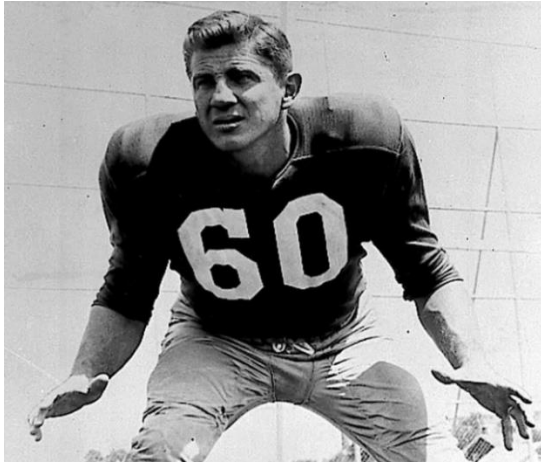


## Of Franklin Field and the two Chucks— Bednarik and Berry



**Betsy Kleeblatt:** FYI. Did anyone else see the THE INTIMATE. ROOSEVELTS? Thrilled to see that FDR accepted his nomination for President at FRANKLIN FIELD in front of 100,000 peeps! Wow. More than any football game I attended! ("A rendezvous with destiny")

**And so the Franklin Field conversation began.....**

**Donald Morrison:** For Roosevelt, it would have been standing room only



**Frank Boka:** Just looked it up. Capacity of Franklin Field 52,593. maybe at one time with bleachers in the open end zone could have been closer to 70,000? And.....probably the person who spent the most time in Franklin Field was Ricky Owens who was an outstanding track man as well as a great receiver on the football team. I as well as some of our class mates like Earl Andrews, Brian Riley, Phil Lesko, John Smigelski, Dave Webb were on the track and field team which meant fall informal practice or cross country, indoor track in the bubble or spring track with the Penn Relays the highlight of the year. Needless to say, Franklin Field felt like my second home. The high light of my career was a third place finish in The Penn Relays Championship of America Shuttle Hurdles relay with fellow sophomore classmates Brian Riley and Phil Lesko and senior Jeff Durgee. At the time of our third place finish, we were the first Penn team to have received a coveted Penn Relays medal in many years.



**Lee Gordon:** There should be no doubt that “standing room only” actually happened at Franklin Field for the nationally ranked University of Pennsylvania football team when the great All-American Chuck Bednarik, aka “Concrete Charlie” — the last 60-minute man — as a two-way football player, crunched his pigskin opponents in 1946, 1947 and 1948.

**Randy Elkins:** I went to that same Eagles/Browns game. I bought my ticket at a ticket outlet just over the bridge heading downtown on a whim. The only seats left were in the end zone in the top tier where the air was thinnest. I was surrounded by the bluest of blue collar beer drinkers with arms as thick as my legs who were louder than any sound I had ever heard to that point in my life. I was scared to death. Even worse, the players were smaller than the size of ants. That was my last Eagles game in Franklin Field.

OK, here is the Wikipedia page on Franklin Field. I was amused by the description of the original cost of \$100,000 as being the equivalent of \$3 million in 2019 dollars. Not even close to what it would actually cost today. Larry Nussdorf could weigh in on that!

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin\\_Field](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_Field)

**Lonnie Schooler:** Randy -- Right you are. Lee and I probably were only a few rows in front of you. Meanwhile, you are reminding me, and not fondly, of what it was like to watch an Eagles game. The depiction of fan behavior in movies such as “Silver Linings Playbook” was no exaggeration. Indeed, while we were at this game, I recall a fist fight broke out about six rows in front of us because of a disagreement over whether Johnny Unitas or Norm Van Brocklin was the better quarterback! Of course, this was in the 4th quarter, and by then, the beer consumption (in glass bottles, no less!) had probably reached record proportions. Ah, the good old days! Since I broadcast the games at Franklin Field for WXPB all four years, including all of the home games in the 1966 and 1967 seasons, it turns out I probably attended more events there than anyone else in the Class, with the exception of those who were on the football team itself. The seating capacity of the stadium was listed at between 60,000 and 64,000. The stadium was never full at any Penn game, but in my freshman year, I did attend an Eagles game against the Browns (Jim Brown being my favorite player at the time). Lee Gordon was in attendance with me. That “sellout” crowd was announced at somewhere between the two numbers listed above. Yes, folks, the Eagles actually played at Franklin Field until moving to Veterans’ Stadium in 1970 or 1971.

