, and stores would prefer the campus location because of their geographic closeness to Pitt Stadium. Moreover, they said rental income (i.e., from the Steelers and Pirates) for the University appeared to help the University avoid a complete program collapse experienced by other urban climber schools (e.g., Temple, Cincinnati, Akron, and Rutgers) (Gerard & McDonald, n.d.).

Ultimately, the Stadium Authority of the City of Pittsburgh chose Three Rivers Stadium and highlighted the disrepair and unattractiveness of Pitt Stadium in a 1967 memorandum. Their report began by citing that parking and access had become inconvenient and even dangerous as the City consumed the University's campus. Next, the report acknowledged narrow wooden bleachers, steep aisles and stairwells, and growing deferred maintenance made for an uncomfortable game day experience; newer venues like Three Rivers Stadium were cited as providing more pleasant accommodations. Last, Pitt Stadium took up valuable University-owned real estate that could be put to more productive academic or commercial use. Although it was not expressly stated in the document, the Stadium Authority implied that Pitt should move into Three Rivers Stadium to be more competitive as an athletic program and institution (Cohen, 1967).

Rededication to University Athletics and Facilities (1970-1998)

The University rededicated itself to both its football program and facilities following additional complaints from television producers and the NCAA about the continued de-emphasis and its effect on the quality of football produced at Pitt. Criticizing the lack of scholarships and the quality of Pitt Stadium's television production capabilities, a self-study completed by the University advised removal of Code Bowman and offered specific structural changes that were made throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s (ABC, 1967; Study of Pitt's future, 1967). For instance, in 1970, Pitt installed an artificial turf like that offered at Three Rivers Stadium (Borghetti, 1999). Unlike natural grass, artificial turf does not release moisture and kept the ground from becoming slippery. This theoretically resulted in lower risk of injury and loss of games due to weather, although many players also complained that artificial turf laid over bare concrete actually caused more injuries (Seifried & Pastore, 2009). Artificial turf also helped reduce maintenance costs, which could be 20 times greater for natural grass (Seifried & Pastore, 2009). Next, with help from a \$250,000 gift from the Panther Foundation, "147 spacious lockers, wall-to-wall carpeting, a sauna bath, new showers, a lounge for the players, color television, a stereo set, and a hospitality room for the parents of the players" were built for an increased number of scholarship players (Alberts, 1986, p. 422).

In 1978, the entire football staff gained a new coaching complex that included a two-floor office, reception area, conference room, and workout area in Pitt Stadium. One year later, more spacious and efficient ticket office headquarters were opened in Gate A (Borghetti, 1999). The conversion of old unused space into a modern sports medicine complex also provided a better facility, not only for football and its opponents, but also for the University's soccer and track teams (Spatter, 1984). Other changes in the late 1970s included replacement of the old wooden bleachers for new metal bleachers (Borghetti, 1999). Noticeably, the competitiveness of the football program improved. For instance, from 1973 through 1982, Pitt went to nine bowl games, won 92 games against 25 losses and two ties. Pitt also received recognition as national champions three times (i.e., 1976, 1980, and 1981) and played to an average of 45,061 over this period (i.e., 79.8% capacity). Yet, several home games played at Three Rivers Stadium produced average crowds of 50,395 sending a message that a more modern home facility was needed.

In 1984, the University announced further plans to repair the dilapidated exterior of Pitt Stadium. For instance, the concrete facade was cleaned and cracks or loose concrete were filled and replaced for approximately \$250,000 by the J.J. Graciano Company (Spatter, 1984). Next, "new restrooms and concession stands at the top of the stadium, as part of a \$500,000 project by the Massaro Corporation," were added from Gate 11 to the scoreboard (Spatter, 1984, n.p.).

Finally, the original artificial turf installed in 1970 was replaced for approximately \$700,000 and areas for the working press and television equipment were improved on levels two and three of the stadium (Spatter, 1984).

Despite these renovations, Head Coach Johnny Majors argued the quality of the stadium hurt the program's image and prevented the University from securing top recruits to remain competitive. Expectedly, Pitt suffered from another period of decline (i.e., 51-57-5) from 1984 through 1993. Majors noted that many of the University's major middle group rivals, such as Penn State, built or renovated facilities, which eroded Pitt's reputation with recruits as a national power (Eldridge, Jr., 1995). Thus, in 1994 the University announced a \$19.4 million renovation of Pitt Stadium. The crown jewel of this renovation was the Duratz Athletic Complex, which provided a new locker room, training area and rehabilitation center, weight room, and equipment room designed to accommodate up to 125 student-athletes ("Pitt Stadium to get upgrade," 1994).

