



# HISTORY

# HISTORY OF TENNESSEE FOOTBALL

The fall of 2025 will see Tennessee football celebrate its 129th season. The Vols played their first game in November 1891 -- and so began a storied tradition.

Tennessee football is the story of the “greats”... the players, coaches, plays and fans, all of whom have helped build the program. From Gen. Robert R. Neyland to Phillip Fulmer, from Gene McEver to Bob Johnson, from Nathan Dougherty to Reggie White, from Dick Huffman to John Henderson.

The Vols' debut on the gridiron in that 1891 season was none too promising, as Sewanee defeated UT, 24-0, in a game played in the muck and mire in Chattanooga. It was also the only game on that year's schedule. The first win would come in 1892, a 25-0 decision at Maryville. The first home win would have to wait until 1893, as the Vols topped Maryville again, this time by a 32-0 count.

Neyland was born Feb. 17, 1892, in Greenville, Texas, and his influence on the Vol program would be felt from 1926 on, even through today.

## THE FORMATIVE YEARS

### A NEW STADIUM IS BUILT IN 1921

In those early years, from 1891-1912, football coaches came and went, frequently on a year-to-year basis. The Vols did not have a head coach until 1899, and had seven head coaches between that time and 1911.

The Vols won the 1914 Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association championship under head coach Zora Clevenger, piling up 374 points to 37 for their opponents. It was also the first Vols squad to defeat Vanderbilt, doing so, 16-14, on Nov. 7. On Nov. 11, 1916, the first Homecoming game was held as the Vols defeated Vanderbilt, 10-6.

It was not until 1920, 29 years into the program's history, that the Vols won their 100th game, a 49-0 victory over Transylvania. The leading player of that time was Dougherty, an All-Southern selection in 1907 and 1908, and known to his teammates as “Big-Un.”

Tennessee had played its home games on Wait Field at the corner of 15th Street and Cumberland Avenue but moved into a new home in 1921.

Shields-Watkins Field was less than a mile away on 15th Street (now Phillip Fulmer Way) and was named for its benefactors, Knoxville banker and UT trustee William S. Shields and his wife, Alice Watkins-Shields. It opened that season with 3,200 seats, although it had been used for baseball the previous spring. No one knew that just over 80 years later, the stadium would hold more than 100,000 fans.

In 1922, the Vols wore orange jerseys for the first time (black shirts with orange and white piping being the previous color of choice), taking the color from the American Daisy that grew in profusion on The Hill north of the stadium.

## ENTER BOB NEYLAND

### A TRADITION IS BORN

In 1926, Neyland, then an ROTC instructor, Army captain and backfield coach the previous season, was named head coach and served through the end of the 1934 season when the Army beckoned him to Panama. Dougherty, dean of UT's College of Engineering and longtime faculty chairman of athletics, hired Neyland with the lone injunction: “Even the score with Vanderbilt; do something about our terrible standing in the series.”

The Vols won the Southern Conference championship in 1927 with an 8-0-1 record and looked forward to the 1928 season. In that season, the Vols defeated heavily-favored Alabama, 15-13, in Tuscaloosa, as tailback Gene McEver, the “Bristol Blizzard” and one of the “Flaming Sophomores of 1928,” took the opening kickoff 98 yards for a score.

Buddy Hackman did likewise a week later against Washington & Lee and the Vols express was off and running. Hackman and McEver became known as the “Touchdown Twins.”

The beginning of the 1930s saw Tennessee play in its first bowl game, a 13-0 victory over New York University at Yankee



On March 16, 1921, all UT classes were dismissed to guarantee a workforce large enough to put the field into shape for a March 19 baseball game.



Stadium in New York.

Vols lineman Herman Hickman, later a College Football Hall of Fame selection, had an outstanding game that afternoon, and Grantland Rice added Hickman to his All-American team on the basis of that performance.

Tennessee won the Southern Conference championship again in 1932 with a 9-0-1 record and joined the fledgling Southeastern Conference a year later. In 1934, Tennessee won its 200th game, defeating Mississippi, 27-0, in Knoxville on Oct. 13.

Over that time, Neyland and the Vols had assembled a 76-7-5 record, with undefeated streaks of 33 and 28 games along with a 30-game home winning streak.

## NEYLAND RETURNS

### SECOND OF THREE GREAT ERAS BEGINS

Bill Britton had taken Neyland's place in the 1935 season while Neyland was in the Canal Zone. Neyland returned home for the 1936 season and immediately began building another dynasty.

By 1938, he was ready. With another group of sensational sophomores leading the way, he began a three-year run in which the Vols won 30 consecutive regular-season games and visited the Orange, Rose and Sugar bowls.

The 1938 team ended with an 11-0 record, defeating Oklahoma in the 1939 Orange Bowl. The 1938 Vols were named national champions by Dunkel, Litkenhous, Board, Houlgate and Poling. The 1939 team shut out 10 consecutive opponents. No collegiate team has since shut out an entire slate of opponents. The Vols brought home a check for \$100,000 from the 1940 Rose Bowl.

In the 1939 Alabama game -- which found national radio commentators Ted Husing of CBS and Bill Stern of NBC at Shields-Watkins Field covering the game -- a sophomore tailback from Knoxville named Johnny Butler etched his name into Vols history with a 56-yard run against the Tide on which he went sideline to sideline for the score at the south end.

Neyland's record during this era was 43-7-3. The Vols still hold an NCAA record for holding opponents scoreless for 71 consecutive quarters (from the second quarter of the 1938 LSU game through the second quarter of the 1940 Alabama game) and pitched 17 consecutive shutouts. The 1940 Vols were voted national champions by Dunkel and Williamson.

After the 1940 season, however, Neyland was called back to the military as winds of war hovered over the world. He was gone until just before the 1946 season, leaving the Vol football program in the capable hands of John Barnhill, who later became head coach and athletics director at Arkansas.

Barnhill compiled a 32-5-2 record and led the Vols to the Sugar and Rose bowls. The Vols also played their first night game in 1944, a 13-0 victory at LSU.

Four Vol players did not return home from World War II. They were Bill Nowling, Rudy Klarer, Willis Tucker and Clyde "Ig" Fuson. They are memorialized in the southeast corner of Neyland Stadium's upper deck façade.

## NEYLAND'S FINAL YEARS

### A CONSENSUS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP COMES TO KNOXVILLE

Neyland arrived home from World War II for the 1946 season and noted, "It will take us five years to put Tennessee back on top." Undaunted, the Vols immediately won the SEC championship and a bid to the Orange Bowl. The dominant player that season was tackle Dick Huffman, still remembered as one of the toughest Vols ever. He would lead the charge against Alabama quarterback Harry Gilmer in a 12-0 Vol win.

Critics argued that Neyland had lost his touch, particularly in view of 5-5 and 4-4-2 seasons in 1947 and 1948, respectively, and the assertion that his beloved single-wing offense had gone out of style.

In 1948, Tennessee won its 300th game, defeating Alabama, 21-6, on Homecoming afternoon.

By the end of the 1948 season, Neyland was ready for his final run as Vols' head man. It was just before the 1949 season that UT publicist Lindsey Nelson formed the initial Vol Radio Network.

After a 7-2-1 mark in 1949, led by another talented group of sophomores, the Vols kicked off the decade of the 1950s with an 11-1 season, marred only by a 7-0 loss at Mississippi State in the season's second week. The Vols, named national champions by Dunkel and DeVold, rolled through the season and upset Texas in the 1951 Cotton Bowl, sparked by a 75-yard run from tailback Hank Lauricella that Stern called one of the best he had ever seen.

Neyland's 1951 team came back and won the national championship with a 10-0 regular-season record. The contest with Alabama that season, a 27-13 Vols victory, was UT's first on a new invention called television. Lauricella, that season's Heisman Trophy runner-up, offensive guard John Michels and defensive tackle Doug Atkins later were named to the College Football Hall of Fame. Atkins, named also to the Pro Football Hall of Fame for his work at Cleveland, Chicago and New Orleans, became the first Vol enshrined in both. Atkins also was named SEC "Player of the Quarter Century" in 1976.

Tennessee finished with an 8-2-1 record in 1952, but the big story was Neyland stepping down as Vols head coach just before the Cotton Bowl game against Texas. The Vols lost that one, 16-0. Neyland's record for his third stint at Tennessee was 54-17-4, and his overall mark finished at 173-31-12.

In 1953, Smokey, a Bluetick Coonhound, became the Vols' official mascot by vote of the student crowd in a contest organized by the pep club. There have been Smokeys ever since then provided by the Brooks and Hudson families of Knoxville.