Lee is also correct to indicate that Penn likely experienced several sellout crowds in its football glory days before its entry into the Ivy League in 1956. As for the crowd that came to hear Franklin Roosevelt, I would not quibble with the 100,000 person estimate of attendees then, only because there were likely a considerable number of people sitting (or standing) on the field itself for that event. In my role with WXPB, I also had the opportunity to travel to

away games at each of the other stadia in the League. The only one of those larger in seating capacity than Penn's was the Yale Bowl, which at the time seated 75,000. I suppose the seating capacity at Franklin Field could have been larger, but some forward thinking stadium architect opted for the horseshoe design. I hope someone preserves for posterity this ongoing "dialogue" that we have had on this topic. Most likely, it could appear in a Penn Gazette article 25 years from now under the heading "How I Spent My Time During the Great Pandemic of 2020." My strongest memory of Skimmer weekend at Franklin Field was Smokey Robinson's visit in 1967. I really enjoyed his music and, in my second life, was also a DJ on WXPN every Sunday night (on AM). Motown had at least 20 of the top 25 records every week during that time! Smokey did not disappoint in person! I remember spending the 2-3 weeks before his appearance promoting the show on WXPN. As for the Penn-Cornell game, and this is coming from someone who grew up in Texas, which meant that every Thanksgiving the meal had to be scheduled around the annual (and now sadly departed) Texas vs. Texas A&M game, the Penn-Cornell game was the premier Thanksgiving football game on the East Coast. My Dad, who was born and raised in Washington, D.C., even told me about driving to the game with his brother and some friends, because one of them had a relative at Penn who was playing in the game.

In our years at Penn, the game was also played on Thanksgiving but suffice it to say, never drew the crowds that were common before the Ivy League started in 1956. The reference to the Palestra brought back another memory to me: Bill Bradley's last game there for Princeton in the Spring of 1965. He was such a big name by that time, that Wilt Chamberlain and several of the 76ers came to watch him play! In 1965 and 1966, the Palestra double headers drew the top teams in the country (with the exception of UCLA and Michigan). Click [HERE](#) to read *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, Volume LXXXIII, Number 78, 17 November 1967.

Those of you who liked pro basketball probably went (as I did) to a 76er game or two at Convention Hall, which was just down 34th street, near the Penn Hospital. I only went to see the Celtics vs. 76er games there (yes, Chamberlain vs. Russell).

For some reason, Convention Hall had to be renovated one year, and the 76er vs. Celtics games that year were played at the Palestra. As I recall, in those days, those two teams met about 12 times per year.

**Mona Shangold:** I thought the capacity of Franklin Field was only about 55,000. I certainly remember that the Eagles used to play there while we were students. Even with seating on the grass too, I don't think 100,000 could fit there.

I'm pretty sure I also attended that Browns-Eagles game (mentioned by a few others) at Franklin Field, and I think my ticket stub from that game was included in the pile of ticket stubs (and other memorabilia) I included in the package I submitted for burial in our time capsule in November 2018. I hope we will all be here to open our time capsule to check (in 2068).

And surely, as several of you have already pointed out, Penn was indeed a national football powerhouse in the 1940's. I can vividly remember the very loud pre-game parades every Sunday before every Eagles home game while we were students. We could see the parades on Chestnut Street and 33rd and 34th Streets from our Hill Hall windows. The noise volume from the bands made it impossible to concentrate on anything else. We could also hear the Franklin Field crowds (from inside our rooms) during the game.

In addition to attending Eagles games, seeing and hearing the pre-game Eagles parades, and hearing the Eagles' game crowd from my Hill Hall dorm room, I can vividly remember walking past the Eagles who were sitting in front of Weightman Hall --- as we did after our own gym classes and pool sessions (during our required swimming course to pass the required swimming test). Yes, the Eagles not only played games there, they also practiced there. I can also remember that the Eagles often ate lunch in our Hill Hall cafeteria.

