

OSU offers free shuttle service to fans

BY PATTI WEAVER
World Correspondent

STILLWATER — Oklahoma State University will offer a new, free parking service for the first home football game on Saturday.

Free shuttle bus rides are available from downtown Stillwater to Boone Pickens Stadium and back.

Mayor Roger McMillian said the service, which will provide about 500 free park-

ing spaces downtown to fans, is an example of the university and the city entering a new relationship of cooperation.

“Football is such a large part of our community in Stillwater, such a vital role in our economy particularly in the fall months, that we want to do everything to make the visitors’ experience to Stillwater as positive as possible,” the mayor said.

The new parking service is a collaboration of the univer-

sity’s athletic department and the city’s Business Improvement District to help alleviate parking problems since about 1,000 spaces were lost due to construction near the stadium, said Brandon Armstrong, event coordinator for the OSU Posse athletic booster group.

Signs in downtown Stillwater will indicate where to park — including a lot west of City Hall off Seventh Avenue and Lewis Street, a covered

garage across the street, and the BancFirst lot at 80 S. Main St.

An OSU transit bus will begin running downtown at about 3 p.m. Saturday, three hours before kickoff against Houston. The bus will continue to run throughout the game, which is expected to end by 9:30 p.m., Armstrong said.

Before the game, the shuttle will run every 15 minutes, depending on traffic, to pick

up riders at Seventh Avenue and Lewis Street and take them to Hall of Fame Avenue near Knoblock Street, about 100 feet from the stadium.

After the game, two or three shuttle buses will run every 25 to 30 minutes, depending on traffic, to pick up fans at the Hall of Fame Avenue site, where they were dropped off, and take them back downtown.

“If there is a heavy demand, we’ll re-evaluate and look at

expanding the parking service in the future,” Armstrong said.

“Merchants and property owners are really excited to offer parking,” to football fans, Stillwater Business Improvement District Coordinator Angela McLaughlin said.

“OSU needs spots — we have parking downtown available on weekends. And we want to get more people downtown,” so it is a win-win situation, McLaughlin said.

RENOVATION TIMELINE

June 2001: Acknowledging that Oklahoma State’s Lewis Field is an inadequate, rusted facility, **Cowboy athletic director Terry Don Phillips** said, “Once our football program starts to perform at a consistent basis, we’re going to need 50,000-plus seats. We want to take it to whatever the maximum optimum level will be and conceptually we could go as high as 65,000.”

August 2001: OSU officials announce a campaign intended to raise \$100 million for new stadium skyboxes and additional seating.

March 2003: The stadium campaign gets a \$20 million boost from **energy tycoon T. Boone Pickens**, a 1951 OSU graduate.



T. Boone Pickens (right), shown at the 2003 stadium groundbreaking, has been an integral part of OSU’s renovations.

STEPHEN HOLMAN/
Tulsa World file

September 2003: OSU’s football venue is given a new name — Boone Pickens Stadium.

August 2004: At a cost of \$47 million, the southside renovation is completed. The structure includes 2,030 club seats and 19 suites.



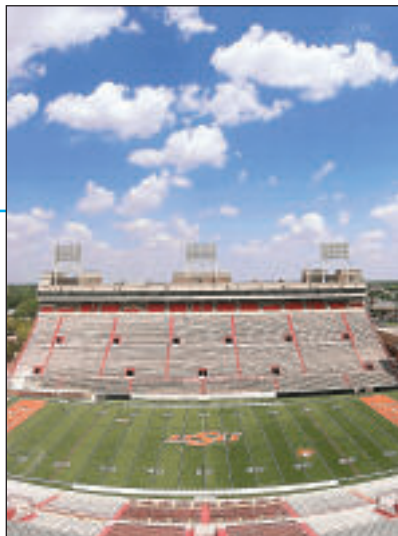
At 460,000 square feet, the west end-zone complex is larger than Oklahoma’s state Capitol. It is currently under construction. JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World

January 2006: Pickens stuns the college sports world by donating an additional \$165 million to the OSU athletic department. His gift allows OSU to proceed with a plan to enclose the west end of the stadium.

August 2006: At a cost of \$56 million, the stadium’s **northside renovation** is completed. The structure includes 1,900 club seats and 32 suites.

September 2008: With the enclosure of the west end, the Boone Pickens Stadium seating capacity increases from 44,700 to 60,000.

August 2009: OSU’s **\$180 million west end football complex** is expected to be finished, thus completing the stadium renovation.



MATT BARNARD/Tulsa World file

By Bill Haisten, World sports writer

3 storylines

A look at three things to watch in today’s Houston-OSU contest.