Harvey Robinson became the Vols' new head coach in 1953, serving through the 1954 season. Neyland once called dismissing Robinson after that 1954 season "the hardest thing I've ever had to do."

## BOWDEN WYATT RETURNS HOME

Bowden Wyatt, who had been head coach at Wyoming and Arkansas, returned to campus as Vols head coach in 1955, 17 years after playing on UT's 11-0 squad in 1938. He hit the jackpot in 1956, his second year, as the Vols won the SEC and earned a berth in the Sugar Bowl. Tennessee's 6-0 win over Georgia Tech that November, matching Neyland proteges Wyatt and Bobby Dodd at Atlanta's Grant Field, later was voted by the Associated Press as the second-greatest college football game ever.

Tailback Johnny Majors twice was SEC Player of the Year and an All-America selection and runner-up for the Heisman Trophy in 1956. He also was named to the College Football Hall of Fame as a player in 1987.

The Vols followed up the 1956 season with a 7-3 season in 1957 and played Bear Bryant's last Texas A&M team in the Gator Bowl, winning, 3-0, on the accurate toe of placekicker Sammy Burklow.

The Vols closed out the decade of the 1950s with two major upset victories in 1959, defeating No. 3 Auburn 3-0 in September and No. 1 LSU, 14-13, in November.

The 1960 season saw the Vols begin the decade with a 10-3 win over Auburn in Birmingham and a 20-7 triumph over Alabama in Knoxville.

The date was March 28, 1962, when Gen. Neyland died at the Oeschner Clinic in New Orleans. In his memory, the stadium was named "Neyland Stadium" and an academic scholarship fund started, both events happening at the Alabama game in October.

Wyatt's tenure as Vols coach ended after a 4-6 record in 1962, with assistant coach Jim McDonald taking the reins for the 1963 season. During that campaign, the first Neyland Stadium



General Neyland with the Vols after the 1951 Cotton Bowl triumph over Texas.

crowd of more than 50,000 saw the Vols play Georgia Tech.

Later that season, the Vols took their 400th victory, defeating Tulane, 26-0, in New Orleans. The times were changing as Vol fans would find out a year later.

## DICKEY BRINGS THE T FORMATION

After the 1963 season, Doug Dickey, then a top assistant to Frank Broyles at Arkansas, became the Vols' head coach, bringing the "T" formation with him to Knoxville.

Not only did Dickey bring the "T" formation, but added the Power "T" to the player's helmets and saw that the end zones display a checkerboard design that debuted Oct. 10, 1964.

Dickey's first Tennessee team finished 4-5-1, but hopes were high as the Vols narrowly lost to Auburn and Alabama, tied LSU at Baton Rouge and upset favored Georgia Tech at Grant Field.

Middle guard Steve DeLong won the Outland Trophy and Dickey's staff recruited a freshman class that would help lead the Vols out of the wilderness. One of that year's recruits, wide receiver Richmond Flowers from Montgomery, Alabama, was the first of a number of track-football athletes who brought a new dimension of speed to the Vol program.

In 1965, Dickey's second team finished 8-1-2 and earned a Bluebonnet Bowl bid, UT's first bowl game since 1957. The season's pivotal moment came in the aftermath of the Alabama game. The Vols had tied Alabama, 7-7, in Birmingham and spirits were high on the Knoxville campus. Line coach Charley Rash put a note in each of his linemen's mailbox that night after the game: "Play like that every week and you'll go undefeated."

Two days later, Rash, Bill Majors and Bob Jones were killed in an early morning car-train collision in west Knoxville. Nearly 40 years later, persons connected with the Vols program still praise the way Dickey handled the tragedy, pulling everybody together and keeping the team going.

One of the most memorable moments of that, or any other season, was the 37-34 "Rosebonnet Bowl" victory over UCLA at Memorial Stadium in Memphis, so named by Vols broadcaster George Mooney because of the postseason destinations of the two teams.

It was a classic offensive shootout that finally was settled when Vol quarterback Dewey Warren ambled around left end for the winning score and Bobby Petrella grabbed a last-ditch Bruins aerial.

Tennessee's 8-3 record in 1966, including an 18-12 Gator Bowl win over a Syracuse team that featured running backs Larry Csonka and Floyd Little, presaged what was to come in 1967.

The Vols lost their opener to UCLA, a night game at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, but came back to win their remaining nine games and the SEC championship, earning an Orange Bowl date against Oklahoma. The Vols swept Alabama, Auburn, LSU and Mississippi, defeating the Tide for the first time since 1960 and the Rebels for the first time since 1958. UT finished No. 2 in the final polls and was selected as national champions by Litkenhous.

In the first game played on Tartan Turf against Vince Dooley's Georgia Bulldogs in 1968, Nashville's Lester McClain became Tennessee's first African-American to play in an SEC varsity football game.

The Vols rallied for a 17-17 tie that day in an exciting finish led by quarterback Bubba Wyche. Runner-up in the SEC in 1968, Tennessee won the crown again in 1969 with a 9-1 record and played in the Gator Bowl. Linebacker Steve Kiner (1967-69) was named to the College Football Hall of Fame in 1999.

After the 1969 season, Dickey moved to Florida as head coach and 28-year-old Bill Battle became the Vols' new head man. His first team finished 11-1 and he became the first Division I head coach to win 11 games in his first year.

Two seasons of 10-2 followed in 1971 and 1972. In that 1972 season, Condredge Holloway became a whirling dervish under center, a master of the broken field run. He ran over, under and even occasionally through opponents during his career, which saw him tabbed "The Artful Dodger."

In 1975, the Vols won their 500th game, defeating Kentucky, 17-13, in Lexington.

Battle resigned after the 1976 season and Johnny Majors, UT tailback of 1954-56 vintage, then head coach of the national champion Pittsburgh Panthers, answered the university's call, coming home as head coach for the 1977 season. "Follow me to Tennessee" was the rallying cry, and Vol fans couldn't wait for the 1977 opener against California.

## JOHNNY MAJORS MARCHES HOME

Johnny Majors' early teams had no bigger victory than a 40-18 triumph over Notre Dame at Neyland Stadium in 1979, a season in which the Vols led eventual national champion Alabama, 17-0, in the second quarter at Legion Field. A 7-4 record was sufficient to earn a Bluebonnet Bowl bid.

A crowd of 95,288 saw the Vols and Georgia square off to begin the 1980 season in an expanded Neyland Stadium.

Georgia won, 16-15, on its way to a national championship, but the Vols did have their moments that year, taking a 42-0 win at Auburn and concluding the season with a 45-14 win over Kentucky and 51-13 win over Vanderbilt.



The 1981 Vols overcame early, seemingly devastating, losses at Georgia and Southern California to post an 8-4 record and receive a Garden State Bowl berth against Wisconsin. Slowly but surely, Big Orange fortunes were on an upswing.

With the 1982 World's Fair as a backdrop, Tennessee ended 11 years of frustration by defeating Alabama, 35-28, at Neyland Stadium. Mike Terry's interception cinched things and Vols fans counted the clock down on the first of four consecutive wins over Alabama. The game also would mark Bryant's final appearance at Neyland Stadium. He stepped down after the season and died in January.

Led by Reggie White, an absolute terror at defensive tackle, UT began an upsurge in fortunes in 1983, going 9-3 and winning the Florida Citrus Bowl. White would earn College Football Hall of Fame honors in 2002. Johnnie Jones had the game-winner against the Tide that year, motoring 66 yards to break a 34-34 tie.

In 1984, the Vols rallied from a 27-13 deficit in the fourth quarter to defeat Alabama, 28-27. In 1985, the Vols surprised everybody by defeating No. 1 Auburn, 38-20, and Alabama 16-14 on their way to an SEC crown, first since 1969, and a Sugar Bowl date with Miami.

Vol quarterback Tony Robinson, who had played brilliantly in a season-opening tie with UCLA and the win over Auburn, hurt a knee in the fourth quarter against Alabama and missed the rest of the season. Daryl Dickey, Doug's son, stepped into the breach and kept the Vols ship on course the rest of the way, including a 35-7 win over the Hurricanes that UT fans remember fondly to this day. The Louisiana Superdome was Big Orange Country South that Jan. 1, 1986, night.

The 1989 season saw an 11-1 record, an SEC championship and Cotton Bowl trip. The win over Arkansas in Dallas Jan. 1, 1990, was the Vols' 600th. The Vols were the most improved team in the country, coming from 5-6 in 1988 to 1989's 11-1.