**Michael Crow:** I occasionally went to Franklin Field to watch Dallas play Philadelphia and used to enjoy watching and listening to the "welcome" given to the Cowboys by the Eagles fans!!

**Randolph Elkins:** Lonnie, you have breached a memory dike apparently. My memory of the Eagles and fear reminded me of another incident of sorts. I used to play pick-up basketball almost every day at Hutch, dividing into "shirts" and "skins". One day Chuck Bednarik was in the group. For some mysterious reason I ended up guarding him at one point. He was either the immovable object or the irresistible force, take your pick. Fortunately, he was a "shirt", or I might have run away before the game even started.

**Lee Gordon:** You ain't the only '68er who played a pick up game against Chuck Bednarik. In senior year, Mark Rosen and I clashed with Concrete Charlie at Hutchinson Gym also. Here is my remembrance of that game: SENIOR YEAR 1967/68: THE GREATEST PENN ATHLETE OF ALL TIME.

At 6 foot 4 plus inches tall, my four year roommate Mark Rosen was an imposing basketball center. As his point guard in pick up games at the Penn gym, my job was to fire passes into

Mark for easy layups. One afternoon, a rather hefty man in his early 40's, wearing a zipped up jacket, asked me if he could play in the next round. No problem, said I, as I threw the basketball into Mark's grasp awaiting the inevitable layup. Not so fast. As the older gentleman posted up with Mark, the newcomer imperceptibly moved his left hip into Mark's body, knocking my roommate over and splaying him on the ground. Mark limped around for the rest of the game. In the locker room, I approached Mr. Zipped Up Jacket Man and remarked: "Sir, I'm in awe of your strength. Nice to meet you -- I'm Lee Gordon." "Hi", he responded as he shook my hand, "I'm Chuck Bednarik." So here I was in the presence of Penn's most famous football player and NFL Hall of Famer -- the last of the two-way footballers. Fortunately, my roommate escaped the full wrath of Chuck.

If you have any doubt about the power of "Concrete Charlie," check out 1960's famous sports photo of this Philadelphia Eagles star linebacker looming over his victim -- a concussed Frank Gifford.



**Mark Rosen:** I'll never forget it. He was wearing a light grey plastic top and pants, used to induce sweating in wrestlers trying to get down to their weight class. No idea why he was wearing one. A real sweat suit. I won't say he was like a brick wall. Perhaps a brick wall lined with an eighth inch of foam. You did not move him. He did push me in while I was in the air, and I as I landed off balance, my ankle rolled. It was a severe sprain/fracture. Despite having my ankles taped. He didn't even say "sorry". Just not in his repertoire. He wasn't mean, just all business. And injuries were part of business.

**Jan Herbst:** The Mark Rosen story brought back a couple of similar Penn memories for me. (1) I recall playing a pick-up basketball game at the Palestra that was joined by a couple of Eagles defensive backs. They were affable enough guys, but they played for keeps, totally oblivious of the fact that b-ball isn't supposed to be a rough contact game. (2) I was in the Penn band (alto sax) our freshman year, and we played for some function whose purpose escapes me at Franklin Field. Sixty-minute Chuck shook hands with the band members (I guess we played "The Red and Blue"). I'll never forget that handshake. His fingers were thick and more solid than any other digits I've ever encountered (aside those on stone or metal sculptures). Since I was, and still am, an Iggles fan, it was a great experience to have met "Concrete Charlie" Bednarik.

**Jack Lehman:** My memories are of some ZBT brothers, our dates, and lots of booze which was easily smuggled into the stadium. So the 2nd half of the games and the final scores thankfully can't be recalled.

**Peter Marvin:** I learned a lesson in physics from those Franklin Field games. My freshman dorm room faced Spruce Street. I would listen to the game on the radio and, over the radio, hear the crowd cheer, followed a second or two later by the actual sound from Franklin Field resounding up Spruce Street.

**Betsy Kleeblatt:** My least favorite memory of Franklin Field, and that is just fine since everyone involved is no longer walking on earth....

