

Aggie Athletics History and Traditions (5-17-11, W. Hines)

The subcommittee's objective is to examine the history and traditions associated with NMSU Athletics and make recommendations on how we can renew and build from past successes. There are a number of topics that could be considered under the topics of history and traditions (including enhancing the Aggie Athletic Hall of Fame, the Football and Basketball Rings of Honor, reunions of teams, etc). However the topics considered here focus specifically on past history and traditions (and possible new ones) that could be implemented **to enhance attendance, interest, and game day experience at Aggie athletic events – especially football and basketball games.**

Being around Aggie athletics for 60+ years, and having done a lot of writing on the history of NMSU athletics, I do have some knowledge of past traditions related to games and game-day experience. Below, I've listed and briefly discussed several.

- Victory Bell— in the 1940s, the Victory Bell, a gift of the Class of 1939, was housed in an open-sided structure on the Horseshoe and rung to announce Aggie victories. In 1972, the bell was rededicated as the NMSU Engineer's Bell and now sits on a platform near Goddard Hall. On game days, various school organizations took turns in toting the ringing bell around campus and Las Cruces prior to kick-off. The Bell was then taken to Aggie Memorial Stadium where it salutes Aggie touchdowns with its distinctive - and loud - chimes. **Reimplement.**
- A Mountain – painting and/or lighting of A Mountain at the start of football season or before rivalry games. This is a good tradition and has endured since the 1920s. It could possibly be enhanced with more spectacular lighting and a planned student event to help with painting. **Update and continue.**
- Victory Cannon – the cannon has been part of Aggie football games (on and off) for decades. At one time it was provided by the TKE fraternity, but more recently has been taken over by ROTC. This is a popular tradition that should be continued.

- Memorial Tower Chimes on game day—this was popular at one time, but has not been done for many years. We should consider re-implementing this tradition and develop recommendations for the particular chimes and tunes that might best enhance school spirit. **Reimplement.**
- Men's Basketball "Victory March"--the Aggie Men's Basketball team have a special connection with the student body. At the end of a victorious game, the Aggies celebrate with the students by marching through the Aggie Country Student Section on the South end of the Pan American Center. **Reimplement.**

Activities to Support Game Day Themes

Aggie marketing has developed a theme for each football game and for some basketball games. These seem to have worked fairly well in most cases. I would recommend a student-LC community activity to enhance each of these game days. For example, a Saturday morning pancake breakfast or hamburger lunch on game day for students with music. AAC or Goal Line Club members could sponsor and cook.

Other ideas needed here!

Input from Paul Couture

Listed below are some ideas sent to me by Paul Couture, several of which have real promise in my opinion. Making better use of the Jumbotron for player bios, short recaps of Aggie history, and past games (e.g., victories over the Lobos and Minors, etc) would be popular and entertaining.

- A strong tradition can be for the fans to get to know the players right away and feel some commitment to them as the season progresses. With our big screen technology we can have full screen introductions by each player to the fans prior to each game. In addition features during the game such as "guess who this is?" Showing a players baby picture/grade school/high school pictures could endear players to the fans.

- Football at NMSU goes back to the beginning of the university before NM was a state. Fans need to get to know that history, what it looked like, where they played, who the star players were and info about the fans. Again the big screen could feature a series of short "NMSU History" videos including stories of some of the classic rivalry games.
- Football games are all about expected and often revered traditions such as the military flyover, Jim Dewey Brown as Pistol Pete riding around the field, and the great marching band. Traditions make the games more memorable and certainly entertaining. Given the strong Hispanic culture in NM featuring more elements of that culture into the game day experience could provide a unique experience for our fans. For example we could feature mariachi music and colorful dance at some of our games.
- Mascots are an important traditional element for the fans at games and Pistol Pete is great however the field is huge and we should consider giving Pete some support with additional fan friendly "characters" who could move around the stadium. One possibility is 7' tall inflatable green and red chilies. Each would have a student inside and they would shake hands and liven up the crowd. The kids would love them. (Another possibility is developing a posse for Pete composed of students in western dress....could be different students for each game – W. Hines).
- A tradition of putting small NMSU flags on cars and trucks would show committed loyalty to NMSU as well as advertise the game.

Walter Hines, Subcommittee Chair

5-17-11