The 1990s began with another SEC championship and trip to the Sugar Bowl.

The highlight of the 1991 season came in South Bend, Indiana, at Notre Dame Stadium, when the Vols overcame a 31-7 deficit to somehow win 35-34. Vols placekicker John Becksvoort had dreamed of defeating the Irish with a field goal, but in this case, an extra point was plenty. Jeremy Lincoln blocked an Irish field goal attempt with his backside to preserve the win.

## FULMER'S STORIED CAREER

Phillip Fulmer's remarkable coaching career includes reaching both the 50- and 75-victory milestones quicker than any other coach in Southeastern Conference history. In 1998, Fulmer guided Tennessee to its sixth national championship, with a 13-0 record and Tostitos Fiesta Bowl victory over Florida State.

In 2002, Fulmer notched his 100th career victory, and like many other milestones, the number of victories takes on an exceptional glow when held up to the light of gridiron history. Fulmer only needed 123 games to reach the century mark.

Fulmer was named head coach in November of 1992 to replace Johnny Majors. Fulmer's stewardship began with the Vols' trip to the Hall of Fame Bowl in Tampa. Quarterbacked by Heath Shuler, the Big Orange routed Boston College, 38-23. The victory, combined with three other triumphs in which Fulmer served as interim coach, gave the new mentor a 4-0 record heading into the 1993 campaign.

Vols gridiron success continued through Fulmer's first full season as head coach. The Vols went 10-2 in 1993, a year in which quarterback Shuler finished runner-up for the Heisman Trophy. Tennessee was rewarded with a trip to the Florida Citrus Bowl.

The 1994 season is remembered for one of the guttiest comebacks ever staged by a Tennessee team. The Vols, whose first-string quarterback Jerry Colquitt was injured in

the opening minutes of the first game, staggered to a 1-3 start but stuck together under Fulmer's direction and ended the season at 8-4, including a bowl victory. Peyton Manning earned a start in the Washington State game and was there for the duration, compiling an NCAA-best record of 39-5 as a starter.

UT closed the season by whipping Virginia Tech, 45-23, in the Gator Bowl and set the stage for a 1995 campaign that included a rousing victory at Alabama, six other SEC wins, an overall 11-1 record and an exciting 20-14 win over Ohio State in the Florida Citrus Bowl. The CNN-USA Today coaches poll ranked UT No. 2 in the nation after that bowl win.

The 1996 Vols gave the school its second straight top-10 ranking with a 10-2 record capped by a 48-28 victory over Northwestern in the Florida Citrus Bowl. Record crowds filled through the gates of the newly enlarged Neyland Stadium, with a collegiate attendance mark of 107,608 for the Sept. 21 game with Florida.

Also in 1996, John Michels was named to the College Football Hall of Fame.

The 1997 season tested the comeback quality of the Vols, who bounced back from a loss to Florida, won the rest of their games, including the SEC championship contest over Auburn, and then had an outside shot at a No. 1 ranking in the AP and coaches' final poll.

But, alas, a national championship wasn't yet to be. After hanging in gamely through the first half, Tennessee yielded to powerhouse Nebraska and suffered a 42-17 loss in the Orange Bowl at Miami.

But even that one-sided defeat couldn't diminish a season in which the Vols, behind the brilliant passing of Heisman runner-up and Maxwell Award winner Manning, won the SEC championship after edging out Florida for the Eastern Division title.

As the 1998 season approached, Tennessee coaches were struck with the dimensions of the assignment that faced them: rebuild following the loss of the nation's best quarterback and one of the game's top defensive stars in Leonard Little.

Demonstrating the unpredictability of college football, Tennessee rolled undefeated through the 1998 regular season, defeated Mississippi State for the SEC championship and then faced Florida State in the first Bowl Championship Series matchup at Tempe, Arizona.

Tea Martin engineered a 23-16 victory over FSU in a title game that gave Tennessee the undisputed national championship and landed Phillip Fulmer deserved acclaim as national coach of the year.

The Vols found themselves in a tight crack at crunch time but showed the resourcefulness that allowed them to escape every trap. The leadership of Martin and the emergence of Travis Henry and Travis Stephens as replacements at tailback when Jamal Lewis was injured received justified recognition for their part in the championship campaign.

A defense led by the indefatigable All-America linebacker Al Wilson played magnificently at critical times, and placekicker Jeff Hall was Mr. Reliable against Syracuse and Florida.

Tennessee had a game-winning drive after an Arkansas turnover late in the fourth period to help save the undefeated season.

UT also scored 14 points on consecutive possessions in the fourth quarter of the SEC title game against Mississippi State to take a 24-14 victory.

The 1999 team was 9-3 and continued a win streak over Alabama that had reached seven through the 2002 season with a 21-7 win at Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa. It was the first time the Vols had played in Tuscaloosa since 1930.

The 1999 team also had a 38-14 win over Notre Dame on

its resume en route to a Fiesta Bowl game with Nebraska.

As the decade of the 2000s opened, the Vols won their 700th game in the season opener against Southern Mississippi.

Casey Clausen became known as the “Comeback Kid,” stepping in at quarterback in the Alabama game and leading the Vols through some close contests down the stretch to a Cotton Bowl game against Kansas State. Defensive tackle John Henderson won the Outland Trophy as the nation’s best interior lineman and was an All-America selection, the first such award for the Vols since Steve DeLong won the award in 1964.

In 2001, Clausen led the Vols to comeback wins at Alabama, Notre Dame and Florida, and capped off an SEC Eastern Division championship season by leading a 45-17 win over Michigan at the Florida Citrus Bowl in the first-ever contest between the two tradition-laden programs.

Travis Stephens and Henderson were All-America selections. An overall mark of 11-2 made Fulmer part of 11-win teams as a player (1970), an assistant coach (1989) and head coach (1995, 1998 and 2001).

Fulmer reached another coaching milestone in 2002, when he guided UT to an 18-10 win in Columbia, South Carolina, marking his 100th head coaching victory.

The 2003 season saw the Vols win 10 games for the seventh time in Fulmer’s coaching tenure. Highlights included a 51-43, five-overtime, marathon win over Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Two weeks later, the Vols won 10-6 over Miami at the Orange Bowl, snapping a 26-game home winning streak for the Hurricanes. A 6-2 SEC mark was good enough for a share of the SEC Eastern Division crown.

Tennessee also extended its streak of consecutive seasons with a bowl appearance to 15, playing against Clemson in the Peach Bowl.

Junior Dustin Colquitt, son of former Vol Craig Colquitt (1975-77), was named an All-America punter, the first Vols kicker so honored since Ron Widby in 1966. Placekicker James Wilhoit was named a freshman All-America.

Doug Dickey was named to the College Football Hall of Fame in December 2003.

The 2004 season, which many fans believed could be a blueprint for disaster, evolved into an SEC Eastern Division championship.

In Atlanta for the title affair, the Vols had the misfortune of encountering for the second time an Auburn team that was one of the most powerful fielded by an SEC school in recent memory, falling 38-28.

That defeat left the Vols with a 9-3 record that they enhanced to 10-3 after pounding Texas A&M, 38-7, in the Cotton Bowl. The anticipated disaster alluded to above was predicated by an unsettled quarterback situation that eventually worked out nicely. Freshman Erik Ainge handled the lion’s share of field general responsibilities. When Ainge was injured at the end of the first half in the Notre Dame game, understudy Rick Clausen took over the rest of the way and was named MVP in the Cotton Bowl. Defensive tackle Jesse Mahelona, a junior college product, rose from virtual anonymity to nab All-America honors in his first year as a Vol. Victories over Florida, Georgia and Alabama were highlights of Fulmer’s 12th full season as head coach.

Days before the Cotton Bowl triumph, Frank Emanuel, a bruising linebacker of the Doug Dickey era, was inducted into the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame.

After a 5-6 campaign in 2005, Tennessee gave its fan base cause for excitement with the beginning of a three-year Neyland Stadium renovation project.

Tennessee also retired the jerseys of three Vol greats

during the 2005 season. Doug Atkins (91), Reggie White (92) and Peyton Manning (16) were honored by having their jerseys permanently displayed in Neyland Stadium.

In 2006, Tennessee gave the same honor to four Vols who died in service to their country during World War II. The jerseys of Clyde “Ig” Fuson (62), Rudy Klarer (49), Bill Nowling (32) and Willis Tucker (61) all were retired prior to the game against Air Force, giving UT a total of seven retired jerseys.

