

## = Apogee Stadium =

Apogee Stadium is a college football stadium located at the junction of Interstate 35 East and West in Denton , Texas . Opened in 2011 , it is home to the University of North Texas ( UNT ) Mean Green football team , which competes in Conference USA . The facility replaced Fouts Field , where the school 's football program had been based since 1952 .

The stadium was proposed by the University of North Texas System Board of Regents after the 2002 New Orleans Bowl . Designed by HKS , Inc . , it was constructed at a cost of \$ 78 million after a contentious student body election in 2008 . It was originally named " Mean Green Stadium " , but was renamed when ResNet provider Apogee purchased the naming rights in 2011 . The stadium hosted its first major event on September 10 , 2011 when the Mean Green lost 48 ? 23 against the University of Houston Cougars . That game 's attendance of 28 @, @ 075 holds the record for the stadium ; the Mean Green have never sold out a home game in their five seasons at the venue . Official home attendance figures for the team 's first five seasons at Apogee Stadium averaged around 18 @, @ 492 per game , which is slightly under 60 % of its capacity of 30 @, @ 850 .

The facility includes various amenities , including a press box , luxury boxes , and an alumni pavilion . It also uses environmental technology ; it is the first newly built stadium to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ( LEED ) Platinum certification . It can be reached by road , but because of limited parking and traffic congestion on game days , many attendees park on the northeast side of Interstate 35E and cross a pedestrian bridge to reach the stadium . Others use public transportation to reach the facility on game days .

## = = History = =

### = = = Early planning and finance = = =

In September 2002 , the University of North Texas purchased 19 acres ( 7 @. @ 7 ha ) on the opposite side of Interstate 35 from the main campus in Denton , Texas from Liberty Christian School for \$ 5 @. @ 1 million . The university also owned an adjacent 158 @- @ acre ( 64 ha ) golf course . Following the football team 's victory at the 2002 New Orleans Bowl , school administrators announced their intent to build an assortment of new athletic facilities on the properties , now called the Mean Green Village . These plans included a new football stadium to replace Fouts Field , where the school 's football team had been based since 1952 . Richard Raefs , vice chancellor of administrative affairs at UNT , stated that that the project 's primary objective was the consolidation of academic facilities and that renovating Fouts Field would cost \$ 8 million more than building an entirely new stadium .

The University of North Texas System Board of Regents released a long @- @ term campus master plan in 2005 that included a proposed new stadium with a capacity of 35 @, @ 000 and an estimated cost " in excess of \$ 35 million " . UNT athletic director Rick Villareal stated that the university would use only private fundraising , rather than another increase in students ' fees , to pay for any new facilities , including a stadium . He projected that the new stadium would cost \$ 40 million and seat 50 @, @ 000 spectators . The athletic department changed that capacity estimate in 2007 to 32 @, @ 000 with the possibility of later expansion to 50 @, @ 000 .

### = = = Athletics fee referendum = = =

In 2008 , the athletic department tried again to increase the athletics fee to pay for the new stadium , which now had an estimated cost of \$ 60 million . UNT Student Government Association ( SGA ) student senators voted to hold a student election on the referendum to approve the new fee , which amounted to a net increase of \$ 7 per credit hour for each student , or approximately \$ 840 per student over the course of four years . According to state law , students cannot pay for more than half the cost of a stadium .

The athletic department made a concerted effort to promote the higher fee to students , and supporters suggested hiring street preachers or troubadours to promote the election . Making the case for the fee prior to the election , athletic director Rick Villareal said that the stadium was " not some arms race for us " and that the fee 's objective was not just to keep up with other universities .

The referendum was held between October 13 ? 17 , 2008 . Students voted for or against the proposal :

In order for the University of North Texas to have a better Athletic program , which in turn can lead to national exposure and increased recognition of UNT ; I agree to a dedicated Athletic Fee not to exceed \$ 10 per semester credit hour , capped at 15 hours . Once the Athletic Fee is implemented , the Student Service Fee will be reduced by \$ 3 per semester credit hour . The Athletic Fee shall not be implemented until the semester the new football stadium is complete , which is expected to be fall 2011 .

