



History of Finley Stadium Davenport Field

In 1997, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga football program said goodbye to historic Chamberlain Field and ushered in a new era for both the University and the city. On Oct. 18, 1997, the Mocs opened up their new home, Finley Stadium Davenport Field, as an overflow crowd of 22,646 watched UTC defeat Tennessee State 28-7.

The 20,668-seat state-of-the-art facility is the crown jewel for the city's Southside revitalization project.

City leaders had talked about a stadium project for UTC and Chattanooga for quite some time before the dream came to fruition. Chamberlain Field on the UTC campus, which opened in 1908, had the distinction of being the second-oldest on-campus stadium in the nation. Officials agreed that something needed to be done. A facility was needed to take the UTC football program to a higher level and to elevate the city's status to a full-service, mid-sized city.

The \$28.5 million project needed supporters to become a reality and got plenty of them. Donations from the private sector ranged anywhere from a 10 dollar bill to \$1 million. In fact, nearly 40 percent, or \$10.2 million of the project, came from private donations. The City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County contributed \$13 million, the State of Tennessee gave \$3.5 million and the University donated \$2.9 million.

Ground breaking on the site that was once the Rock Tenn plant was held March 7, 1996. Seven months later, the Stadium Corporation named the facility Finley Stadium Davenport Field.

The late W. Max Finley, former Chairman of the Rock Tenn Corporation, dedicated his life to public service and was an active supporter of the University of Tennessee system. He received both the University of Chattanooga Distinguished Alumni Award and the Outstanding Service Award of the UTC Alumni Council and was inducted into the University's Hall of Fame.

The playing field is named in honor of the late Gordon Lee Davenport. The President and CEO of the Krystal Company from 1975-85 served as Chairman of the Stadium Corporation and Campaign and worked endlessly and tirelessly in the planning and actual development of the facility. Davenport, a longtime friend of UTC athletics and particularly Mocs football, received the UTC Alumni Council Outstanding Service Award and is a member of the University's Hall of Fame.

Davenport attended the stadium's grand opening, participated in the opening ceremonies and was presented a

game ball from UTC head coach Buddy Green following the Mocs' victory over Tennessee State.

Bronze busts of both Finley and Davenport adorn the main entryway to the stadium.

The Stadium Corporation left nothing out of its masterpiece. The facility, designed by Derthick, Henley & Wilkerson and built by C&I Specialty, both of Chattanooga, contains 32 luxury sky boxes and 3,465 preferred seats with chairbacks. The \$350,000 scoreboard includes a giant matrix screen, and the Stadium Club can hold 250 for pregame or postgame functions. The press box can hold 60 media representatives, has three radio booths and a television broadcast booth. Identical home and visitors locker rooms contain a separate training area and coaches locker room, as well as an extensive player locker area.

Installation for the new artificial turf surface at Finley Stadium took place in May 2005.

The state-of-the-art surface was installed by TC Tholon USA and Precision Sports Fields Inc.

Adjacent to the stadium is the First Tennessee Pavilion. The old Ross-Meehan Foundry has been renovated into an open-air pavilion which has become a favorite for tailgaters, complete with food and beverage concessions and a children's area. The pavilion offers tailgaters a perfect atmosphere around the stadium while providing protection from the weather without being indoors.

Besides serving as the home of Mocs Football, Finley Stadium Davenport Field has served as the host of the NCAA Division I Football Championship since 1997. It is also host to UTC, international and high school soccer, high school football, national lacrosse tournaments, concerts and other community festivals.