



# How a Well-Designed Football Stadium Can Transform a School & Community

By Kurt Ludwick

Whether renovating an existing stadium or building a new one, the proper design considerations can give any school a competitive edge.

Starting a college football program is an enormous endeavor that goes far beyond building a stadium, hiring a coach and assembling a team. It's a multimillion-dollar investment that often begins with recruiting the right architectural partner, because a facility's design can either help school leaders accomplish their football program's goals, or hinder them. An experienced design firm can do far more than build a stadium, however. It can help provide a school's decision-makers with a framework for a winning football program.

Whether building a football program from scratch or expanding an existing one, there are many architectural considerations to keep in mind, like what appeals to student-athletes, how it integrates with the rest of your campus, what modern technology to adapt, how to create multi-purpose spaces and how to increase revenue. These decisions affect the quality of a facility and can help attract top-level recruits. A well-designed football program is also proven to greatly contribute to the vibrancy of a college or high school campus and can even benefit the local community.

## Transforming an Aging Stadium

McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture has extensive experience planning and designing sports complexes for colleges and universities, and recently completed a design for Lenoir-Rhyne University's Moretz Stadium in Hickory, N.C. (pictured). The \$18 million renovation allows the stadium to function as a multipurpose facility for football games and men's and women's lacrosse. It will also serve the community by hosting concerts, youth sports camps, movie nights and graduations.

"These renovations put us among the top in NCCA Division II—and I'd say better than some Division I schools—and will help us in attracting not only the best student-athletes, but it will also serve as a resource for the Greater Hickory community," said Dr. Fred Whitt, university president, at the stadium's ribbon cutting ceremony.

Moretz Stadium was built in 1924, making it the fourth-oldest stadium in Division II. Since its inaugural season, the Bears football program had experienced accelerated growth. The team had regularly been ranked among the top DII programs in the country and had simply outgrown its original stadium design.

The design for the facility's much-needed updates included new restrooms, concession areas, ticket booths and new locker rooms. These are all practical needs, but in an effort to attract student-athletes, MPS also designed a lounge area for the men's and women's lacrosse teams.

Integrating cohesive branding when designing these spaces is valuable because it makes your team feel more connected and your fans more committed. A school with great branding will have an easier time making athletes feel like they're investing time and energy into more than just an institution. It also makes your school more

memorable to those who tour the campus or attend games.

The Moretz Stadium design also addressed the need for more modern technology, including new video boards, a state-of-the-art speaker system and enhanced stadium lights. As technology evolves, coaches increasingly substitute screens and tablets for traditional chalkboards and whiteboards to break down plays. They also use wireless film projectors to review game footage with the team. Another advancement to consider is the ability to record or live stream games, which can help schools reach a wider audience and gain new fans. Architects must adapt and integrate this technology to help coaches and teams gain a competitive edge.

Lastly, by adding luxury suites and a VIP seating area for various donor levels, MPS was able to offer Lenoir-Rhyne a higher return on its investment. The potential for increased ticket sales can help universities offset the costs of a new stadium. Schools can also increase revenue by adding concession stands, reserved parking for higher-end donors, and event spaces that alumni can rent at an additional cost.

## Anderson University: An Ideal Facility

McMillan Pazdan Smith recently designed Anderson University's Trojan Football Operations Center. The 45,000-square-foot facility will serve as the daily operations center for the football program, which will play its inaugural season in 2024. It's another example of an effective multi-purpose design, with coaches' offices, locker rooms, team meeting rooms, and a sports medicine and conditioning center for various student-athletes.

A stand-out feature in the Anderson University design is its time-efficiency consideration and how it integrates with the campus. Students who pursue highly competitive collegiate sports can feel overwhelmed by the academic and athletic demands placed on them. To address these challenges, MPS designed the sports complex to minimize steps from the classroom to the field and even incorporated areas where athletes can study and catch up on assignments.

As for the training room, architects must comply with the rules the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) set to protect student-athletes. In accordance with these rules, MPS designed private treatment areas for injured athletes and designated hydrotherapy and rehabilitation spaces. Addressing noise concerns is also a top priority when designing conditioning rooms where heavy weights and machinery are being used, as is safety.

## Increasing Attendance & Gaining a Fan Base

If designed intentionally and intelligently, a successful football program can result in increased revenue for a university, higher enrollment and better recruiting. As is the case with any large capital project, it should be carefully planned with all stakeholders involved in each step.

Schools can promote attendance by designing engaging student seating areas and specially designated alumni seating. Media also plays a considerable role in



Photo Credit (all): McMillan Pazdan Smith



promoting your brand. Designing media booths and press boxes with the electronic requirements needed to support their broadcast technology is crucial to gaining media coverage and securing a wider following.

High game attendance can change the culture of a school, but the level of student and fan engagement needed to fill a stadium takes time. Even if attendance numbers are low initially, universities should always build with the idea of future expansion. If they have accomplished what it takes to field a winning football program, it won't be

long before they pack the stands and gain national attention.

Kurt Ludwick is a Principal of McMillan Pazdan Smith's and Director of the firm's Sports and Recreation Studio. MPS is a regional, studio-based design firm with offices across the Southeast and a focus on the design of learning environments that promote positive educational experiences.