On October 21 , 2008 , the UNT SGA announced that in one of the largest turnouts in the school 's history , student voters approved a dedicated athletic fee to fund the new stadium . Almost 14 % of the student body voted , with 2 @, @ 829 students ( 58 @. @ 1 % ) voting for the increase and 2 @, @ 038 ( 41 @. @ 9 % ) voting against it . After the election , the cost estimate for the stadium 's construction increased by \$ 18 million to \$ 78 million , \$ 38 million more than the 2005 estimate . At a press conference with head football coach Todd Dodge , Villarreal stated that " there 's an arms race going on with facilities . This one will put us up there with everybody else . " In February 2009 , the school 's chapter of Students for a Democratic Society unsuccessfully attempted to petition for a re @-@ vote on the referendum .

Following the election , Representative Myra Crownover and Senator Craig Estes submitted companion bills during the eighty @-@ first Texas Legislature to approve the fee increase . According to the report submitted by Crownover to the state 's Higher Education Committee , the fee would not begin until construction of the new stadium was complete . As a result of the fee , the athletics department would collect approximately \$ 8 @. @ 7 million from students in 2012 , of which \$ 3 @. @ 9 million would be put towards payment of the new stadium . Estes ' bill was approved by the Texas House and Senate , and was signed into law by Governor Rick Perry on May 23 , 2009 . Prior to the groundbreaking ceremony on November 21 , 2009 , President of UNT Gretchen Bataille said that of the approximately \$ 78 million needed to pay for the new stadium , the department had raised \$ 5 million . In 2015 , the eighty @-@ fourth Texas Legislature passed a bill allowing the Board of Regents to raise the fee by up to 10 % each year beyond the original limit of \$ 10 . In September 2015 , the Board of Regents approved an increase in the fee , raising it to \$ 11 per credit hour .

= = = Construction and naming rights = = =

In February 2008 , the school selected HKS , Inc. to provide architectural and design services for the proposed new stadium . The university hired Manhattan Construction Company in 2009 to provide pre @-@ construction and construction services . After leveling the area , Manhattan installed a steel @-@ reinforced concrete skeleton for the stands . Subsequently , the firm flattened the playing field area and installed artificial turf . In later phases , glass and brick were added to the facility 's luxury suites . Construction officially finished on July 20 , 2011 .

On August 11 , 2011 , UNT announced a deal with Austin @-@ based ResNet provider Apogee for the naming rights to the new stadium , and the name was changed to " Apogee Stadium " . According to the contract , Apogee will pay \$ 11 @. @ 8 million of the \$ 20 million deal in cash over 20 years , including graduated annual payments beginning at \$ 312 @, @ 000 and ending in three payments of \$ 1 million . The remaining \$ 8 @. @ 29 million will be in the form of in @-@ kind services . As part of the contract , Apogee also received one luxury suite in the new stadium and premium tickets to other UNT events .

= = = Opening season = = =

The stadium hosted its first game on September 10 , 2011 , when the Mean Green football team lost 48 ? 23 against the University of Houston Cougars . Despite the concerted efforts of the university and the athletic department , the first home game at the new stadium did not sell out , and the game attracted 28 @, @ 075 spectators , 2 @, @ 775 fewer than full capacity . Although attendees ' reception to the opening game was generally positive , attendance dropped to 21 @, @ 181 for the second home game against the Indiana University Hoosiers . By the third home game against the Florida Atlantic University Owls , attendance had dropped to a season @-@ low of 13 @, @ 142 . To promote the final home game of the season against the Middle Tennessee State University Blue Raiders , the university offered free tickets to some athletic booster club members , and head football coach Dan McCarney promoted the game with an op @-@ ed in the school 's student newspaper , the North Texas Daily . The official attendance for the final game was 15 @, @ 962 , bringing the total home attendance for the year to 113 @, @ 186 , a new record for the Mean Green . For the 2011 season , the stadium averaged 18 @, @ 864 spectators per home game , which is 61 @. @ 15 % of the facility 's capacity of 30 @, @ 850 . The team ended the season ranked 98th out of 120 Football Bowl Subdivision ( FBS ) teams in average home attendance . It finished with five wins and seven losses , its best record since the 2004 season .