The date: Homecoming, Freshman Year, 1964 (in case you have forgotten)

The Place: Franklin Field - The Opponent: I have no recollection

I grew up about an hour from Penn, and had attended many football games with both my family and with quite a few dates I had with Penn students while in high school, but that is another story for another time...It was therefore not a surprise when my parents announced they were coming to Homecoming, but they neglected to tell me they wanted to go with ME! Really, go to Homecoming with your parents? How embarrassing is that! By the time it was all sorted out, it got worse. I was to meet them at the Bell, and I begged them NOT to embarrass me. I arrived at the Bell to find my mother wearing a red wool coat and navy shoes, my father wearing a navy pinstripe suit with a red and blue rep stripe tie and them both waving felt PENN banners and cheering RAH, RAH, RAH! And this was NOT supposed to embarrass me? You can imagine how many people witnessed this, and it gets worse. I had been instructed to dress nicely, but not the reason. We were going to the game with Dr. Gaylord P. Harnwell! I was 17 and although I was not shy, this man scared me. I had nothing in common with him, so I was terrified when I found myself sitting next to him. I asked him what his hobbies were, and he said Macramé! I said to him that I guessed he untied knots all day at work and went home to tie knots. It was, thank God, the last conversation I ever had with him!

**Colin Hanna:** In my Freshman year, for Eagles Home games at Franklin Field, I'd put the radio on minimal volume during the game broadcast while studying, and when I'd hear a roar from the fans through my dorm window, I'd quickly increase the volume and catch some or all of the call of that play. After my Freshman year, I quit studying, so that was a one-year experience.

**Mike Levy:** While I was at Penn I worked for the old United Press International. (Back then the rivalry between AP & UPI was intense.) Each year I got a sideline pass for the Dallas game. Looking up and seeing the majesty the crowd, the noise, the kinetic energy I could feel from the hits 5-10 yards away from me...The bombardment on my sensory apparatus was intense. Franklin Field...a magical place. Imagine going from a high school football team to a being a Penn player on the turf at Franklin Field.

Weren't there Skimmer week-end parties on Franklin Field, great performers on the stage, student lying on blankets not drinking milk?

**Michael Crow:** Of course. With boos [and booze] in the background! I used to have Dallas high school friends - from Princeton, Dartmouth, and Brown come watch Bob Hayes and Don Meredith [and others] get booed as they ran onto Franklin Field.

Click [HERE](#) to read *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, Volume LXXXI, Number 16, 13 April 1965

**Colin Hanna:** Do you remember the '57 Chevy station wagon Chuck Berry brought with him? As I recall, it was onstage! Can anyone confirm that?

**Tad Decker:** Yes. Chuck Berry. I for one. I can't remember who the other group was. But the microphone/ speaker system broke down and Chuck Berry lent his own equipment to the second group. I think it was our sophomore year. I believed they stopped that for a few years because of the turf or grass. I believe Joe Cocker played there the year after we graduated. One year it was in the Palestra.

**Bill Hermann:** The 1965 headliners on Franklin Field included Chuck Berry, Marvin Gaye, The Chiffons and the Brandywine Singers.

**Lee Gordon:** Chuck Berry was the featured act for Skimmer Weekend our freshman year. Here is my indelible recollection, stamped into my brain, retrieved from my Wayback Machine: FRESHMAN YEAR SKIMMER WEEKEND: THE GREATEST ROCK AND ROLL ENTERTAINER OF OUR GENERATION

It is Skimmer Weekend and I am entranced by the handsome black man on the stage in the middle of our football haven, Franklin Field. As a freshman, I can't believe my eyes and especially my ears when I hear "Johnny B. Goode" ring out. We are, indeed, "Back to the Future". There he is: Chuck Berry, one cool cat, dazzling our classmates and the entire Penn community. What a sight! What a sound! Charles Edward Anderson Berry is 20 years older than I am, but I feel that age-wise we are in sync. We are hurtled from the somnolent '50's



into the rocketing '60's. As we levitate to the rock and roll beat, I notice a blond haired fraternity boy type jump out onto the stage. Chuck, cool as ever, engages that buffoon into his act. I don't want this evening to ever end because this will be the first time that the love of my life, my irresistible beauty, Sandy, gets to feel the rhythm of Penn's campus.