The 2006 team rebounded from a tough season the previous year to win nine games and earn a bid to the Outback Bowl in Tampa, Florida. The season opened with a return-to-form of sorts for the Big Orange as they dismantled ninth-ranked and highly-touted California at Neyland Stadium. The Vols climbed as high as No. 7 in the polls during a five-game win streak mid-season that included wins over Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. The regular season concluded with wins over rivals Vanderbilt and Kentucky.

The 2007 season will be remembered by Vol fans for its hectic final stretch that saw UT win three of its last five games by a field goal or less en route to winning the SEC East and a trip to the conference title game in Atlanta.

Tennessee took a lead into the fourth quarter of that game, but fell 21-14 to LSU. The Vols rebounded a month later with a New Year’s Day Outback Bowl win over Wisconsin. The 2007 team finished 10-4, handing Fulmer his ninth 10-win campaign in 15 seasons at the helm in Knoxville. The SEC East title was his seventh in 15 years.

Those earning honors after the 2007 season included placekicker Daniel Lincoln (All-America) and safety Eric Berry (Freshman All-America).

Their spirits buoyed by a top 20 preseason national ranking, the Vols instead crashed to their second losing campaign in four years in 2008. Tennessee notched a victory over Kentucky in the closing game to close out a disappointing season with a 5-7 overall worksheet and a 3-5 slate in the SEC.

The team’s struggles took their toll, most notably the dismissal of Fulmer from his head coaching position after 17 years.

The brightest light in 2008 was safety Eric Berry. The Georgia native became the 33rd UT player, and the first since 1990, to claim consensus All-America honors. He would be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2023.

## CHANGING TIMES

Lane Kiffin took over the coaching reins for a brief stint in 2009 leading the Vols to a 7-6 overall record and a Chick-Fil-A bowl berth. Berry highlighted the season once again, garnering consensus All-America honors for the second straight season.

Derek Dooley was hired on Jan. 15, 2010, as the school’s 22nd head coach. Dooley led the Vols to a 15-21 record in three seasons before leaving the program late in the 2012 season. In his first season, he led Tennessee to an appearance in the 2010 Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl against North Carolina.

Ranked 23rd in the nation, Tennessee hosted Florida on Sept. 15, 2012, with ESPN’s College Game Day on campus. Prior to the sellout game, Johnny Majors’ No. 45 jersey was retired.

Offensive coordinator Jim Chaney served as interim head coach for the 2012 season finale and led the Vols to a 37-17 victory over Kentucky.

Tennessee’s state-of-the-art Anderson Training Center opened during 2012. The 145,000-square foot, all-purpose facility is one of the most modern and functional buildings of its kind.

Butch Jones was introduced as the new head coach



of the Vols on Dec. 7, 2012. Jones came to Knoxville after winning four conference championships in six years as the head man at Central Michigan and Cincinnati. He led the Vols to the 800th win in program history in his first victory at the helm on Aug. 31, 2013, with a 45-0 blanking of Austin Peay.

Quarterback Josh Dobbs and defensive end Derek Barnett led the way during Jones' tenure. Barnett was a consensus All-American in 2016 and set the Tennessee career record for sacks with 33.0.

In his five seasons, Jones led UT to a 34-27 record that included three consecutive bowl wins and back-to-back 9-4 seasons in 2015 and 2016. Following a 4-6 start to the 2017 campaign, Jones was relieved of his duties on Nov. 12. Defensive line coach Brady Hoke took over for the final two games of 2017, a pair of home losses to LSU and Vanderbilt.

Fulmer was named Director of Athletics on Dec. 1, 2017, after serving in a special advisor role to UT president Joe DiPietro. Six days after taking the reigns of the athletic department at his alma mater, Fulmer hired Jeremy Pruitt as the Vols' 26th head coach.

In addition, Peyton Manning was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame during this time.

Pruitt produced a 16-19 on-field record in three seasons and 11 of those victories from 2019-20 were vacated by the NCAA Committee on Infractions penalty ruling in July 2023. Pruitt's first year of 2018 saw the Vols upset No. 21 Auburn on The Plains, and UT topped No. 12 Kentucky in Neyland Stadium.

Looking to carry the momentum of the program's first bowl victory since 2016, the Vols entered the spring of 2020 with several key returning faces, including heralded senior offensive lineman Trey Smith. Overcoming blood clots and the passing of his late mother, Smith was the recipient of the inaugural Fritz Pollard Trophy in 2020, and he claimed the 2019 Jason Witten Collegiate Man of the Year Award. A 2020 All-America selection, he was selected in the 2021 NFL Draft by the Kansas City Chiefs and has since won two Super Bowls and signed the highest contract by a guard in NFL history in the summer of 2025.

Two practices into the spring of 2020, the year abruptly changed on March 12 as the COVID-19 pandemic halted the athletic campaign and swept through the world. Under the leadership of SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey and the conference's athletic directors and presidents, football returned with a 10-game, conference-only schedule in the fall of 2021. With players being tested for COVID-19 three times a week and Neyland Stadium at 25 percent operating capacity, Tennessee posted a 3-7 on-field record in perhaps the most unique season in school history. That fall saw multiple December games in Neyland Stadium for the first time in history and the program's latest scheduled regular season contest (Dec. 19 vs. Texas A&M).

The summer of 2020 was mournful for the Vol community as beloved UT legend Johnny Majors passed away on June 3. Pruitt's tenure ended on Jan. 18, 2021, and Fulmer announced his retirement as athletic director.

## “THE BEST IS YET TO COME”

A new, innovative era of Tennessee athletics began when the school announced Danny White as Director of Athletics on Jan. 21, 2021, three days after Pruitt's dismissal. White, who served in the same role at UCF, tabbed Josh Heupel as the school's 27th head football coach on Jan. 27, 2021.

The fall of 2022 would be a monumental one for the program. With the Vols celebrating the 125th season of the program and the 100th of Neyland Stadium, Heupel's up-tempo offense - the fastest in college football in terms of plays per minute - gave Tennessee a new identity and springboarded the program to seven victories and an appearance in the Music City Bowl against Purdue. UT legend AI Wilson was a presence at games all season, and in December 2021, he was formally inducted into the College

Football Hall of Fame.

Five Vols were drafted in the spring of 2022, and the momentum continued into the fall of 2022. Led by the play of 2022 SEC Offensive Player of the Year Hendon Hooker and eventual Biletnikoff Award winner Jalin Hyatt, Tennessee started the year 8-0 and ascended to No. 1 in the initial College Football Playoff rankings following epic victories over Pittsburgh, Florida, LSU and Alabama on The Third Saturday in October. It marked the first time since the 1998 national title that the Vols held the top spot. “Smokey Grey” uniforms made a return in the victory at LSU and “Dark Mode” uniforms debuted against Kentucky. With 11.6 million viewers tuning in and ESPN College Gameday on hand for the second time in four weeks, Chase McGrath's 40-yard field goal as time expired vs. the Tide sent off a celebration for the ages as fans stormed Shields-Watkins Field for the first time in two decades.

Heupel was named Associated Press SEC Coach of the Year, and Tennessee culminated its first 11-win season with an emphatic 31-14 victory over ACC champion Clemson in the 2022 Capital One Orange Bowl. The Vols finished ranked No. 6 in both the Associated Press and Coaches polls as Heupel, standing on the stage in Miami, proclaimed to the Vol faithful that “the best is yet to come” for Tennessee football.

The 2023 squad, under the direction of Heupel, won nine games and finished No. 17 in the final polls after throttling Big Ten West champion Iowa, 35-0, in the 2024 Citrus Bowl. That same fall Eric Berry, one of the most versatile players in college football history, was enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame.

In 2024, the SEC welcomed Texas and Oklahoma into an expanded 16-team league without divisions. The Vols were picked to finish seventh in the SEC but proved the doubters wrong en route to the program's second 10-win regular season in three years and its first College Football Playoff berth. Led by SEC Offensive Player of the Year running back Dylan Sampson and a top-10 defense, Tennessee posted a 10-2 regular season, including epic victories over rivals Florida and Alabama in Neyland Stadium, to finish tied for second in the SEC. Center Cooper Mays, a local native, continued a family pipeline of Vols and was a first-team All-American. Though it fell to eventual national champion Ohio State in the first round of the College Football Playoff in Columbus on Dec. 21, the Vols still celebrated their winningest three-year stretch in two decades and finished No. 9 in the AP Top 25 and No. 8 in the Coaches poll.

Heupel's fifth season begins in 2025, a year that will see VFL great John Henderson become the 23rd UT player to be enshrined in the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.