= = = Later events = = =

For the five home games of the 2012 season , average game attendance saw a slight increase to 18 @, @ 927 , giving the Mean Green the 103rd highest attendance out of 124 FBS teams . The venue hosted its first nationally televised game on October 16 , 2012 when the Mean Green defeated the Louisiana ? Lafayette Ragin ' Cajuns 30 ? 23 on ESPN2 . The broadcast had an estimated 366 @, @ 000 viewers , earning a Nielsen rating of 0 @. @ 3 . The 2013 season began with a home game celebrating 100 years of football at North Texas ; an announced crowd of 21 @, @ 975 watched the Mean Green defeat the Idaho Vandals 40 ? 6 . For the six home games of the 2013 season , average game attendance at Apogee was 21 @, @ 030 . The venue averaged 19 @, @ 271 attendees per home game during the 2014 season and 13 @, @ 631 for the 2015 season .

= = = Other uses = = =

Other events at the stadium include an annual Independence Day fireworks show , hosted by the local Kiwanis organization . The stadium also hosted Bands of America regional marching band competitions in 2012 and 2014 The facility also hosts a number of high school football contests each year , including playoff games . The venue hosted a 5K run in 2016 , coinciding with that year 's spring game .

= = = Largest crowds = = =

= = Structure and facilities = =

Apogee Stadium occupies 426 @, @ 300 square feet ( 39 @, @ 600 m2 ) on 46 acres ( 19 ha ) of land . Stands on the north , east , and west sides of the stadium seat 30 @, @ 850 and form a horseshoe shape around a standard American football field . The field 's surface is PowerBlade HP + , a type of artificial turf comprising synthetic fibers with a rubber and sand infill . Unlike Fouts Field , Apogee Stadium does not have an all @-@ weather running track , and spectators are set approximately 33 feet ( 10 m ) closer to the field . A separate 2 @, @ 500 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 230 m2 ) pavilion for alumni is located just north of the stadium . Parts of the stadium 's exterior are covered with 48 @, @ 320 square feet ( 4 @, @ 489 m2 ) of recyclable silver aluminum composite panels , with an additional 1 @, @ 334 square feet ( 123 @. @ 9 m2 ) of green panels for accent .

The home side stands are located on the west side of the stadium . They include 21 luxury suites ,

which the athletic department sells for \$ 20 @, @ 000 per year plus a " 6- or 7 @-@ figure gift to the Stadium Fund " , and 754 club seats , which can be purchased with a one @-@ time gift of \$ 3 @, @ 125 to \$ 12 @, @ 500 , in addition to an annual \$ 500 donation to the athletic department and the cost of season tickets . The side also includes a press box , named the Bill Mercer Press Club , in honor of the school 's longtime play @-@ by @-@ play announcer . Barnes & Noble College Booksellers operates a Mean Green Gear Store , which is located underneath the stands at Gate 2 on the west side of the stadium .

The stands on the east side of the field are generally reserved for student seating ; behind them is a path @-@ defined tailgating area called " The Hill " . The seating behind the north end zone forms a distinctive " V " shape intended to resemble an eagle 's wings in flight . The tips of the " wings " reach 106 feet ( 32 m ) above the field . There is no seating behind the south end zone , but the area includes a 47 @-@ by @-@ 27 @-@ foot ( 14 @. @ 3 m × 8 @. @ 2 m ) scoreboard and a 5 @-@ foot ( 1 @. @ 5 m ) bronze bust of an eagle . The bust is named " Spiriki " , and was donated by members of the Geezles , the school 's first social fraternity . On game days , the area also includes a scale replica cannon named " Boomer " , which is fired each time the team scores .

= = = Environmental design = = =

In 2008 , president of UNT Gretchen Bataille signed the American College and University President 's Climate Commitment ( ACUPCC ) to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 . As part of that process , all new university buildings and facilities are required to achieve a minimum of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ( LEED ) Silver certification . While planning the stadium 's construction , the university consulted HKS , Inc. to design it to meet a number of green building standards and hired FocusEGD , an environmental graphic design firm , to design many of the stadium 's graphic elements . As a result , Apogee Stadium uses various forms of environmental technology . To reduce water consumption and urban runoff , the facility includes a 85 @, @ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 7 @, @ 900 m<sup>2</sup> ) water retention system , 338 @, @ 000 square feet ( 31 @, @ 400 m<sup>2</sup> ) of permeable paving , and low @-@ flow plumbing systems . To minimize the human impact on the environment , developers took advantage of the landscape around the stadium whenever possible .