**SchoolConstruction**  
design+construction+operations  
**NEWS**

Sign up online for your FREE subscription to School Construction News  
[WWW.SCHOOLCONSTRUCTIONNEWS.COM.SUBSCRIBE/SCN](http://WWW.SCHOOLCONSTRUCTIONNEWS.COM.SUBSCRIBE/SCN) or  
Scan the completed form and email to: [louise@emlenmedia.com](mailto:louise@emlenmedia.com)

*All questions must be answered. Incomplete forms cannot be accepted.*

**What is the primary business of your organization? (check one)**

1  Architecture/Engineering  
2  Construction/Building  
3  Educational Facility  
4  Supply/Manufacturing  
99  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
*please specify*

**For which of the following functions do you have responsibility? (check one)**

1  Architecture/Design/Engineering  
2  Construction  
3  Maintenance  
4  Management/Operations  
99  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
*please specify*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(E-mail addresses will not be sold or given away.)

**To receive FREE information from a category of products and services — in this issue, check the appropriate box(es):**

<input type="checkbox"/> Access Control	<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Supplies/ Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> Flooring	<input type="checkbox"/> Insulation	<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> ADA Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Coating/Water Proofing	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Service/ Commissary	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape/Irrigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music Rooms/Systems
<input type="checkbox"/> Architectural/ Engineering/ CM Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Clocks/Time Keeping Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Drainage/Irrigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> Laundry Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Athletics/ Surfaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Auditorium/Assembly	<input type="checkbox"/> Clothing/Uniforms	<input type="checkbox"/> Drinking Fountains	<input type="checkbox"/> Framing Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Partitions
<input type="checkbox"/> Audio/Visual	<input type="checkbox"/> Compact Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Doors/Frames	<input type="checkbox"/> Gymnasium	<input type="checkbox"/> Lockers/Benches	<input type="checkbox"/> Pest Control
<input type="checkbox"/> Bleachers/Seating	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Hardware & Software	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Management	<input type="checkbox"/> HVAC	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Piping
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpet		<input type="checkbox"/> Facility Services/ Integration	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry Associations & Events	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors/ Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> CCTV		<input type="checkbox"/> Fencing	<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Modular Classrooms/	<input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing
		<input type="checkbox"/> Fire/Life Safety			<input type="checkbox"/> Project Management
					<input type="checkbox"/> Software
					<input type="checkbox"/> Recycling/Waste Management
					<input type="checkbox"/> Roofing
					<input type="checkbox"/> Science/Lab Equipment
					<input type="checkbox"/> Scoreboards
					<input type="checkbox"/> Security
					<input type="checkbox"/> Signage
					<input type="checkbox"/> Skylights
					<input type="checkbox"/> Software/Technology
					<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Flooring
					<input type="checkbox"/> Storage
					<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
					<input type="checkbox"/> Walls/Solid Surfaces/ Materials
					<input type="checkbox"/> Washroom/Toilets/ Sinks/Accessories
					<input type="checkbox"/> Windows/Glazing/ Coverings
					<input type="checkbox"/> Wire Management/ Electrical

Please start/continue my FREE subscription to School Construction News  YES  No **Complete address below**

**Signature: (required)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

4  Independent or gov't. ,...vocational school  
5  All of the above

**Enrollment level you are responsible for: (check one)**  
6  over 20,000  
5  10,001-20,000  
4  5,001-10,000  
3  1,001-5,000  
2  501-1,000  
1  250-500

**Construction type: (check one)**  
1  New construction  
2  Addition/Expansion  
3  Renovation  
4  Technology upgrade  
5  Maintenance  
6  All of the above

**Are you responsible for specifying/purchasing?**

1  YES 2  No

**Delivery preference for School Construction News (required)**  Print  Digital  Both

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like to receive our School Construction NewsWire, digital newsletter?**  
 Yes  No

**Circle number for product information**

100	121	142	163	184	205	226	247	268	289	310	331	352	373
101	122	143	164	185	206	227	248	269	290	311	332	353	374
102	123	144	165	186	207	228	249	270	291	312	333	354	375
103	124	145	166	187	208	229	250	271	292	313	334	355	376
104	125	146	167	188	209	230	251	272	293	314	335	356	377
105	126	147	168	189	210	231	252	273	294	315	336	357	378
106	127	148	169	190	211	232	253	274	295	316	337	358	379
107	128	149	170	191	212	233	254	275	296	317	338	359	380
108	129	150	171	192	213	234	255	276	297	318	339	360	381
109	130	151	172	193	214	235	256	277	298	319	340	361	382
110	131	152	173	194	215	236	257	278	299	320	341	362	383
111	132	153	174	195	216	237	258	279	300	321	342	363	384
112	133	154	175	196	217	238	259	280	301	322	343	364	385
113	134	155	176	197	218	239	260	281	302	323	344	365	386
114	135	156	177	198	219	240	261	282	303	324	345	366	387
115	136	157	178	199	220	241	262	283	304	325	346	367	388
116	137	158	179	200	221	242	263	284	305	326	347	368	389
117	138	159	180	201	222	243	264	285	306	327	348	369	390
118	139	160	181	202	223	244	265	286	307	328	349	370	391
119	140	161	182	203	224	245	266	287	308	329	350	371	392
120	141	162	183	204	225	246	267	288	309	330	351	372	393

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022