

KORNBLAU FIELD AT S.B. BALLARD STADIUM

1936

Foreman Field opens



at the Norfolk Division of the College of William & Mary on Oct. 3, 1936. A.H. Foreman, who helped found the Norfolk Division and procured funding for the stadium, is feted by officials, including the mayors of Norfolk and Virginia Beach. Virginia defeats William & Mary – the mother school in Williamsburg – 7-0. The stadium later becomes home

of the Oyster Bowl, concerts, graduations and the reincarnation of Old Dominion University football 69 years later. Foreman Field was considered the finest stadium in Virginia when it opened. Joe Namath, Johnny Unitas, and Ernie Davis played in the stadium with clam shell-like sideline seating

2009

ODU football makes a successful debut



on Sept. 3, 2009 when the Monarchs throttle Chowan, 36-21. Coach Bobby Wilder was hired in 2007 to build a team from scratch and did so by piecing together an amalgam of junior college and high school players. ODU's tailgate lots are overflowing. The noise from the sellout crowd of 19,782 is so deafening that linebacker Marcus Porter has trouble calling defensive signals. Kicker Drew Hareza scores the first points for ODU on a 39-yard field goal. The first touchdown is

a 50-yard pass from Thomas DeMarco to Marquel Thomas. Thanks in part to smart scheduling by senior associate athletic director Bruce Stewart, that first team goes 9-2.

2018

A stadium plan is finalized

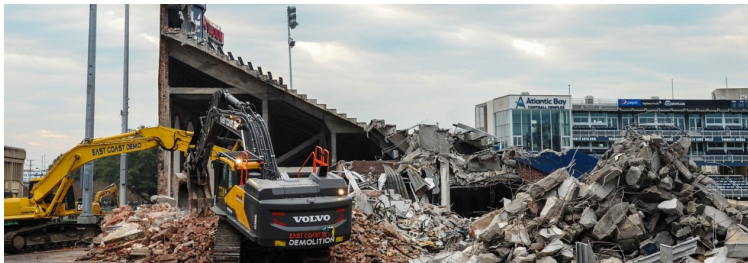


on April 18, 2018, when a \$65 million plan to tear down Foreman Field and build on that site is announced. The General Assembly is asked to approve spending \$10 million more on the project and again, student fees will not be raised. The stadium will incorporate many design features University officials saw on a trip to Florida Atlantic

University to inspect FAU Stadium. The \$10 million is needed “because construction costs have been escalating significantly,” says Greg DuBois, Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance. The cost later increases by \$2.5 million as ODU raises private money for the Priority Automotive Club.

2018

Demolition of old Foreman Field begins



Monday, Nov. 19, when two subcontractors hired by S.B. Ballard Construction begin tearing down the sidelines simultaneously. The crews are able to demolish the stadium in less than two weeks. Dozens of fans congregate outside the stadium during demo, and many walk away with bricks handed to them by gracious Ballard employees. More than 670 concrete piles have been pounded into the ground three days before Christmas, and in spite of poor weather, more than 24 million pounds of concrete are poured to form the foundation by February. Ballard's employees often work well into the night to keep pace with the tight schedule.

1940

Norfolk Division shuts

its football program following the 1940 season because of financial losses and the looming war. Coached by Tommy Scott, who was athletic director, basketball and baseball coach, the Division thrived at first. In its best-known foray against a four-year team, the Division lost at Miami, 6-0, which brought the Braves acclaim. Scott's daughter, Sugie, is married to athletic director Jim Jarrett 69 years later when ODU resurrects football. Scott had a 62-19-4 record over 11 years, but was winless in his last season, which ended with a 21-0 loss to Bergen in front of 100 paying fans.



2012

ODU announces it will join Conference USA



On May 17, 2012, President John R. Broderick announces at a press conference that the Monarchs will leave the CAA to play in C-USA and the Football Bowl Subdivision beginning in 2013. ODU thus becomes the state's third FBS program, joining Virginia and Virginia Tech. The President consulted with the Board of Visitors, state officials and presidents from other universities over six weeks, but makes clear the decision is his. Athletic Director Wood Selig calls the decision “a game changer.” The move comes among a wave of national conference realignment. The CAA lost VCU earlier in the week and would later lose George Mason.