The facility also includes three Northern Power Systems 100 wind turbines , which were installed in February 2012 . To fund the turbine project , the Texas State Energy Conservation Office allocated \$ 2 million in federal stimulus funds to the university . The 120 @-@ foot ( 37 m ) turbines each have three 30 @-@ foot ( 9 @. @ 1 m ) blades and are expected to produce a combined 450 @, @ 000 kilowatt @-@ hours ( 1 @, @ 600 GJ ) of energy per year , which would account for roughly six percent of the athletics department 's power grid in the area . The turbines are also expected to offset 323 metric tons ( 323 @, @ 000 kg ) of carbon dioxide emissions .

The stadium 's sustainable design features have earned praise and awards from media outlets and industry groups . In 2011 , Apogee Stadium became the first newly built stadium to achieve LEED Platinum certification , the highest level awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council . The points @-@ based ratings system measures various environmental aspects including water efficiency , energy conservation , indoor air quality , and sustainability . Dallas Business Journal named the stadium the " Green Project Deal of the Year " in 2012 , and Engineering News @-@ Record named it the year 's " Best Green Project " . The stadium was named as one of the four finalists during the World Stadium Awards Congress for " most sustainable stadium design concept " , but lost to the London Olympic Stadium .

= = Transportation and location = =

Apogee Stadium is located on Bonnie Brae Street at the junction of Interstate 35 East and West in the southeast part of Denton , Texas . It is part of the Mean Green Village , a 175 @-@ acre ( 71 ha ) parcel of land located south of UNT 's main campus that includes various athletic department facilities . In February 2003 , the school conducted studies to identify potential traffic problems in the area . The results of the studies indicated that the intersection of Bonnie Brae Street and Airport

Road northwest of the facility represented a potential major traffic hazard , since the two @-@ lane Bonnie Brae Street could not accommodate the additional game day traffic , and Airport Road would be needed for access to Denton Municipal Airport to the north . Initially , university officials planned to address some concerns by rerouting season ticket holders through the surrounding neighborhoods , but in 2009 , residents expressed concerns that the stadium could clog traffic systems in the area . Consequently , the City of Denton passed an ordinance to shut down the area streets on game days to anyone without a resident 's permit . The university began the process of transferring the right @-@ of @-@ way surrounding Bonnie Brae Street to the city in 2012 to allow for the road 's expansion from two lanes to four . The project is expected to improve the region 's transportation system between Interstate 35 East and U.S. Route 377 to the south .

To encourage the use of sustainable transportation , developers limited the quantity of parking spaces on site . The facility includes 1 @,@ 758 parking spaces adjacent to the stadium , but to access it on the day of an event , most attendees park at Fouts Field on the opposite side of Interstate 35E and walk across a pedestrian bridge , which leads to the stadium . The university announced plans to build the bridge in August 2011 to address another area of the concern from the 2002 studies . Construction on the \$ 2 @.@ 5 million project , a joint venture between the university and the Texas Department of Transportation , began in February 2012 . Although originally expected to open for the football team 's first home game of the 2012 season , construction delays moved the opening date to October 16 for the third home game of the season .

In June 2016 , the Fort Worth Transportation Authority announced its intent to begin operating a commuter bus service on weekdays from Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center to the stadium parking lot . The Denton County Transportation Authority ( DCTA ) is expected to review the proposal on August 22 , 2016 . On game days , UNT football game attendees can also take the DCTA A @-@ train to the Euline Brock Downtown Denton Transit Center and take a shuttle to Fouts Field , where they can walk to the stadium . Beginning two hours prior to the beginning of each game and ending one hour after the game is over , the Mean Green Game Day shuttle also stops at various locations in Denton , including the Denton County Courthouse @-@ on @-@ the @-@ Square and the southeast corner of the university . In September 2013 , the school announced a partnership with DCTA to provide free trips on the A @-@ train and shuttle rides to the stadium for football game attendees wearing UNT apparel .