

## College Facilities Play a Major Role in Student Athlete Recruiting

In collegiate athletics, the competition for the top student athletes is intense. Increasingly, colleges are trying to set themselves apart in their recruiting efforts by offering state-of-the-art facilities with high-end amenities. From the design of the prime recruiting areas – weight rooms, locker rooms, lounges – to video boards to improvements in lighting and seating in stadiums and arenas to offering the ultimate destination experience, colleges are striving to improve the student athlete and fan experience through the facility offerings.

Check out some of the projects in the works in this special collegiate sports facility industry section.

## Ephesus Can Rejuvenate with Its Lumadapt Lighting

The first company to bring LED lighting to a North American sports venue, Ephesus has moved the needle again with its Lumadapt product.

For the company's latest innovation, its fourth generation of LED sports lighting technology, Ephesus created a purpose-built solution for arenas that deliver lighting solutions for today's needs. From broadcast, fan experience and player performance standpoints, Lumadapt gives arenas the flexibility to adjust its lighting system to accommodate needs as they change over time.

Previously, the company developed color temperature tuning, where the lights could change from warm white to cool white, depending on the activity occurring in the arena, whether it was a hockey or basketball game, convention or dinner.

Now, the company has introduced color — red, green, blue and amber — into the same fixture to create more entertainment options. At the Herb Brooks Arena in Lake Placid, N.Y., home to the 1980 Winter Olympics "Miracle on Ice" hockey game, red, white and blue lighting is projected onto the playing surface during time outs and intermissions in recognition of the Miracle on Ice game.

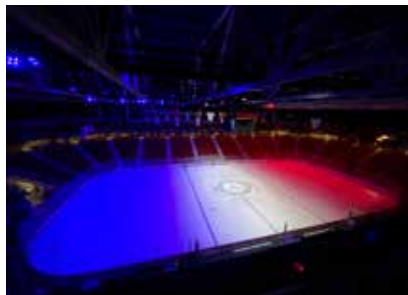
Lumadapt also gives arenas beam-tuning capability, to change the light coming out of the fixture from a narrow to a wide beam to accommodate the different uses of the arena floor. For example, one venue is used for both hockey games and tennis matches. The tennis court extends beyond the width of the hockey rink. Rather than having to incorporate supplemental lighting, using Lumadapt's fixtures, the beam angles can be adjusted to wide beam for tennis.

Additionally, the lighting can be segmented to black out one part of the arena, while leaving another section illuminated. This provides an added layer of safety as walkways can be lit while the rest of the arena is dark. While much of competition can only dim their lights to 15 or 20 percent, with Lumadapt, the lights can go down to 0 percent in milliseconds.

"With the features offered in Lumadapt's fixtures, venues have more flexibility and can mix and match to create unlimited fan experiences," said Mike Quijano, director of marketing at Ephesus. "We can create dynamic flashing scenes and gener-



Ephesus Lumadapt's lighting turns Princeton's Hobey Baker Rink orange.



With Ephesus' Lumadapt lighting, the ice at Herb Brooks Arena is lit up in red, white and blue in recognition of the Miracle on Ice game.

ate excitement in the venues. We can accommodate whatever event is being held in that venue today and into the future."

Designed to last at least 10 years, Lumadapt accomplishes with one fixture what it may take other products multiple systems to achieve. "When you add it all up, with the value you get from Lumadapt, there's nothing else like it in the market," said Quijano, "and it's so easy to install." The company has completed installations in NHL-scale arenas in three days. "It's really easy to take your arena from yesterday's technology to the future in less than a week."

Prior to installing Lumadapt, a team of Ephesus engineers and lighting designers analyze the arena, reviewing the height of the catwalk and the location of the cameras so the fixtures can be placed to optimize player and broadcast performance.

"We take a fresh look because as LED sports lighting has become the de facto standard, new specifications have been written," said Quijano. "We come in with, not only a fixture in the system, but also a design and the

project management support to implement that solution to meet the facility's requirements."

In addition to installations in new facilities, Lumadapt is being installed in numerous renovation and retrofit projects (see *University of Dayton*, page 6A). "Executives see our sports lighting as a way to bring new life to their venues," said Quijano.

Two recent retrofit projects include the Herb Brooks Arena project mentioned earlier and the Hobey Baker Rink at the Princeton University. "The Herb Brooks Arena is an example of a traditional and iconic venue adopting a new technology to develop new traditions," said Quijano, "taking that old building with its history and creating new fan experiences to enable people to relive all the events and excitement that has happened there over the years."