*Josh Heupel was given the reins of the program on Jan. 27, 2021, and he's led the Vols to victories in the Orange and Citrus Bowls and lifted UT to its first College Football Playoff appearance in 2024.*

# NEYLAND STADIUM PRESERVED BY PILOT

## A STADIUM IS BUILT

Shields-Watkins Field opened Sept. 24, 1921, as the Vols defeated Emory & Henry, 27-0. On opening day, the new stadium had 3,200 seats in 17 rows on the west side of the field.

Named for its benefactors, W.S. Shields and wife, Alice-Watkins Shields, the venue was known as Shields-Watkins Field until the stadium was named in honor of Gen. Robert R. Neyland in October 1962.

Efforts to build a playing field on campus started as early as 1912 when University Realty Company was formed and held an option on seven acres of land until the university could complete the purchase and develop a physical education-athletic field.

As of 1917, financing had not been completed and contributions were solicited. Checks averaging \$10 were received and UT students pledged \$2,000 in cash and 2,000 days of labor.

Work was done on the field, but the Vols continued play on Wait Field less than a mile to the north. With a debt of \$22,453 hanging over the project in 1919, Shields, president of Knoxville City Bank and a UT trustee, promised to pay the debt if the university could raise the money to prepare and equip the field. Shields also bought two lots bordering the property on the west.

The trustees accepted the offer and voted to name the field in honor of the Shields. That was Nov. 22, 1919. On July 20, 1920, the trustees voted to build a permanent grandstand, at a total cost of \$20,000.

All that was left to do was prepare the field. March 16, 1921, was designated as a "Campus Day," with classes

being dismissed to guarantee a work force large enough to get the field ready for a baseball game three days later.

The field was finished by noon the next day and the baseball game against Cincinnati went on as scheduled.

## FOUR ADDITIONS IN 13 YEARS

Capt. Neyland's success on the field led to four expansions between 1926 and 1938 as capacity grew from 3,200 to 31,390 with expansions on both the east and west sides and at the northwest corner in Section X.

An overflow crowd of 20,000 showed up for the 1936 game against Duke. The Blue Devils had things pretty much their way until Red Harp, the "Pineville Flash," returned a punt 70 yards for a score in the final seconds to give the Vols the win. In the 1937 game against Alabama, another overflow crowd saw the Vols lose a tight decision.

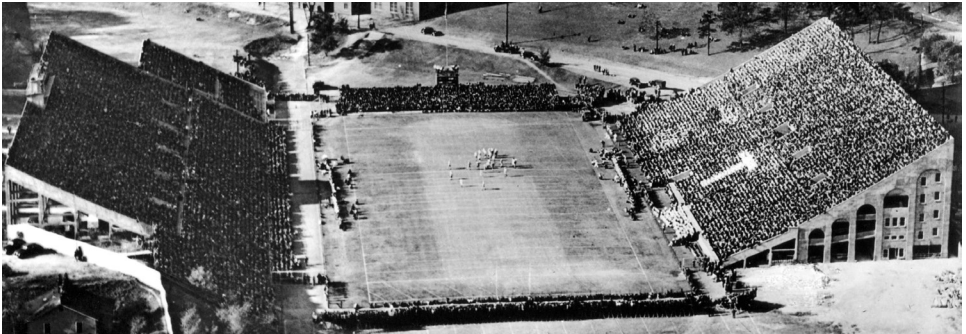
The east side expansion brought with it dorm rooms for 128 men, half of them athletes, a T-Club reception room and a practice room for the band under the stands.

## A BIG EXPANSION IN 1948

The largest expansion of the stadium came in 1948 as veterans came marching home from World War II.

Returning to the Vol sidelines in 1946, Gen. Neyland said it would take five years for the Vols to be back on top. Almost immediately, the Vols won the SEC title that season and plans were drawn for a south end addition that included more dorm rooms, athletic department offices and a new dressing area for visiting teams.

When the Vols squared off against Alabama Oct. 16, 1948, for Homecoming, 48,000 fans were present in the expanded stadium. Another 52,000 showed up a few



Shields-Watkins Field in 1938



Shields-Watkins Field in 1948

weeks later for the clash with North Carolina.

## GROWTH OVER FOUR DECADES

The west side upper deck and new press box came in 1962, dedicated at the Alabama game. Gen. Neyland did not live to see the new addition, passing away in New Orleans on March 28, 1962. Before his death, he received progress reports on the new addition and press box.

Tired of the Shields-Watkins Field press coop being consistently named one of the three worst in the country, he remarked to an aide: "We're going to have the best press box in the country, and I hope it improves the quality of writing done there."

Four expansions followed, first on the upper east side in 1968, then on the south upper deck in 1972 and 1976. In 1980, the stadium became a bowl, with the north end lower deck enclosing the field.

The last major expansion came in 1996, when the north end upper deck was finished and the stadium for the first time seated more than 100,000.

## UNDER THE LIGHTS IN KNOXVILLE

The first south end upper deck expansion in 1972 also brought night football to the Home of the Vols. When Tennessee opened the home season that year against Penn State, the game debuted football under the lights. The Vols have played at night consistently ever since, enjoying a captivating atmosphere that intimidates the opposition and is unmatched throughout the country.

## PRESS BOX/WEST SKY BOXES

The Neyland Stadium Press Box and Executive Suites officially opened for the Colorado State game Sept. 5, 1987, replacing the press box in operation since 1962. The

press box was named for long-time trustee and Athletics Board member Col. Tom Elam of Union City, Sept. 18, 1992. Elam died March 9, 1998.

It had four levels, encompassing leased suites, box seating for official guests of the university and athletics department, and complete facilities for print and broadcast media.

## GOING BACK TO GRASS

In 1994, a natural Tifway Bermuda Grass field was reinstalled at Neyland Stadium to replace the artificial turf that served as the playing surface from 1968-93. The new field was built to the United States Golf Association's golf-green construction specifications, and the grass is mowed to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.

It takes 90 gallons of paint to complete the lines, centerfield "Power T" logo and the famous orange and white checkerboard end zones.

## A FACELIFT FOR THE FUTURE

In the fall of 2004, then-athletics director Mike Hamilton unveiled a Master Plan to prepare Neyland Stadium for the next 75 years. The renovations were planned to be completed in five phases during the off-seasons to alleviate inconveniences to fans. One key goal of the plan was to find a way to fund the renovations without financially impacting the general fan.

The 2006 season marked the completion of the \$26 million Phase I Master Plan renovations. This included extensive infrastructure work, the renovation of the north lower concourse, including concourse expansion, new restrooms and concession stands and the construction of the East Club. Phase I was funded entirely by gifts from the East Club and leadership donations to the project.

While the addition of the state-of-the-art East Club



Neyland Stadium in 1962



Neyland Stadium in 1972

slightly reduced the stadium's overall capacity, it did keep the capacity at the imposing six-figure mark.

For the 2007 season, fans enjoyed the unveiling of an LED display, located in the bowl of the stadium, along with permanent recognition of the football program's retired numbers and national championship teams. The natural-grass playing surface also was replanted before the season for the first time since its reinstallation in 1994. Perhaps not coincidentally, Tennessee posted a perfect 7-0 mark at home in 2007.

The continuation of Phase II of the renovations continued in the offseason prior to the 2008 campaign. Those improvements included the renovation of the lower-west concourse, improvements to the team locker room, the construction of the Lauricella Center, a field-level lettermen's room, and the Stokely Family Media Center.

Phase III began after the 2008 season and the changes which were ready for 2009 were the renovation of the top level concourse of the west lower sideline, removal of the scissor ramps leading to the west upper deck, the addition of elevators and stairwells on the west side, improvements to the west tower sky boxes, renovation of the press box and broadcast center, as well as the construction of the West Club section.

Tennessee completed the Phase III construction prior to the 2010 season. Most noticeable was the new entrance plaza at Gate 21. The phase also included a new wrought iron and brick facade along the north and west exteriors of the stadium, as well as a statue of Gen. Neyland. The Tennessee Terrace in the west upper deck was also finished.

## 100 YEARS AND BEYOND

In June 2021, Vice Chancellor and Director of Athletics Danny White unveiled the "My All" Campaign, a comprehensive fundraising initiative to ensure Tennessee's ability to provide a transformational student-athlete experience for current and future Vols and Lady Vols.