**Mike Levy:** I ran a booking agency, and got Chuck Berry in our Junior year. As I wrote before, he showed up on time, I tried some small talk, he said 'where's my check', gave him his check, he got up on the stage, and he was Chuck Berry. Most excellent.

It's not Homecoming nor is it Skimmer, but this year's football season at Penn will begin with a spectacular worthy of either of these two events. On Friday night, September 29, at 8:00 p.m., the Palestra will be the scene of the Lehigh Weekend Spectacular featuring Chuck Berry and the Lovin' Spoonful.

Chuck Berry, the big daddy father of rock will no doubt make a repeat performance of his great Skimmer show several years ago. Originally from Tennessee, Berry moved into the limelight with his memorable "Sweet Little Sixteen". Berry was an innovator with one of the first and the finest of the Southern Negro rock sounds.

Click [HERE](#) to read *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, Volume LXXXIII, Number 39, 26 September 1967

**Win Walp:** Lee – nice research! It was my distinct recollection that Chuck Berry appeared our freshman year because we had just finished pledging our fraternity and it was an ATO frat bro who got on stage with Chuck Berry (it actually may have been a few ATO brothers) and we were so proud of our fraternity brothers (the unique perspective of a 19 year old!). I had also remembered 3 other acts, an all girl Motown group and 2 others. On the Texas front, I was not born a Texan but now that I have lived half of my life here in Dallas (37 years), I am at least a ½ Texan. As for BBQ, in Dallas, Pecan Lodge and Lockhart's and a place near Weatherford outside of Ft. Worth (of course I forget the name). Great memories!



The blond hair may be a more limiting identifier than somewhat over inebriated and drinking hard liquor. Especially since the Skimmer drink of choice was the Yukka Flats, a drink made in a large container full of ice mixed with a quart of vodka and lemons, sugar and maraschino cherries, shaken until ready and resulting in a drink that tasted like lemonade. Memories, although perhaps somewhat clouded memories. P.S. I know who was on stage with Chuck but will protect their identity.

**Larry Miller:** Freshman year: Skimmer 1965. Chuck Berry Students on blankets, and in the high jump/pole vault pit, I cannot reveal the names to protect the guilty. Did not fill the stadium but next to the stage -- it was the forerunner of a moshpit. Great Memories.

Click [HERE](#) to read The Daily Pennsylvanian, Volume LXXXI, Number 16, 13 April 1965 — Day Of Judgement? From Callow To Chuck Berry Skimmer '65: The Return To Franklin Field

**Lee Gordon:** So here we are, Old Guard Penn grads trying to remember what year Chuck Berry performed. Our clashing recollections impelled me to seek an internet retrieval that might be enlightening. Here is what I unearthed: *The 1965 headliners on Franklin Field included Chuck Berry, Marvin Gaye, The Chiffons and the Brandywine Singers.*

Click [HERE](#) to read about Penn's Skimmer program tradition

**Karen Carr:** Kevin Carr, my soon-to-be husband, after graduation- was on the Houston Hall Board and was chairman his senior year. As his girlfriend, I got to go backstage sophomore and junior year. Smokey, Martha, Supremes, Temptations, Tina, Simon and Garfunkel, etc - Homecoming, Skimmer, any excuse for a party! Also when my son was at the Naval Academy, we were at the Army-Navy game in Philadelphia. What a spectacle that is! Glorious!