The Hobey Baker Rink was constructed in 1923. "At an almost 100-year-old venue, you run into some unique challenges," said Quijano. "The old venues may not have been designed like buildings today, with a catwalk and easy access to the fixtures, making it more challenging to meet the player and broadcast experience requirements. Hobey Baker is a vintage arena that has worked hard to preserve its history over the past 100 years, and yet, we were able to provide a futuristic lighting solution that many people did not think possible until very recently. It's created an excitement they have never had."

"Many of these older arenas are intimate and iconic," said Quijano. "We're able to give them new functionality without affecting their iconic look and feel." ■

## NEW FACILITIES IN PROGRESS

### UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, BIRMINGHAM

Name of facility: Protective Stadium

Description: New football stadium

Architect of record: Populous

Est. cost: \$175 million

Start date: 2019

Completion date: 2021

Location: Birmingham, Ala.

### CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Name of facility: Goodwin Field

Description: Ballpark expansion to include baseball and softball clubhouse and student athlete development areas

Architect of record: DLR Group

Contractor: Penta Construction

Est. cost: \$8 million

Location: Fullerton, Calif.

### CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Name of facility: Champions Center

Description: South end zone renovation and football training facility

Architect of record: Populous

Est. cost: \$30 million

Start date: June 2019

Completion date: 2021

Location: Mount Pleasant, Mich.

### UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Description: New baseball ballpark

Architect of record: Populous

Contractor: Brasfield & Gorrie

Est. cost: \$38 million

Start date: January 2019

Completion date: 2020

Location: Gainesville, Fla.

### JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

Name of facility: JMU Arena and Convocation Center

Description: New basketball arena and practice facility

Architect of record: Moseley Architects, Populous as consultants

Contractor: S.B. Ballard

Est. cost: \$90 million

Start date: March 2018

Completion date: Fall 2020

Location: Harrisonburg, Va.

### NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Name of facility: Student Athlete High Performance Center

Description: New wellness and development facility with competition and practice gyms

Architect of record: DLR Group

Contractor: CORE Construction

Est. cost: \$35.3 million

Start date: Spring 2020

Completion date: Spring 2022

Location: Flagstaff, Ariz.

CONTINUED, PAGE 39

# DLR Group Designs Facilities to Optimize the Student Athlete Experience

The evolution of the student athlete's experience on campus has become more robust than in the past. Universities are very competitive as they recruit talented student athletes who are looking for programs that field the best teams, have the best facilities and give them the best opportunity to improve their skills, particularly those who are striving for a professional career.

"Colleges are elevating their recruiting game with features and the quality of facilities because they're trying to entice very young high school students, as well as their parents," said Don Barnum, AIA, DLR Group principal. Barnum leads the firm's Global Sports Studio. "Sophomores and juniors, 16- and 17-year-olds, have a different perspective than most adults and even current student athletes. Schools are catering to what recruits want, which is to be wowed by bells and whistles."

A common feature schools are using to attract student athletes is a type of lounge or recreation area adjacent to or part of the locker room. These spaces, which are typically designated areas for each sport, can include game rooms, pool tables, TVs and couches. They allow student athletes to relax and have a



**University of Wyoming High Altitude Performance Center.**

break from their rigorous schedules. Another area of importance to student athletes is the weight room. Every student athlete wants to get stronger and improve their performance, and a modern weight room helps them achieve their goals. On the flip side, parents are interested in their kids' health and wellness, so they tend to look at academics, the sports medicine area and how their child will be cared for.

During the design process, DLR Group meets with coaches and administrators individually in an information gathering session to determine teams' needs. "We need to understand the team's practice and game procession so we can design



**University of Texas Baseball Player Development Center.**

the building that responds to their specific needs," said Barnum. "If multiple teams are sharing a building, we find the commonality of their activities and design accordingly. It may be the performance venue is the only thing they share every day."

The most commonly used or continuously used space, such as the weight room or equipment room, becomes the building's focal point at the center of the design. For example, at the University of Houston, DLR Group designed a shared building for men's and women's basketball. At the center are the administrative and shared areas — coaches offices, weight rooms and sports medicine facilities, while the training courts are separate

and radiate out from the center. "Teams need to practice at the same time, so the solution is to give them their own space," said Barnum.

Many universities want sports-specific training facilities to stay competitive with their peers. "At the University of Texas, we designed the baseball facility with their clubhouse, lounges, pitching labs, hitting labs and strength conditioning area dedicated to the baseball team," said Barnum. Softball and other sports are treated the same way.