Neyland Stadium - equipped with brand new LED ribbon boards and a vibrant, state-of-the-art LED lighting system to accentuate pregame and in-game festivities - embarked on its centennial celebration during the 2021 season, a fall that saw first-year head coach Josh Heupel

lead the Vols into a new era. UT also unveiled larger-than-life bronze statues commemorating four program trailblazers throughout the storied history of Tennessee football in Lester McClain, Jackie Walker, Condredge Holloway and Tee Martin in the plaza outside Gate 21 at Neyland Stadium.

At the completion of the 2021 season as part of the "My All" campaign, construction began on two new videoboards on the north and south ends of the stadium, a lower-west premium club, enhanced chairback seating in multiple lower-west sections and a social deck gathering space on the stadium's upper north end. The upgrades were completed prior to the start of the 2022 season. The modernization project brought Neyland Stadium's capacity to 101,915. The 2022 season also marked the return of the fan-favorite "VOLS" letters, located on both sides of the videoboard at the top of the stadium's upper south end. Neyland Stadium rose to prominence once again that fall as Tennessee went 7-0 in its confines, outscoring opponents 387-152.

In June 2023, the UT Board of Trustees approved Tennessee Athletics' request to adjust the scope and budget of the ongoing Neyland Stadium renovations project to \$337 million. The project includes new deliverables each football season through the fall of 2026. In the spring of 2023, installation of a very high density (VHD) Wi-Fi network began in the stadium. The 2024 season included a new stadium kitchen, commissary and loading dock and upgrades to stadium skyboxes. The 2025 season will feature the widening of concourses, construction of expanded gates, the establishment of Founders Suites and additional restrooms and concessions areas.

Neyland Stadium provides an unparalleled college football experience, as evidenced by 20 consecutive sellouts entering the 2025 campaign. In 2023, Tennessee led the SEC and ranked top four in the nation in both average attendance (101,915) and accumulated attendance (713,405). UT has exhausted its football season ticket inventory for the third straight season with 70,500 purchased and a wait list of over 24,000. The 97.8 percent season ticket renewal rate for the 2025 campaign was a record high for the department.



Neyland Stadium in 1980



Neyland Stadium in 2010



A statue plaza honoring four UT trailblazers debuted in 2021



Neyland Stadium in 1992



## UNDER CONSTRUCTION

A look at the major expansion and renovation projects at Neyland Stadium through the years. The field that once held 17 rows of bleachers and 3,200 spectators more than 90 years ago now seats 101,915 on gamedays.

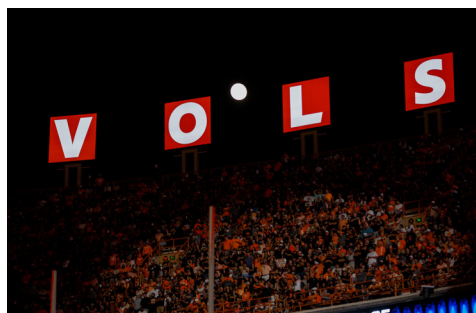
Year	Addition	Seating Capacity
1921	West Stands (17 rows, 3,200 seats)	3,200
1926	East Stands (17 rows, 3,600 seats)	6,800
1930	West Stands (42 rows, 11,060 seats)	17,860
1934	Section X (1,500 seats)	19,360
1938	East Stands (44 rows, 12,030 seats)	31,390
1948	South Stands (horseshoe, 15,000 seats)	46,390
1962	West Upper Deck (Press Box, 5,137 seats)	51,527
1966	North Stands (End Zone, 5,595 seats)	57,122
1968	East Upper Deck (7,307 seats)	64,429
1972	South Upper Deck (6,221 seats)	70,650
1976	Southeast Upper Deck (9,600 seats)	79,250
1980	North Stands (bowl 16,944, net gain 10,499 seats)	89,749
1987	West Executive Suites (42 suites, 1,361 seats)	91,110
1990	Student Seating Adjustment (792 seats)	91,902
1996	North Upper Deck (10,642 seats)	102,544
1997	ADA Seating Adjustment (310 seats)	102,854
2000	East Executive Suites (78 suites, 1,250 seats)	104,079
2006	East-Side Club (425 seats)	102,037
2008	West-Side Club (425 seats)/Press Box	100,011
2010	West Side Terrace (1,800 seats)/Gate 21 Plaza	102,455
2022	North End Zone Social Deck/Lower West Sideline & Field-Level Club	101,915

## PILOT TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIP

Neyland Stadium has been home of the Vols for more than 100 years and that legacy will live on thanks to a transformative partnership with Tennessee Athletics and Knoxville-based Pilot, the largest network of travel centers in North America. In August 2024, Tennessee and Pilot announced the partnership that preserves the iconic venue's name and enhances the stadium experience for future generations. Under the terms of the agreement, which is slated for up to 20 years and could extend further, the names of Neyland Stadium and Shields-Watkins Field will remain unchanged.



North End Zone Social Deck and videoboard debuted in 2022



The iconic V-O-L-S letters returned in modern form in 2022 thanks to the leadership of Vice Chancellor and Director of Athletics Danny White.

## ATTENDANCE RECORDS

### NEYLAND STADIUM ATTENDANCE SINCE 1946

Year	Games	Record	Attendance	Average	Year	Games	Record	Attendance	Average
1946	6	5-1	187,000	31,167	1987	7	6-0-1	650,753	92,965
1947	5	4-1	145,000	29,000	1988	6	1-5	551,677	91,946
1948	6	3-2-1	196,000	32,667	1989	7	7-0	657,419	93,917
1949	6	4-2	182,000	30,333	1990	7	5-2	666,540	95,220
1950	8	8-0	199,283	24,910	1991	6	6-0	578,389	96,398
1951	6	6-0	143,768	23,961	1992	6	4-2	575,544	95,924
1952	6	5-0-1	163,930	27,321	1993	7	7-0	667,280	95,326
1953	6	4-2	128,440	21,406	1994	6	4-2	573,821	95,637
1954	6	3-3	133,882	22,312	1995	7	7-0	662,857	94,694
1955	6	3-2-1	149,940	24,990	1996	6	5-1	632,509	105,418
1956	6	6-0	199,906	33,318	1997	6	6-0	639,227	106,538
1957	5	4-1	175,404	35,081	1998	6	6-0	641,484	106,914
1958	6	2-4	175,380	29,230	1999	7	7-0	747,870	106,839
1959	6	4-2	215,510	35,918	2000	6	5-1	645,567	107,595
1960	6	4-1-1	203,148	33,858	2001	6	5-1	641,059	106,843
1961	6	5-1	199,265	33,211	2002	7	4-3	746,936	106,705
1962	6	3-3	195,661	32,610	2003	7	6-1	735,269	105,038
1963	6	3-3	180,846	30,141	2004	7	5-2	746,507	106,644
1964	5	2-3	190,754	38,150	2005	6	3-3	645,558	107,593
1965	6	5-0-1	251,708	41,951	2006	7	5-2	740,521	105,789
1966	6	4-2	272,826	45,471	2007	7	7-0	727,426	103,918
1967	5	5-0	268,443	53,689	2008	7	4-3	710,136	101,448
1968	6	5-0-1	373,550	62,258	2009	8	6-2	793,760	99,220
1969	5	5-0	293,479	58,696	2010	7	4-3	698,465	99,781
1970	6	6-0	373,991	62,332	2011	8	5-3	757,136	94,642
1971	7	6-1	420,511	60,073	2012	7	4-3	629,752	89,965
1972	6	5-1	409,188	68,198	2013	7	4-3	669,087	95,584
1973	6	5-1	417,818	69,636	2014	7	4-3	698,276	99,754
1974	7	5-1-1	478,562	68,366	2015	7	5-2	704,088	100,584
1975	7	5-2	507,677	72,525	2016	7	6-1	706,776	100,968
1976	7	3-4	564,922	80,703	2017	7	3-4	670,454	95,779
1977	7	4-3	582,979	83,283	2018	7	4-3	650,887	92,984
1978	7	4-2-1	586,502	83,786	2019	8	0-3 <sup>^</sup> (5-3)	702,912	87,864
1979	6	5-1	512,139	85,357	2020*	5	0-4 <sup>^</sup> (1-4)	112,660*	22,532*
1980	7	2-5	659,190	94,170	2021	8	5-3	691,088	86,386
1981	6	6-0	558,996	93,166	2022	7	7-0	703,727	100,532
1982	6	5-1	561,102	93,517	2023	7	6-1	713,405	101,915
1983	7	4-3	659,059	94,151	2024	7	7-0	713,405	101,915
1984	7	4-2-1	654,602	93,515					
1985	7	5-0-2	658,690	94,099					
1986	7	4-3	643,317	91,902					

**78 Years 492 362-124-12<sup>^</sup> 38,517,449 78,287**

\* - denotes COVID-19 pandemic season (25 percent capacity)

<sup>^</sup> - denotes wins during the 2019 and 2020 seasons were vacated

## ■ LARGEST NEYLAND STADIUM GAME ATTENDANCE

1. Sept. 18, 2004	Florida	109,061	6. Oct. 8, 2005	Georgia	108,470
2. Sept. 16, 2000	Florida	108,768	7. Sept. 2, 2000	Southern Miss	108,064
3. Sept. 21, 2002	Florida	108,722	8. Sept. 27, 2003	South Carolina	107,881
4. Sept. 5, 2004	UNLV	108,625	9. Oct. 2, 2004	Auburn	107,828
5. Sept. 29, 2001	LSU	108,472	10. Nov. 9, 2002	Miami (Fla.)	107,745

## MODERN TESTIMONIALS

"There's nothing like this stadium, the loudest in the league."