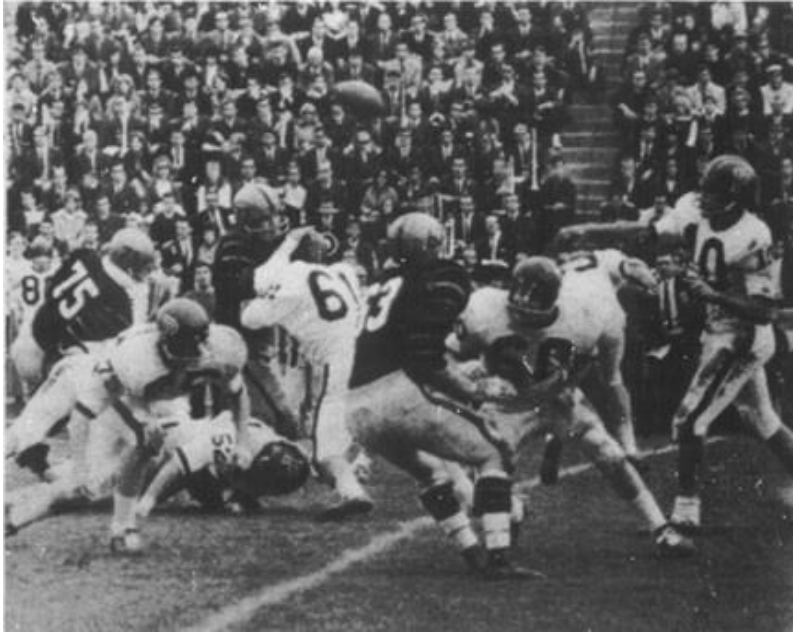
**Don Morrison:** <https://www.collectableivy.com/cornell-v-penn-football-program-1931/>

**Carol Shlifer Clapp Coonley:** I was never a football fan...but my best friend's father (and my doctor) was and so we dutifully accompanied him to Penn games 1956-1960. Thanksgiving, of course, but surprisingly many Sabbath Saturdays as well. I loved the hotdogs and hot chocolate and counted the minutes until the game was over. I don't know why I remember the experience so well but the names Barney Berlinger and Fred Doelliing are burned into my brain. Franklin Field forever!

**Randy Elkins:** Forgive me for a slight change of subject, but some of my favorite memories of Penn were the Big Five basketball doubleheaders on Friday and Saturday in the Palestra. I went to every one I could. Now, I realize nostalgia can play funny tricks on the mind, but no one will ever convince me that those doubleheaders were not the greatest gift to fans in the history of college sports. I figured out early on that the press tables in the North section a few rows up from the floor were never fully occupied and that's where I snuck down to watch, at least until I was in a position to get a floor pass from the yearbook photo staff and sat under

the west basket with a camera. Please don't embarrass me by asking, as one of the press photographers there did once, what speed film I had in the camera.

Click [HERE](#) to read *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, Volume LXXXI, Number 79, 17 November 1965



**Bill Creeden:** Okay! Franklin Field ...where should I begin. Debbie '72, my wife, and I feel FF has been a meaningful part of both our lives. You may quickly understand why it may be for me - freshman and 3 years of varsity football. But, Debbie has her own reasons. Most importantly FF is where in 1971 I asked Debbie to marry me. She was a senior and I was in grad school. My dad grew up in SW Philly and attended in '30s & '40s Penn FB games. He sat mostly in the west end zone temporary stands in front of Weightman Hall. During my childhood, he would tell stories of games he had watched. Names like Munger, Bagnell, Minisi, Bednarik, Bell and others, surfaced in his recollections. Occasionally, we would drive by FF on the way to visit his parents. Dad's FF tickets were upgraded in the mid '60s. FF is where I watched my first live FB game Penn vs. Columbia 1959. Thanks to my Levittown, PA CYO championship football team. Sat in east end oval upper deck.

- Played 2 high school games in 1963 on FF - Philly Catholic championship and City championship. Our Penn classmate Pat Broderick and fellow Deke and teammate played for St. Joe Prep in the Catholic game.
- 1964 last Freshman game versus Rutgers played on FF to cap undefeated season.