Student athletes have large demands on their time and the NCAA defines how much time they can spend with their coaches and the program. "This leads us to focus on creating operational efficiencies," said Barnum. "Coaches want to have a precise procession of activities scheduled to maximize their available time with their student athletes. They don't want to have parts of their practice spread out over a distance because that takes up valuable practice time. We design their facilities to accommodate their need for proximity."

"Our goal is to make the lives of the coaches and student athletes more efficient, easier and better through the design of the building," said Barnum. ■

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# Daktronics Outfits Collegiate Sports Departments with Its LED Displays

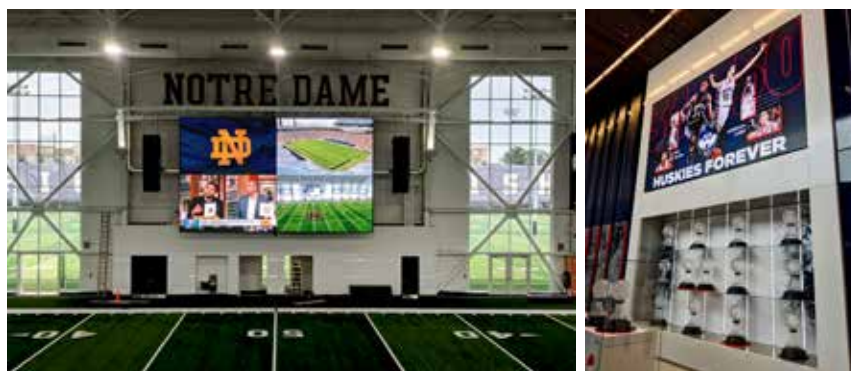
Outfitting a college campus with video displays for its sports programs goes far beyond the in-bowl displays found in stadiums and arenas.

The high-resolution LED technology available today competes with the older LCD displays that can be found in more traditional locations on college campuses. With LED displays coming in a larger format than an LCD display, they're starting to be placed in unique locations.

Daktronics, the world leader in large-screen video displays, also has a line of products that can be installed in any location on a college campus.

"LCD displays are available up to about 85 inches," said Jay Parker, vice president of Daktronics, "but if you want to go to an 150- or 200-inch diagonal display, you're going to want an LED display." To make a large-scale display with LCD technology requires multiple screens with mullions separating the image. LED displays are seamless, without mullions to divide the screen and interfere with the image.

At five to seven years, the life span of LED displays is almost double what could be expected from LCD displays, which, with its extended usage on college campuses, can be just three



Daktronics has installed LED video boards in the football practice facilities at Notre Dame and UConn's Hall of Fame,

years. Over the long term, this helps athletic departments save money.

LED displays are now being used by collegiate sports programs everywhere from the weight room to the locker rooms, training tables, facility entrances, halls of fame, as a press backdrop and even in the practice facility.

"The unique placement of LED displays has a lot to do with recruiting efforts," said Parker. "At the training table or in the weight room, it also gives entertainment value to student athletes. These displays can make workouts go by a lot more quickly."

A major trend is the placement of LED displays in the entrances to an

athletic department office or the football office, welcoming visitors, whether they're donors, sponsors, alumni, student athletes, friends or family. One of the challenges with this location is the large amount of ambient light that typically comes through a multitude of windows. With LCD displays, on sunny days, it could be difficult to see the image. With LED displays, that's no longer a problem as their improved brightness can compete with the sunlight, allowing the images on the screen to be seen.

In practice facilities, coaches can show replays of drills and plays in real time and visually give their players immediate feedback.

In the press conference area, the displays are serving as a backdrop with logos and images for the team's sponsors. Trying to use LCD displays as a backdrop is a challenge as the slower refresh rate makes it difficult for photographers to take pictures. With the advanced technology in LED displays, that's no longer an issue.

Daktronics' LED displays can be found on college campuses across the country. The University of Oklahoma welcomes visitors with displays in the main lobby of the athletic department's office. The University of Missouri does the same in their football offices. Oklahoma and Missouri also have displays in their weight room. Practice facility displays have been installed at Alabama, UCLA, Georgia, Missouri, Notre Dame and Oklahoma. UConn recently added a series of LED displays that complement the finished look of its Hall of Fame. The University of Minnesota has high-resolution displays on the outside of the athletic department that then moves inside, providing a welcoming and unique theme as people enter.