By Bill Haisten, World sports writer

Early stops

During the second period of Houston’s 55-3 victory over Division I-AA Southern University last week, the quick-strike Cougar offense possessed the football less than four minutes but still put 31 points on the board. Houston punted only once all night and had 615 total yards. OSU’s defense was impressive in limiting Washington State to fewer than 200 total yards, but Houston’s Cougars have more speed and weapons than WSU’s Cougars. OSU must get early defensive stops, force punts and deflate Houston’s confidence.

Big returns

Washington State was staggered by OSU’s special-teams play. Dez Bryant popped a 42-yard punt return that led to a field goal. Ricky Price had a 68-yard punt return (the first punt return of his career) that led to a field goal. Perrish Cox scored on a 90-yard kickoff return. Can OSU’s return game be consistently dynamic, or was Washington State deficient? Houston was terrible on punt coverage last season. If that has not been corrected, the Cowboys could run free again on Saturday.

Comfortable at home

Houston is a dangerous nonconference opponent, but the Cowboys have prevailed in 12 consecutive home openers. Since the beginning of the 2001 season, Oklahoma State has a home record of 27-11. In five home starts last season, Cowboy QB Zac Robinson averaged 275 passing yards and 84 rushing yards. OSU players and coaches express confidence that their defense is significantly better than last year’s model. With Case Keenum at quarterback, Houston should provide an interesting test.

OSU-HOUSTON GAMEDAY TIPS

Where to park: Construction around campus leaves limited parking options. If you do not have Posse Club parking access, expect to pay at least \$20 to park in the Boone Pickens Stadium area. Fans looking for free parking can park in downtown Stillwater and ride a free shuttle bus at Seventh Avenue and Lewis Street. The shuttle will run approximately every 15 minutes before the game starting three hours prior to kickoff and will run every 30 minutes after the game depending on traffic.

Posse parking lots will open at noon Saturday. There will be no access to Knoblock Street between Hall of Fame Avenue and McElroy Road on game days.

Boone Pickens Stadium policies: All persons are subject to search. Allowable bags, 8 inches by 11 inches, are subject to search. No pets or animals are allowed in the stadium except service animals for impaired or disabled guests. Spirit banners, flags, or signs considered to be improper will be removed and confiscated by game management. The use of poles to display these items is prohibited. The following items are not permitted: umbrellas, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, car seats, baby strollers, artificial noisemakers, beach balls, explosives,

firearms, food, beverage, ice chests, backpacks, video cameras, large lens cameras, tripods and monopods.

What to do outside of the stadium: The Made in Oklahoma vendors open at noon on the stadium’s north side. At 2 p.m., the Hall of Fame Block Party opens on north side the stadium with carnival style concessions, plus free activities including carnival rides, inflatable games, airbrush face painting, temporary tattoos, and caricature drawings by Hunter Husky.

At 3:45 p.m., the Cowboys will walk from the Atherton Hotel and down Hester Street to Boone Pickens Stadium. At 4 p.m., following the walk, there will be a pep rally in the stadium’s south parking lot and live music from the Turnpike Troubadours at the Hall of Fame Block Party.

What to do inside the stadium: Watch the Cowboys take on the Cougars. About five minutes before kickoff, the new team entrance video “We Like It Loud” will be played on the video board in the east end zone. There are concession stands on the stadium’s north and south sides.

Stadium reminders: The gates open for suite holders at 4 p.m. and regular ticket holders at 4:30 p.m. Also, OSU is designated as a tobacco-free campus. Smoking and use of all tobacco products are prohibited.

By Matt Doyle, World sports writer

OSU:

Designer of the renovations says the difference in the past 10 years is incredible.

FROM B1

the addition of a \$47 million southside structure in 2004. The \$56 million northside structure was completed two years ago, and now the west end is enclosed and ready for orange-clad occupants.

Last week, the Cowboys and Cougars opened with victories. OSU prevailed 39-13 over Washington State in Seattle, while Houston was a 55-3 winner over Division I-AA Southern University.

In 2006, OSU lost 34-25 at Houston’s Robertson Stadium. During Saturday’s rematch, the OSU marching band and a few thousand students, among others, will watch from the west end.

“It was already really loud when the end zone was open,” senior safety Ricky Price said. “I can’t even start to imagine what the noise will be like now.”

Most of OSU’s donors contributed to the south- and northside projects, so it was Pickens’ 2006 gift of \$165 million that empowered OSU to proceed with a more complete renovation.

After Pickens announced his grand-slam donation, OSU athletic director Mike Holder said, “This gives us an opportunity to get in the ballgame

RENOVATION COST

A cost breakdown on the Boone Pickens Stadium makeover:
Southside structure: \$47 million.
Northside structure: \$56 million.
West-end structure: \$180 million (estimated).
Total: \$283 million (estimated).

with everybody else. If we hadn’t had this gift, I feel like we would have been dead in the water for the next 20 years.”