2018

ODU stuns No. 13 Virginia Tech



on September 22, in one of the last games played at Foreman Field. The Hokies are 27½-point favorites and ESPN gives winless ODU a 1.8 percent chance of winning. But in a finish that even Hollywood could not have scripted, former walk-on Blake LaRussa comes off the bench to throw for 495 yards and four touchdowns, and the Monarchs win going away, 49-35. The game is witnessed by an ODU home record crowd of 20,532 and a national TV audience on the CBS Sports Network. Many ODU fans, players and students shed tears at game's end. Students swarm the field and coach Bobby Wilder takes selfies in the middle of the mosh pit. President John R. Broderick, his voice filled with emotion, thanks the team for such a huge win on the day he buried his father in Connecticut.

2019

Stadium construction hits a milestone



on March 2, when work is completed on a 95-foot tower on the stadium's west side. The towers and other structures in the stadium are pieced together with concrete precast trucked to Norfolk. Had the walls been fashioned on site, with block and mortar, the stadium renovation could have been delayed by winter rains and might not have opened on time. By early August, most seats are in place, the west side press box is being finished and new video and ribbon boards and turf are being installed. In late August, the stadium will be handed over to the University by S.B. Ballard.

2005

Football is revived at ODU

on Tuesday, June 13, 2005, when the ODU Board of Visitors unanimously approves a proposal from President Roseann Runte to begin playing football in 2009. Foreman Field is to undergo a \$24.8 million renovation. Because of a donation from Stephen Ballard, head of S.B. Ballard Construction, the stadium is renamed Foreman Field at S.B. Ballard Stadium. Most of the \$24.8 million is spent on new suites, loge seats, a home locker room and a five-story parking deck in the south end zone that remain today. John R. Broderick was not President, but plays a key role behind the scenes in the effort to re-start football. So does ODU alumnus Sonny Stallings, the former State Senator from Virginia Beach.



2013

ODU announces that a new stadium



will be constructed to replace Foreman Field. Dave Harnage, ODU's Chief Operating Officer, presents the Board with a summary of the University's new master plan in August of 2013 that includes tearing down Foreman Field and building a new stadium on Powhatan Avenue. Harnage says engineers determined Foreman Field can't be saved. After that proposal is deemed too expensive, the Board approves a plan for a new stadium on the Foreman Field site with 22,300 seats and a price tag of \$55 million. Harnage says student fees will not be raised for the project. Raising student fees, Harnage says, “is not acceptable.”

2018

The final game at Foreman Field

is played on Nov. 17, 2018, when ODU trounces VMI, 77-14, in its regular-season finale, but the game takes a back seat to postgame ceremonies. Dozens of players return and are introduced to the crowd. Coach Bobby Wilder gives an emotional speech, followed by a fireworks display with “Closing Time,” by Seismic playing in the background. Broderick invites A.H. Foreman's two living grandchildren, Herbert Foreman Hargroves, a Richmond businessman, and Peggy Bartlett, a retired Portsmouth principal, to turn off the lights for the final time. Afterwards, the recently installed lights for the new stadium turn on, resulting in a final ovation from the 8,000 people still in the stadium. “It's just a building,” Bartlett says of the stadium. “The spirit remains.”



2019

ODU meets Norfolk State on Aug. 31

at 7 p.m. in the first game at Kornblau Field at S.B. Ballard Stadium. Foreman Field is gone, replaced by an imposing, \$67.5 million FBS quality stadium. It is fitting that ODU will open against Norfolk State. No team has played more games on ODU's campus than the Spartans, who used Foreman Field as their home stadium for decades. This game will mark the 83rd season of football at the same site. Fans will be treated to nearly 16,000 new sideline seats all with back support, better sight lines and more leg room than Foreman Field. There are twice as many concession stands and bathrooms, new ribbon scoreboards, and a video board. The bands from both universities will play at halftime in a show of unity between sister institutions.