- **Tom Hart, ESPN and SEC Network**

"Neyland Stadium is the toughest place to play in college football. ... I've never been in an avalanche before, but I would imagine Tennessee taking the lead on you in the fourth quarter and Rocky Top blaring, that's what an avalanche of orange feels like."

- **Josh Pate, Late Kick**

"Cover the whole country. Neyland Stadium is as HYPED as any stadium I've been in. The stadium, game ops, crowd and the passion is INSANE!"

- **Kirk Herbstreit, ESPN**

"I have been to Neyland Stadium, I've played there.

That is the loudest place I ever played. I swear, our center turned around on third down in the third quarter and said 'the ball is moving.' It was so loud no one outside of my guards could hear me under center."

- **Brady Quinn, Former NFL and Notre Dame QB**

"It's the loudest singular moment I've ever had in a game. Playing in that stadium, the crowd was the loudest I've ever heard. That's how good it is. Those fans have been hungry. Tennessee should be jacked about what they have."

- **David Pollack, Former Georgia All-American LB**

# NEYLAND STADIUM NOTES

**Current Capacity:** 101,915

**Stadium Attendance Record:** 109,061

Sept. 18, 2004 | Tennessee 30, Florida 28

## ■ NEYLAND FIRSTS

**First Game as Shields-Watkins Field:**

Sept. 24, 1921

Tennessee 27, Emory & Henry 0

**Dedication Game as Neyland Stadium:**

Oct. 20, 1962

Alabama 27, Tennessee 7

**First Game on Artificial Turf:**

Sept. 14, 1968

Tennessee 17, Georgia 17

**Final Game on Artificial Turf:**

Nov. 27, 1993

Tennessee 62, Vanderbilt 14

**First Night Game:**

Sept. 16, 1972

Tennessee 28, Penn State 21

**First Game on Restored Grass  
(Tifway 419, Bermuda Hybrid):**

Sept. 17, 1994

Florida 31, Tennessee 0

## ■ ALL ABOUT SUCCESS

**Tennessee Success at Home:**

In 103 seasons, the Vols own a 498-142-17 on-field record at home, a winning percentage of .771. UT's NCAA home win total is 492-142-17 (.766) following the vacation of six home victories from 2019-20 due to the NCAA Committee on Infractions ruling in July 2023.

**Consecutive Home Wins:**

30, beginning Dec. 8, 1928, with a 13-12 win against Florida and ending Oct. 21, 1933, with a 12-6 loss to Alabama.

**Consecutive Home Games Without a Loss:**

55, beginning Oct. 3, 1925, with a 51-0 victory against Emory & Henry, and ending Oct. 21, 1933 with a 12-6 loss to Alabama.

**Winning Seasons:**

Tennessee has had 91 winning seasons in 103 years at Shields-Watkins Field, including 38 undefeated years at home. The Vols have produced 7-0 records at home in two out of the last three seasons under Josh Heupel. UT is 25-4 at Neyland under his watch, including 20-1 since the start of the 2022 season. Neyland has been sold out for 20 straight games.

## LARGEST COLLEGE FOOTBALL STADIUMS

Facility	Capacity
1. Michigan Stadium Michigan	107,601
2. Beaver Stadium Penn State	106,572
3. Ohio Stadium Ohio State	102,780
4. Kyle Field Texas A&M	102,733
5. Tiger Stadium LSU	102,321

Facility	Capacity
6. Neyland Stadium Tennessee	101,915
7. Bryant-Denny Stadium Alabama	101,821
8. DKR-Texas Memorial Stadium Texas	100,119
9. Sanford Stadium Georgia	93,033
10. Rose Bowl Stadium UCLA	91,136

## OLDEST COLLEGE FOOTBALL STADIUMS

Facility	Year Opened
1. Beaver Stadium Penn State	1909
2. Bobby Dodd Stadium Georgia Tech	1913
3. Davis Wade Stadium Mississippi State	1914
4. Nippert Stadium Cincinnati	1915
Vaught-Hemingway Stadium Ole Miss	1915
6. Camp Randall Stadium Wisconsin	1917

Facility	Year Opened
7. Boone Pickens Stadium Oklahoma State	1919
8. Husky Stadium Washington	1920
9. Neyland Stadium Tennessee	1921
Kansas Memorial Stadium Kansas	1921
Stanford Stadium Stanford	1921
Rose Bowl Stadium UCLA	1921

GENERAL

STAFF

PLAYERS

REVIEW

HISTORY

HONORS

VOLMANAC

RECORDS



## TRADITIONS

### ■ PRIDE OF THE SOUTHLAND BAND

The University of Tennessee band was organized immediately after the Civil War when the school reopened. Since then, the enrollment in the band program has grown to more than 400 students (in all bands) from all colleges of the University.

The 300-member "Pride of the Southland" Band appears at all home football games and most out-of-town games before more than 850,000 spectators plus millions more on television.

With the exception of 2013 and 2021, the Pride of the Southland has represented the state of Tennessee for each Presidential Inauguration since 1965. The band has also made more than 43 bowl appearances, including the Sugar Bowl, Astro Bluebonnet Bowl, Citrus Bowl, Gator Bowl, Hall of Fame Bowl, Garden State Bowl, Sun Bowl, Liberty Bowl, Peach Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, Cotton Bowl, Orange Bowl, the Music City Bowl and the Rose Bowl.

When the UT Marching Band takes the field, the crowd reaction truly indicates that it is not only the Pride of Tennesseans, but the "Pride of the Southland."



### ■ THE VOL WALK

Head coach Johnny Majors and his team performed the first "Vol Walk" into Neyland Stadium before the Alabama game on Oct. 20, 1990. They marched from Gibbs Hall down Yale Avenue (now Peyton Manning Pass) and Stadium Drive (now Phillip Fulmer Way) into Neyland Stadium about two hours before kickoff.

In 1989, the team walked unofficially to the games from Bill Gibbs Dormitory. That phenomenon caught on with fans. However, the first publicized and announced Vol Walk did not take place until the Alabama game in 1990.

Now 35 years later, the Vols have maintained the tradition of greeting fans as they make their way to the locker room and prepare for the game.

### ■ THE POWER T

The famed letter "T" debuted on Tennessee's helmets in 1964 as Doug Dickey assumed the coaching reins. Johnny Majors had the 'T' slightly redesigned when he was named head coach in 1977.

Dickey also brought another Tennessee tradition to life when he started the Vols running through a giant "T" formed by the band. The tradition began on Sept. 18, 1965, versus Army. In the fall of 2021, LED lights were installed and that "T" now lights up for home night games.



### THE SIGN

The wooden sign carved in the shape of the state of Tennessee inscribed with the words "I will give my all for Tennessee today" has been in the Vols' home locker room and on the road since Bill Battle's coaching tenure in 1970. Director of Athletics Director Danny White added a new twist when prior to the Vols' first game of the 2021 season, the signs appeared in each portal of Neyland Stadium. Fans can now partake in the tradition as they make their way to their seats.



### NEYLAND'S MAXIMS

1. The team that makes the fewest mistakes will win.
2. Play for and make the breaks and when one comes your way -- SCORE.
3. If at first the game or the breaks go against you, don't let up -- put on more steam.
4. Protect our kickers, our QB, our lead and our ball game.
5. Ball, oskie, cover, block, cut and slice, pursue and gang tackle -- for this is the WINNING EDGE.
6. Press the kicking game. Here is where the breaks are made.
7. Carry the fight to our opponent and keep it there for 60 minutes.