- Treasure trove of memories for 1965-1967 FB seasons. Attendance then averaged 10-12K, unless Penn invited community groups to sit in east end to swell attendance by 3-5K.
- Did not go far from FF throughout the year, since I washed dishes for the evening training table at White Training Center and stayed there for first semester summer classes.
- I parked cars in 1965 at the Newman Club for Eagle games and then hustled often to FF to watch the game. The gate guards knew me. Had pleasure of standing next to Jim Brown. He had an incredible physic - chiseled.
- Got to know many of the Eagles because they practiced at FF most of the time.
- Two quick Eagles fan memories. Joe Kuharich, Eagles head coach during our Penn era, had a "fan" who for all home games rented a bi-plane that circled above FF with a banner "Joe Must Go". Eagle fans at FF in 1969 pelted Santa Claus with snowballs.
- 1971 at FF coached Penn FB freshman against 4 opponents, including Columbia freshman and my brother, Kevin' 75(LB).
- 1973 attended with Debbie first of two men's lacrosse national championship games held at FF - MD (10) vs. JHU (9) in OT.
- FF's largest annual attendance was and still is for The Penn Relays. FF replaced cinder track with synthetic track in 1967. Worked in 'press box' located at finish line during my upper classman years. 1968 Penn Relays showcased Olympian hopefuls striving to compete in Mexico City. My roommate and FB teammate, Rick Owens, '68, was an alternate in 200m event for 1968 Olympics.
- In 1997, after numerous games attended over 3 decades, Debbie and I watched our son, Court '01, run onto FF as a place kicker for Penn FB team. Jason Feinburg, who became Penn's all-time highest scorer and one of Court's best friends, won the position. Great thrill to see Court in Red and Blue for us and his grandfather, Dr. Rudy Schmidt.

**Debbie Creeden:** Deb's dad, Dr. Rudy Schmidt - orthopedic surgeon and Penn Med School professor, was team physician, totaling 38 years for both Penn FB and the Eagles. Deb's family attended some away games and most home games at FF for both teams. Family also filmed players and parts of Penn home games. Sadly, those footages are gone, but I showed up in some long before I became part of the family. Penn traditions ran deep in the Schmidt family tempered mostly by FF experiences.

- 1970 Debbie was a member of the field hockey team that played on the FF new artificial turf.
- 1971 Debbie took a student job in the coaches' offices in Weightman Hall. This is where we first met. Her work station looked out onto FF.

## **The Penn Palestra**

- 1964 I played before 9K people in Philly catholic championship game.
- In '60s Big Five B-ball was at its apex. My student job working the cloak room during games allowed co-worker, classmate and teammate, Dennis Blake, and me to watch the best of college basketball - Nick Workman, Bill Bradley, Wes Unseld, Butch Beard, Cotton Nash, Dave Stallworth, Bob Lanier, Larry Miller, Dave Bing and Matt Guokas, to name a few.
- Enjoyed celebrating a number of Penn Ivy championships there too.

## **About Chuck Bednarik**

- Everyone enjoyed watching Chuck - last of 60 minute men. He played both center and MLB for Eagles.
- He was legendary at "Hutch" basketball games. His mantra was "Do you see any blood? It wasn't a foul." No one drove the baseline against Chuck, unless you wanted to be bounced off the mat protecting you from the brick wall.
- Chuck did local TV sports for ABC when we were at Penn. He asked Rick Owens and me to come to the station to tape a segment about our upcoming game. Dennis Blake went with us. While we were chatting with Chuck waiting for the session Blake commented on Chuck's 1960 NFL championship ring. Chuck handed it to Blake to examine. Chuck left to see why the delay. Blake tried the ring on his finger. It easily slid off. Blake moved it to his thumb where it got stuck. Blake panicked. He had visions of losing his thumb. The ring finally came off before Chuck returned. The look on Blake's face before the ring came off remains a priceless memory.

This only skims through a multitude of Penn memories about Franklin Field, etc. Debbie and I cherish each one and the people who helped make them.

**Tad Decker:** The only thing that you forgot to mention is that Creeden and Owens and Blake got more cheers in one game than the rest of us on defense heard in our collective careers. I think most of us still remember fondly Coach Cervino for the great fun he made practice and the games. I don't think I ever heard a better pregame speech as the one he delivered before that win over Rutgers.

**Phyllis Rodbell:** Wow Bill, what a memory. Thanks so much for sharing your memories of Franklin Field and your football career. I loved hearing your stories about Debbie and her family too, the tie that binds. Look what Betsy's innocent remark started. You were the name I remembered the most from the football team. Being the quarterback has it's privileges. My dad was a Penn grad too and he always took me to the Army-Navy games at Franklin Field while I was in high school. (I was his "boy" since he had only daughters). I have lovely

memories of going to the games and our kids cannot get over the fact that the “men” wore coats and ties to the games in the 60’s.