"The large-screen LED video displays are bigger than traditional LCD displays, deliver a cleaner, brighter image and have more impact on the audience," said Parker. ■



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**NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**

Name of facility: Regional Sports Complex  
 Description: New football stadium and softball ballpark  
 Architect of record: Co-Op Architecture  
 Sports designer: DLR Group  
 Contractor: Quest Construction | McCownGordon Construction  
 Est. cost: \$26 million  
 Start date: April 2020  
 Completion date: August 2021  
 Location: Sioux Falls, S.D.

**UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA**

Description: Softball ballpark  
 Architect of record: Populous

Contractor: Timberlake Construction  
 Est. cost: \$25 million  
 Start date: June 2020  
 Completion date: January 2022  
 Location: Norman, Okla.

**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY**

Name of facility: Stephen F. Austin State University Basketball Performance Center  
 Description: New basketball training facility  
 Architect of record: Populous  
 Contractor: KDW  
 Est. cost: \$25.2 million  
 Start date: June 2019  
 Completion date: April 2021  
 Location: Nacogdoches, Texas

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS**

Name of facility: Darrell K. Royal Texas Memorial Stadium  
 Description: South end zone and football training facility renovation  
 Architect of record: Populous  
 Contractor: Hensel Phelps  
 Est. cost: \$175 million  
 Start date: Summer 2019  
 Completion date: August 2021  
 Location: Austin, Texas

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS**

Name of facility: McCombs Field  
 Description: Player development expansion to the softball ballpark  
 Architect of record & sports designer: DLR Group

Contractor: DPR Construction  
 Est. cost: \$7.6 million  
 Start date: September 2019  
 Completion date: July 2020  
 Location: Austin, Texas

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**

Description: Swimming and diving facility expansion  
 Architect of record: Populous  
 Completion date: Fall 2020  
 Location: College Station, Texas

CONTINUED, PAGE 40

# Full Circle: How Collegiate End Zone Renovations Have Come of Age

By Jeremy Krug, Associate Principal, Populous

It doesn't take a Hall of Fame coach to know the end zone is the literal measurement of success for a college football program. Visit it more often than your opponent on a week-to-week basis and championships tend to follow.

Collegiate end zone expansions are the latest trend in Division I collegiate football stadium design – and the Populous design team doesn't see the movement ending anytime soon. Each project takes shape around a unique sense of place and purpose on campus, but they have common goals. They impact the game-day experience in every aspect, including enhanced atmosphere, unique amenities and a reinvigorated connection to campus.

On top of creating a more intimidating game-day atmosphere, end zone projects create opportunities for unique seating and premium spaces that have the flexibility to host a wide



University of Missouri's Faurot Field at Memorial Stadium.



A rendering of the new Ken Garth Performance Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium at the University of Utah.

variety of groups and events year-round. Each university considering an end zone renovation has a wealth of options unique to its culture and the end zone's footprint.

Opened this fall, the University of Missouri's new south end zone captures the essence of the university and creates a platform for success. It provides student athletes with state-of-the-art training and recovery amenities.

On game day, student athletes arrive to the gridiron through the Bunker Club, bringing them up close and personal to Tigers fans. A garage door

is the only thing separating fans from the locker room. As the door rises, fans bring noise and hype to their Tigers' entry by banging on the repurposed gold bleachers that once stood in the original south end zone. Elsewhere, the south end zone offers a variety of seating options across all price points, while a new 360-degree concourse allows for better accessibility and exploration at Faurot Field.

Opening in 2021 is the University of Utah's new \$80 million Ken Garth Performance Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium. The new facility will enhance the

game-day experience through the addition of new premium seating, bench seating and hospitality areas to create a world-class college football atmosphere.

Collegiate athletic departments across the United States have capitalized on the potential of the space that lies just beyond the pylons. End zone expansions can not only close in a seating bowl, but open possibilities for growth well into the future. World-class performance enhancements and additional revenue opportunities are simply too powerful to ignore. ■

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**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, SAN ANTONIO**

Name of facility: Roadrunner Athletic Center of Excellence  
 Description: New multi-sport training facility with administrative offices and practice fields  
 Architect of record: Populous, Marmon Mok  
 Est. cost: \$30 million  
 Start date: Summer 2018  
 Completion date: 2020  
 Location: San Antonio, Texas

**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY**

Name of facility: Dustin R. Womble Basketball Practice Facility  
 Description: New basketball training facility  
 Architect of record: Populous  
 Contractor: Lee Lewis  
 Est. cost: \$29.5 million  
 Start date: Winter 2018  
 Completion date: Summer 2020  
 Location: Lubbock, Texas