Concession stands and restrooms were taken down to allow more concourse space for better spectator traffic (Borghetti, 1999). The installation of gates and fences to partition off different seating levels also created easier flow for those inside the stadium. Structural elements were added to support easier entrance to the second deck ("Progress reported, 1995). The North end of the stadium also received a new video scoreboard for a cost of \$360,000 that was funded by private donors ("Progress reported, 1995). The PantherVision video board was installed in 1997. This large, state-of-the-art screen provided fans with the enjoyment of watching instant replays and enlarged viewing of live football action (Borghetti, 1999).

Abandonment and Demolition of Pitt Stadium (1999)

Despite these renovation efforts, Pitt Stadium would still prove inadequate to meet the needs of the University's athletics programs entering the 21st Century and thus continued to maintain its status as a climber school. In the late 1990s, athletic director Steve Pederson and university chancellor Mark Nordenberg announced that the University would leave Pitt Stadium to share a new home with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Pederson claimed that it would cost \$150 million to bring Pitt Stadium up to meet modern consumer demands. He cited a battle with urban traffic congestion, parking availability, ingress and egress to and from the facility, and lack of decent press facilities as some of the biggest concerns (Anderson, 2001; Robertson, 1999; Service, 1999). Many alumni feared that Pederson's plan would destroy the game day atmosphere by moving off campus. Pederson, however, was convinced that the move to the football-specific Heinz Field was best for the University and City (Service, 1999). The program continued to suffer from 1994 through 1999, winning only 22 games while losing 45.

Pederson provided evidence of Heinz Field's potential when the temporary move to Three Rivers Stadium produced an average crowd of 40,868 and prompted 9,000 student ticket sales per game, "the most in several years." He also remained adamant about the ineffectiveness of the Pitt campus to host more than 12,000 visitors and his belief about the ability of a new facility to provide a unique tailgating and socializing experience similar to that enjoyed by autocrat and middle school programs and the Pittsburgh Steelers. Head coach Walt Harris also believed playing in a modern facility would boost the program's fan base because of what could be offered by Heinz Field (Anderson, 2001; Robertson, 1999; Service, 1999). Specifically, Heinz Field was located just off two interstates that serve the Pittsburgh area, supported large parking areas, and enjoyed dedicated access to the City's light rail system (Heinz Field fan guide, 2014). Next, Heinz Field offered luxury suites and club seats for Pitt to sell. The emphasis on luxury

suites as an important revenue source emerged in the late 1980s, beginning with professional sport facilities. The exclusive comfort, open space, and access to a variety of concession and service options made available for wealthy patrons improved the status and value of those franchises (Seifried, 2010b).

Many historic college structures ultimately required renovation or abandonment because they did not provide an adequate number of luxury accommodations (e.g., suites and club seats). Supporting this acknowledgment, it should be recognized that profits associated with luxury seating were not shared as normal gate receipts were in the past with competitors (Fort, 1997; Seifried & Pastore, 2009). This provided universities with an exclusive, high-dollar revenue stream that flowed entirely to themselves; it was not diluted through NCAA control, conference revenue-sharing mechanisms, or the peculiarities of individual game contracts.

The generation of such revenue and a better connection opportunity with potential university-level donors was not lost on Pitt. When presenting to the Board of Trustees about the Heinz Field proposal, Pedersen highlighted the lack of revenue generation provided by Pitt Stadium as compared to more prestigious middle group counterparts such as Penn State, Ohio State, and Notre Dame. Penn State scheduled their expansion of Beaver Stadium to begin in 2001, which included the addition of 4,000 club seats and a minimum of 58 enclosed luxury boxes ("Beaver Stadium expansion," 1998). Similarly, Ohio State improved Ohio Stadium from 1998 through 2001 through the addition of 82 luxury suites and 2,500 club seats (Sherratt, n.d.). These schools already averaged \$2.5 to \$3 million per game in revenue while Pitt only generated \$2.5 million for the entire 1998 season. Pedersen and others worried they would continue a downward spiral toward the level of Mid-American Conference teams (i.e., lower level climber schools) (Barnes, 1999). ESPN commentator Beano Cook, a 1954 Pitt graduate, provided more support by suggesting the lack of a new facility meant Pitt no longer played 'big-time football' and that Heinz Field would allow the school to climb back to prominence. Regarding this point, Cook emphasized that while some schools used to produce revenues with mediocre teams, schools today need to win in modern facilities to meet peer revenue production (La Point, 2001).