**Diane Holsenbeck:** Not until I took the time to learn the rules of the game did I willingly watch American football. I brought my appreciation up many notches when I took the time to watch my uncle’s film collection of famous players in slow motion. As an athlete that captured me. And finally I took the time to read my uncle’s three slim books and several articles he authored about football.

After reading the recent e-mails about Franklin Field I reflected on my experiences as a child in that historic stadium, the first in the country built for football games. My father (class of 1940) loved Franklin Field and brought his three daughters to the Penn-Harvard game every Fall at Franklin Field or the Harvard Stadium. He had graduated valedictorian from high school at 15. Being three years younger than most of his classmates he was rather shrimpy despite his eventual height of 6’ 2’. He couldn’t compete in Varsity sports at Penn without a growth spurt so he played the clarinet in the Penn band and thereby got to march onto Franklin Field. His father, an engineer on the Panama Canal, wanted all three of his sons to become engineers. He also thought 15 was too young for his middle son to start college. Thus my father got a job at Western Union in his home town, Washington D.C. and was assigned the White House. In those days deliveries of telegrams were made directly to the President. Needless to say there were daily deliveries. Therefore my father became a familiar face to Franklin Delano Roosevelt who took a great interest in my father and one day said “You are way too smart to be delivering telegrams” to which my father replied, “ Yes sir, when I turn 16 my father will let me go to college.” And indeed my father headed to Massachusetts to study engineering for his Freshman year. However, he was miserable and went to his elder brother who was pursuing a Masters degree in Architecture at MIT. Harlan asked, “What do you want to do in your life?” to which my father unhesitatingly replied, “I want to be a business man.” “Well then, transfer to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania!” and my father did. After graduation he headed back to Cambridge and got his MBA in a single year. This explains why we were dragged to Franklin Field and to the rather inferior stadium at Soldier’s Field across the Charles for football games every Fall. Whenever Penn was winning he was a happy man. Whenever Harvard was winning he would announce at Half time “I cannot lose“ though he confessed that he believed everyone usually preferred their undergraduate alma mater as he did. Moreover, the Bicentennial class at Penn enjoyed some of the true hey days at Franklin Field before the Ivy League was invented and when some of the future Ivy teams boycotted Penn for fear of injuries, reputedly because of sturdy boys from the coal mining parts of Pennsylvania.

I learned that one of my father’s uncles had been a football player at Ohio State and played in the Rose Bowl. He was a family hero but turned down a pro ball career to become a

doctor. I wondered how on earth such a contact sport would come up with such a name as “Rose” Bowl.....fast forward. My family resided in New Canaan, Connecticut for a number of years where the Police Department brought a couple of busloads of school children one Saturday each Fall to the Yale Bowl in New Haven. The seats were in the end zone but in those days the cheering squad was of course all male and the leaders were exceptional gymnasts so there was a great end zone show throughout the game with trampoline acts etc. But I was very aware that this was a strange stadium. So I wrote a mini research paper in Middle School about the history of football stadiums in the United States.



I learned that Franklin Field was the oldest, having opened in 1895 with a single tier and that the second tier was added in 1922 which increased seating capacity to about 78,000. Yale's Bowl on the other hand was not built until 1914 but it was the largest stadium to be built since the coliseum in Rome! The soil that was excavated was used to create a berm around the ellipse which to be frank does not make much of an impression from the outside compared to FF adjacent to the first Museum of Archaeology in the country which in 1895 still harbored dreams of realizing the drawing plans for extensive Babylonian Gardens where now is an over scaled Medical tower that though incomplete has rushed to come to the call for 150 beds dedicated to COVID-19 patients. What may interest football aficionados is that the word “bowl” as in Rose Bowl, Orange Bowl, and alas Super Bowl, are all derived from the original Yale Bowl. Additionally, Yale Bowl underwent renovations in 2006, reducing seating capacity to about 61,000. Franklin Field is undergoing renovations that were to be completed this year were it not for the pandemic crisis. It is my fervent hope that the country's first score board in 1895 at Franklin Field will show victory over COVID-19 at Homecoming 2021. Now you have TMI from this gestaltian thinker.