**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH**

Name of facility: Rice-Eccles Stadium  
 Description: South end zone expansion  
 Architect of record: Populous, VCBO  
 Contractor: Layton Construction  
 Est. cost: \$80 million  
 Start date: Winter 2019  
 Completion date: August 2021  
 Location: Salt Lake City, Utah

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**

Name of facility: Softball Stadium  
 Description: New softball ballpark  
 Architect of record & sports designer: DLR Group  
 Design architect: VDMO  
 Contractor: Jamerson-Lewis Construction  
 Est. cost: \$15.9 million  
 Start date: October 2018  
 Completion date: January 2020  
 Location: Charlottesville, Va.

# 4Topps' Seating Converts Bleacher Sections into Premium Experiences

4Topps Premium Seating has a plan to transform uncomfortable, tight bleacher sections at college stadiums across the country.

"We take under-sold and under-utilized stadium sections and deploy our full product line to convert them into a variety of premium seating experiences," said Deron Nardo, president of 4Topps.

Using 4Topps' diverse product line, a college can transform a very plain seating arrangement of bleachers into a multi-tier experience that generates higher revenues.

4Topps lineup of breathable, AirFlow stadium seats includes bolted-on mesh Bleacher Seats, a new Slim-Line Row Seat for the narrow treads that exist in many college stadiums, Cool Comfort + Premium Row Seats with a High-Back option, Swivel Seats, Drink Railing and 4Topps Table Units. Each product creates a unique experience at a different price point, enhancing the fan experience.

"We're not a seating vendor, we are a seating partner...a consultant," said Nardo. "We analyze each college's seating offerings and provide them with ideas to drive revenue. Our ultimate



Slim Line Row Seats for narrow treads, along with a drink railing, are ideal for college stadiums.

goal is to put products in stadiums that increase revenue for venue owners and create a better experience for the fans. We're really a seating ROI consultant." Another key element of a 4Topps'

renovation is how colleges can rejuvenate a seating bowl without the need for a major demolition and construction project or the multi-hundred million-dollar price tag that comes with it.

"We can affect the fan experience without the school needing to spend big money that requires significant fundraising," said Nardo.

4Topps' solutions come with the added benefit of downsizing the stadium's seating capacity, a result many schools are seeking. By taking advantage of the company's products, one of 4Topps' clients was able to not only reduce their seating capacity by 10,000 seats, but also create a completely new seating product matrix to sell to fans.

"In many places, the optics at stadiums are terrible because there are entirely too many seats," said Nardo. "There aren't an infinite number of solutions to make venues more manageable from a size standpoint. We can rightsize a venue from a capacity standpoint while creating tiers of premium seating products. Otherwise, it's just a concrete bowl with tightly packed bleachers...not exactly the most welcoming environment."

4Topps' early successes came in MiLB, MLB and with the PGA Tour, but the company has identified the multi-venue college campus as the next great opportunity.

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# Student Athlete and Fan Experience is at the Core of Mortenson's Work

One of the current market trends in collegiate athletics is the placement of student athletes and fans at the core of the business and the emphasis from universities on serving those core customers.

For student athletes, colleges are striving to serve their academic needs, focusing on career development, keeping them healthy through injury prevention and sports medicine, and providing social interactions through locker rooms, lounges and other spaces that help recruit top student athletes.

"We're seeing quite a bit of work in the football operations realm," said Travis Noble, the collegiate sports market leader at Mortenson. "It's an arms race. Colleges are trying to boost their ability to recruit the top athletes by enhancing the student athlete experience."

Colleges are often challenged with finding the funding to accomplish all of their goals, forcing them to make difficult choices and establish funding priorities. Through its data analytics group, Mortenson keeps a database of the nation's leading collegiate programs in terms of the kinds of spaces, programs and type of work, along with where they're making improvements or expansions that address student



Fans watch the Wildcats take the field from the end zone at Bill Snyder Family Stadium at Kansas State University, as others line the rails.

athletes' needs. With this data, Mortenson can create benchmarks that help their customers invest their funds in projects that will have the most impact.

On a macro level, Mortenson helps colleges target their spending on improvements for the student athlete or fan experience. On the micro level, the company keeps track of specific programs, such as sports medicine, strength training and recruiting areas like the locker rooms and lounges. "Using this information, we can help colleges maximize their spend to get the greatest return on their investment," said Noble. "We see this predominantly with football programs,



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but it's also used for other programs.