On November 13, 1999, the University played its final home game in Pitt Stadium (Collier, 1999). In December 1999, Pitt Stadium was brought down in stages by planned demolition ("Heinz Field: Home of Pitt football, 2014). The concrete from the stadium was ground and left on the site to help form the foundation for other projects (Anderson, 1999). In the structure's place, the University eventually built the 12,500 seat Peterson Events Center, which would become home to the University's basketball teams, among other Panther varsity sports teams. The University also used much of the acreage where Pitt Stadium once stood for student housing and green space for students and citizens to enjoy their urban environment. Coaches' offices moved to Bruce Hall, and the Duratz Athletic Complex and training facilities eventually moved to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Sport Performance Complex, which is also home to the practice area for the Steelers (Robertson, 1999). Importantly, Pitt felt giving up the campus location for a new convocation center would also produce more revenue for local merchants. Specifically, Pitt administrators argued merchants would benefit from a steadier stream of likely customers. Moreover, they argued the Peterson Events Center would host 50 or University-sponsored events each year further adding to the reputation and status of the University (Service, 1999). Collectively, these assets and advantages were capable of producing new experiences for the Pitt fan nation and made the move to Heinz Field superior to that of staying at Pitt Stadium for the University.

Discussion/Conclusion

This history on Pitt Stadium provides a useful prism to trace the social, consumer, and institutional pressures that affected athletic venues at a large urban “climber” university throughout the 20th Century. Like many other stadium histories, the life of Pitt Stadium was hardly smooth, but rather characterized by fits of transformation interspersed with periods of languishment. Pressures to change the facility were a response to shifting social structures, public beliefs, and popular mentalities reflected in the City, University, and institution of college football about the evolving threshold for climber, middle group, or autocrat status. Additionally, the ultimate failure of the University to transcend its “climber” status through Pitt Stadium informs the ongoing debate regarding on-campus football and the general attempt to use athletics to raise an institution’s academic profile.

The University’s early efforts to elevate its status can be traced to the related decisions to change its name from WUP to University of Pittsburgh in 1908 and to relocate from suburban Allegheny to urban Oakland in 1909. The football team’s corresponding move to nearby Forbes Field ushered in an era of unprecedented athletic success for the school, which led to greater publicity and consumer demand for football (and, arguably, increased enrollment). When Forbes Field proved inadequate to meet this growing popularity, the University made the conscious—though not uncontroversial—decision to build an on-campus stadium to further its reputation. Notably, the approval and construction of Pitt Stadium predated the University’s Cathedral of Learning, another impressive structure intended to help create an air of institutional supremacy, highlighting the idea that Pitt was attempting to use architecture (both academic and athletic buildings) to improve public perception.

The University’s early sports success, coupled with the general rise of college football as a massive commercial enterprise, created huge demand that compelled the University to build Pitt Stadium. This demand is evident in not only attendance at Pitt football games, but also the financial and infrastructural support of the City’s prominent businessmen in the construction of Pitt Stadium. The early profitability of Pittsburgh football should also be acknowledged, as the growing gate receipts incentivized the decision-makers and alumni associated with the University that building its own large on-campus facility could realize even more profits, higher enrollments, and alumni donations. Pitt was not alone as many other schools used their football stadia to raise enrollments, improve alumni relations, and increase alumni donations.

The University continued to enjoy tremendous athletic success in its first few years in Pitt Stadium, but soon preexisting political tensions and emerging economic pressures impeded this progress. The internal political turmoil was best represented in the contentious relationship between Head Coach Jock Sutherland and Chancellor John G. Bowman. In the late 1920s, both local and national media were critical of the University’s ethics in permitting widespread payment to athletes who were allegedly unqualified students. Of course, these commentaries suggested that, although Pitt had envisioned using athletics to increase its prestige, the University was actually now viewed even less favorably by the media and potentially by the autocrat and middle group institutions it sought to emulate and join. In response, Bowman introduced strict measures prohibiting the admission and compensation of students based on their athletic merit, prompting Sutherland’s resignation and several decades of decline in the prominence of the football program. As gate receipts declined along with the team’s performance, so did the condition of Pitt Stadium, and the general economic crisis brought on by the Great Depression of

the 1930s and material shortages during World War II further exacerbated the issue and the school's efforts to join the Big Ten (i.e., middle group).