In 2001, it was estimated that OSU could execute a stadium makeover — including the addition of west-end seats — for about \$85 million.

The west-end structure, which will include a locker room, coaches’ office, a strength-and-conditioning facility and 56 luxury suites, has a price tag estimated at \$180 million. The elaborate building — which, at 460,000 square feet is larger than Oklahoma’s state Capitol — pushes the overall renovation cost to an estimated \$283 million.

The west-end structure is scheduled for completion before the start of the 2009 season. At that point, OSU’s six-year stadium project will have finished.

“Anyone who hasn’t seen the stadium recently, they’ll be impressed when they walk up,” Holder said. “OSU graduates will have a different feeling about football here when they see the exterior of the football stadium.”

Tulsa architect Gary Sparks, a 1966

OSU graduate, was responsible for the design of the Boone Pickens Stadium and Gallagher-Iba Arena renovations.

“Even if you don’t care about football, you should come and see what has happened with Boone Pickens Stadium,” Sparks said. “It’s worth the price of the ticket just to see the stadium. This stadium has every amenity you could possibly imagine.

“Just go back to 1998 — only 10 years ago. We had the old Gallagher-Iba and the old Lewis Field. What OSU has done with facilities is incredible. Regardless of what had happened at Gallagher-Iba and on the south and north sides of the stadium, it just wouldn’t have looked finished if we hadn’t enclosed the west end. Now, it looks like a big-time stadium.”

From his office on the west side of Gallagher-Iba Arena, Cowboy coach Mike Gundy gets a daily look at the evolution of the stadium.

“When we got the money to renovate the south side, most people felt like we would get the north side done,” Gundy said. “But I don’t think anyone was convinced that the end-zone project would ever happen. You’re talking about a lot of money and a lot of work.

“I know there were drawings and vision and all that, but sometimes when people figure out what something is going to cost, the drawings and vision don’t matter. I never really thought it would be like this.”

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Arkansas aims to bring ‘A’ game

BY NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Arkansas coach Bobby Petrino probably will not have to worry about his team’s focus this weekend.

Ordinarily, the Hogs’ matchup with Louisiana-Monroe on Saturday would be a classic trap game — what with Arkansas’ trip to Texas coming up the following week. But after a startlingly close win over Western Illinois in their opener, the Hogs do not sound like they are looking too far ahead.

“Louisiana-Monroe is going to watch some film, and they are going to have a chance to beat us,” defensive lineman Adrian Davis said. “We need to bring our ‘A’ game and earn it.”

LOUISIANA-MONROE VS. ARKANSAS

6 p.m. Saturday
War Memorial Stadium,
Little Rock, Ark.
TV: None
Radio: KCFO am970

Arkansas won with its “C” game last weekend, rallying to defeat second-tier Western Illinois 28-24. Quarterback Casey Dick played well, but the Razorbacks had difficulty stopping the run, allowing the Leathernecks to control the ball for extended periods.

In Louisiana-Monroe, Arkansas (1-0) faces an opponent that is becoming plenty familiar with the Southeastern Conference. The War-

hawks stunned Alabama last November and have three SEC teams on their schedule this year. They lost to Auburn 34-0 last week.

The victory over Alabama turned heads all over — and is a warning to any Razorback who might take this next game lightly.

“We’ve all watched that game throughout the entire summer,” Petrino said.

Arkansas was without running back Michael Smith in the opener. The junior was suspended for improper use of scholarship textbooks, but he is expected back this weekend. The Razorbacks had to rely on freshmen Dennis Johnson and DeAnthony Curtis in the backfield, and freshmen Greg Childs and Joe Adams each caught touchdown passes.

Relying on inexperienced players will be a fact of life this season, Arkansas’ first under Petrino. The Hogs lost star backs Darren McFadden and Felix Jones to the NFL during the offseason.

Louisiana-Monroe coach Charlie Weatherbie is not taking any comfort in Arkansas’ struggles last weekend.

“I’m sure they’ll improve from the first week to second week just like we will,” he said.

“It’s always tough playing two opponents like Auburn and Arkansas,” Weatherbie said. “We’ve got to not make the mistakes that we made this last week.”

Petrino feels the same way about his team. The Razorbacks will face Texas next week, but first, they need to play a solid 60 minutes against Louisiana-Monroe.



Arkansas coach Bobby Petrino runs onto the field with his team against Western Illinois last weekend. Petrino and the Razorbacks will play Louisiana-Monroe on Saturday in Little Rock, Ark.

DANNY JOHNSTON/Associated Press