Mortenson also helps colleges create additional revenue generation opportunities through the development of premium spaces in under utilized areas. For one client, Mortenson constructed a bunker club in the stadium's end zone, using the space beneath the seating bowl to create a fluid and social environment for fans to gather before the game and during halftime. "This becomes an add-on sale for the university where it can be included in some packages, but could also be used to upgrade other packages," said Noble.

Using technology created to improve the construction process,

Mortenson has developed a virtual environment or panoramic 360-degree video for fans and potential sponsors and donors to get the look and feel of a facility that's under design and construction. It gives these audiences a sense of the size and scale of the project and the finishes used and can help them determine where and how they want to contribute to the project. This can lead to larger donations and earlier ticket sales.

Another trend Mortenson is noticing is a move to smaller, more sports-specific venues with sight lines that are appropriate for the size of the playing surface. Hockey-only facilities provide a prime example. The sight lines for basketball, with its smaller court, are vastly different than for hockey, with its larger rink and the glass separating the seating bowl. A basketball arena may be designed for 15,000-18,000 seats, whereas collegiate hockey is moving to a closer, more intimate setting that may only include 6,000-8,000 seats.

"We keep the customers long-term vision at the forefront of what we do," said Noble. "We're helping them make decisions to improve the student athlete and fan experience, while also improving their business strategy." ■

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# Las Vegas Is a Hot Spot for Collegiate Sports

The Sports and Entertainment Capital of the World, Las Vegas is home to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), a member of the Mountain West Conference. In addition to hosting home games for the Runnin' Rebels, the destination annually hosts college football's Las Vegas Bowl, which, beginning in 2020, will feature a team from the Pac-12 Conference facing off against a team from either the Big Ten Conference or Southeastern Conference. The city also hosts basketball championships for the Pac-12, Mountain West, West Coast and Western Athletic conferences.

"Las Vegas has something for everyone and the city itself is part of the overall sports experience," said Desiree Reed-Francois, UNLV's athletic director. "We have 150,000 hotel rooms, venues of every size, an incredible airport and 294 days of sun. In Las Vegas, we know the galvanizing power of intercollegiate sports and we have all the attributes of success."

Las Vegas' world-class facilities include UNLV's 18,000-seat Thomas & Mack Center, home of the Runnin' Rebels men's basketball team, along with the city's 20,000-seat T-Mobile Arena (home to the NHL's Vegas Golden Knights) and the 10,000-seat Las Vegas Ballpark (home to the AAA Las Vegas



**The city of Las Vegas annually hosts the Las Vegas Bowl. In 2018, the Mountain West's Fresno State Bulldogs beat the Pac-12's Arizona State Sun Devils, 31-10.**

Aviators). Additionally, the \$2 billion Allegiant Stadium is the future home of the NFL's Raiders and UNLV football, upon its opening in 2020. "What's unique about Las Vegas is our service ethos," said Reed-Francois. "If we don't have the space, we'll build the space."

UNLV has the nation's top-ranked Hospitality College, and the university's graduates help keep the city's tradition of excellent customer service alive. "We take great pride in the customer service we provide," said Reed-Francois. "Hospitality is part of our DNA."



**UNLV's Thomas & Mack Center is the site of basketball championships for the Pac-12, Mountain West, West Coast and Western Athletic conferences.**

To take advantage of the myriad of entertainment options in the city, UNLV works with a variety of corporate partners to put together fan entertainment packages. "We want to make sure we're meeting the needs of our customers," said Reed-Francois.

Visiting teams are impressed with the overall atmosphere of customer service and hospitality in Las Vegas. "We've proven we can support college events," said Reed-Francois. "Putting on a great sporting event is about people and that's where our town

excels. We're creating spaces and places for people to mix and mingle and network. We offer a range of packages, from the all-you-can-eat family plan to corporate VIP options and student friendly competitions that will nurture your social media community or impress your clients."

In May of this year, the NCAA rescinded its policy that prevented its national championships from being held in states that allow sports betting. Now that the ban has been lifted, UNLV is working with the city, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority and its corporate partners to bid on NCAA championships. "We're going to be aggressive," said Reed-Francois. "We want to make sure every opportunity is explored. We know what our great city has to offer and we want to share that with the rest of the country and be competitive in this space. We're really enthused about the opportunity to host championships. Our student athletes now have the opportunity to play a championship event in their own backyard."

"UNLV and Las Vegas can provide a unique sports experience," said Reed-Francois. "What makes a great sporting event are the memories and there's no better place to create memories than Las Vegas." ■

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