Although the school made some cosmetic and pragmatic improvements to Pitt Stadium throughout the 1940s and 1950s, these measures were largely reactionary rather than progressive. Originally, the location of Pitt Stadium was chosen to take advantage of Pittsburgh's nearby elites and public transportation system, which could help the middle-class and working citizens located throughout the City attend games. However, as the surrounding neighborhoods became more densely populated with residents, businesses, and more University expansion, fans and officials became concerned with parking, access to Pitt Stadium, and eventually safety.

It became evident that as the 1960s approached that Pitt Stadium was less like other modern urban venues emerging at that time and college venues being renovated. Maintenance and enhancements lagged behind other peer institutions that made changes to improve amenities (e.g., number and quality of concessions, restrooms, and lights) the growing fan nation and partners demanded at live sporting events. This prompted the University to consider several major changes regarding the home of its football team, including converting Pitt Stadium to a multipurpose municipal facility or joining the Pittsburgh Steelers in Three Rivers Stadium.

After declining to partner with local government, the University purported to rededicate itself to athletics in the 1970s. "Code Bowman" was abolished and through the 1990s several much-needed stadium rehabilitation efforts were undertaken (e.g., metal bleachers, ticket turnstiles, façade repairs), along with a few projects intended to make Pitt Stadium a truly modern venue (e.g., artificial turf, large video screen). However, the aforementioned congestion ultimately prevented the University from expanding luxury suites and club seats like their non-urban peers could do in the 1990s and beyond. This effectively prohibited Pitt Stadium from ever becoming a commercially viable stadium capable and ultimately resulted in maintain their status as a climber school and subsequent move to Heinz Field, also shared by the Pittsburgh Steeler.

Lastly, although the University was not able to leverage Pitt Stadium as originally intended, Heinz Field and the accumulation of new athletic and academic building success after 2001 prompted the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) to extend an invitation to Pitt in 2011 to join the conference beginning in 2013. The move to the ACC, which includes schools such as University of Virginia, Duke University, and University of North Carolina, among several other prominent middle group research institutions who are members of the prestigious Association of American Universities, were attractive for a variety of reasons (Hart, 2011). For instance, both Chancellor Mark Nordenberg and then-athletics director Steve Pederson cited the ACC member schools' academic prestige and the University's history of collaborating with these schools in both research and sports as reasons the University applied for conference membership. Specifically, Nordenberg stated, "In looking to our own future, we could not envision a better conference home for Pitt and are grateful to the Council of Presidents for extending an invitation to join the ACC community" ("ACC extends, 2011, para. 4). Elsewhere, Pederson suggested

"When we set high expectations for our student-athletes in their academic, athletic and personal goals, it is important to provide every opportunity and resource to enable that success. Joining the ACC and the outstanding institutions in this conference will give every Pitt student-athlete the chance to achieve their highest aspirations." ("ACC extends, 2011, para. 6)

Overall, it appears the razing of Pitt Stadium may have done more to help the University than the actual construction and occupation. Future administrators of universities should find the initial success and later inadequacy of Pitt Stadium instructive in their strategic facility plans. Among the key practical lessons to be learned from the rise and fall of Pitt Stadium are the importance of having a consistent internal vision within the university (especially common goals among athletic and academic administrators), establishing lasting financial connections with prominent business and political institutions, and providing easy access, safety, and amenities for middle class fans and students.

Further, we recommend they should study the recent urban football stadiums build in Houston (i.e., John O'Quinn Field at TDECU Stadium- 2014) and New Orleans (i.e., Yulman Stadium- 2014) for the University of Houston and Tulane University, respectively, to understand the impact of returning to campus after leaving a larger professional facility. For example, although Houston administrators praised their new venue as a vehicle to compete with flagship state schools like University of Texas and Texas A&M University, they also acknowledged that the stadium project only became viable *after* the school was given Tier I research status several years earlier (Ehling, 2014). Further, it should be noted, that despite the construction of these state-of-the-art on-campus facilities, both Houston and Tulane have become entrenched as members of the American Athletic Conference, making it difficult to climb in terms of national recognition for their football programs. Thus, college athletic administrators should take the information provided by the Pitt Stadium case as precautionary, in that new campus venues built for a variety of stakeholders and not necessarily new stadia may be the key to improving institutional status in the eyes of autocrats and middle group peers.

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