## ORANGE & WHITE

The colors Orange and White were selected by Charles Moore, a member of the first football team in 1891, and later were approved by a vote of the student body. The colors were those of the common American daisy which grew in profusion on The Hill. Tennessee players did not appear in the now-famous Orange jerseys until the season opening game in 1922. Coach M.B. Banks' Vols won that game over Emory and Henry by a score of 50-0. The Vols donned all Orange - orange pants and orange jerseys - for the first time on Nov. 26, 1977, in a 42-7 win over Vanderbilt. Head coach Johnny Majors at the time said, "the team didn't know we were going to do it, but we surprised them."

## THE CHECKERBOARD

The unique design accompanied coach Doug Dickey's arrival in 1964 when the Vols played Boston College on Oct. 10. The colorful and popular end zones were a part of Tennessee football until 1968 when the natural sod was dug out and artificial turf was put in its place. The tradition was reinstated with the new artificial turf in 1989 and has continued with the transformation to natural grass in 1994. The checkerboard end zones also appear at Food City Center.

## ROCKY TOP

Felice and Boudleaux Bryant's "Rocky Top," — written in 10 minutes at the Gatlinburg Inn in 1967 — has captured the fancy of Vol fans everywhere and is a much-requested and much-played song at UT sporting events. First performed as part of a halftime country music show at the 1972 Tennessee-Alabama game, the song attracted so much attention and is so beloved that long-time UT band director WJ Julian said that not playing it would cause a mutiny among Vol fans.

It's been described as "simplistic and clever," with five basic chords and title being repeated 19 times. Yet opposing coaches have mentioned the influence and impact of "Rocky Top" on their teams and their game preparations.

There have been more than 100 renditions of "Rocky Top" by individuals, country groups, bluegrass and even East Tennessee rock groups. "Rocky Top" was adopted as an official song of the state of Tennessee by Chapter 545 of the Public Acts of 1982.

## VOL NAVY

Former Vol broadcaster George Mooney found a quicker way to get to Neyland Stadium in 1962 other than fighting the Knoxville traffic. Mooney navigated his little runabout down the Tennessee River to the stadium and spawned what would later become the "Vol Navy." Tennessee, Baylor and Washington are the only institutions with football stadiums adjacent to bodies of water.



## THE SMOKEYS

Smokey	(1953-1954)
Smokey II	(1955-1964)
Smokey III	(1965-1977)
Smokey IV	(1978-1979)
Smokey V	(1980-1983)
Smokey VI	(1984-1991)
Smokey VII	(1992-1994)
Smokey VIII	(1995-2003)
Smokey IX	(2004-2012)
Smokey X	(2013-2022)
Smokey XI	(2023-pres.)



## SMOKEY

After a student poll sponsored by the Pep Club revealed a desire to select a live mascot for the University, the Pep Club held a contest in 1953 to select a coonhound, a native breed of the state, as the mascot. Announcements of the contest in local newspapers read, "This can't be an ordinary hound. He must be a 'Houn' Dog' in the best sense of the word."

The late Rev. Bill Brooks entered his prize-winning blue tick coonhound, "Brooks' Blue Smokey," in the contest. At halftime of the Mississippi State game that season, the dogs were lined up on the old cheerleaders' ramp at Shields-Watkins Field. Each dog was introduced over the loudspeaker and the student body cheered for their favorite, with "Blue Smokey" being the last hound introduced. When his name was called, he barked, the students cheered and Smokey threw his head back and barked again. This kept going until the stadium was in an uproar and UT had found its mascot. Rev. Brooks supplied UT with the line of canines until his death in 1986 when his wife, Mildred, took over the caretaking role. She did so until 1994, when her brother and sister-in-law, Earl and Martha Hudson of Knoxville, took over responsibility for Smokey VII and eventually Smokey VIII, with Smokey IX carried the banner from 2004-12. Mrs. Brooks died in July 1997.

One of the most beloved figures in the state, Smokey is famous for leading the Vols out of the giant "T" prior to each home game. The dogs have led exciting lives. Smokey II was dognapped by Kentucky students in 1955 and later survived a confrontation with the Baylor Bear at the 1957 Sugar Bowl. Smokey VI, who suffered heat exhaustion in the 140-degree temperatures at the 1991 UCLA game, was listed on the Vols injury report until he returned later in the season. Smokey III compiled a 105-39-5 record and two SEC Championships. Smokey VI, who passed away in 1991, was on the sidelines for three SEC Championships. Smokey VIII is the winningest Smokey, having compiled a record of 91-22 (.805), with two SEC titles and the 1998 National Championship.

Smokey X was introduced at Homecoming 2012 and began his duties in 2013. He served for 10 seasons, culminating with an epic 11-2 campaign in 2022 that saw the Vols win the Orange Bowl and defeat Florida and Alabama.

The Bluetick Coonhound became the official dog breed of Tennessee in 2019.

## ■ WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER?

Not your run of the mill school nickname, the proud legacy of the Volunteer calls Tennessee student-athletes to compete at an elevated standard when the stakes are highest. A Volunteer is the bravest breed of human from the boldest nation on Earth, fiercely proud to call Tennessee home whether the battle lies within its borders or in a land far away.

### THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS

In the aftermath of the Declaration of Independence, Americans were determined to create a nation that was free of the evils that had required them to resort to revolution. Among these was the fear of a large standing army. Such a force could be used to impose the will of an evil monarch and was therefore a threat to individual liberties. Instead, they would rely upon a volunteer army, citizen soldiers who would be called into service at times of crisis to serve their country.

When the people who would later be known as Tennesseans were first asked to volunteer for such an army, they had been living along the upper tributaries of the Tennessee River, near modern day Elizabethton. The call went out for volunteers to gather at Sycamore Shoals in September 1780 and march across the Smoky Mountains to meet this British threat. When finally assembled, the volunteers totaled almost 1,000 men, virtually the entire fighting force of the settlements. These "Overmountain Men" defeated the British at King's Mountain to turn the tide of the war in favor of the fledgling nation.

The tradition of the Tennessee Volunteer was thus already initiated when, in the War of 1812, the nation once again went to war. As they had done over 30 years before, Tennesseans responded enthusiastically. Instead of the 3,500 troops requested, 25,000 Tennesseans joined, participating in battles from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico.

### OLD HICKORY

Earlier in the War of 1812 the British torched Washington. The Tennessee Volunteers made sure New Orleans would suffer no such fate. Under future President Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans, Tennessee Volunteers took part in the greatest victory of the war when they helped to defeat an army of crack British regulars. Facing more than twice their number, the Tennessee Volunteers joined a New Orleans militia, a group of former Haitian slaves fighting as free men and a band of outlaws headed by the notorious pirate Jean Lafitte. Thanks in no small part to the deadly Volunteer riflemen of Tennessee, the U.S. took a lopsided victory where more than 2,000 British were killed or wounded compared to eight killed and 13 wounded on the American side.

Jacob Hartsell, a captain in the 2nd East Tennessee militia, was among the Tennesseans who took part in the battle. He was so inspired by his fellow Tennesseans that he wrote a heroic poem in their honor. Entitled "The Brave Volunteer," this poetic journal entry is the earliest known written reference to Tennesseans as Volunteers.

### VOLUNTEERS AT THE ALAMO

Two decades later, Tennesseans advanced their reputation as volunteers when, unsolicited, several hundred made the journey south to assist the Texans in their war for independence from Mexico. The best known of these was David Crockett. His already legendary status was only enhanced by his dramatic death at the Alamo in 1836.

But before the Alamo fell, 33 Tennesseans, the largest number of defenders provided by any state — nearly four times as many as from Texas — kept Mexican General Santa Anna's overwhelming army at bay for 13 days against unbelievable odds. On March 6, 1836, the brave Tennessee Volunteers and the other Alamo defenders were overrun and breathed their last.

However, the crucial days the Volunteers slowed down the Mexican army gave another Tennessean, Sam Houston, enough time to gallop through Texas raising an army to defend what would become the Lone Star State. This army defeated Santa Anna in no small part because of

the contributions of Tennessee's Volunteers. There can be no doubt Texas owes a great debt of gratitude for its statehood to the fierce men from Tennessee.

### TENNESSEE ... THE VOLUNTEER STATE

But Tennessee's status as the "Volunteer State" was solidified 10 years later when the United States War Department called for volunteers in the War with Mexico. Moving quickly to meet their allotted quota of 2,800 recruits, state officials were overwhelmed by 30,000 volunteers.

It was during the Spanish-American War that the students of the University of Tennessee began to lay official claim to the Volunteer nickname for themselves. In 1897, the student yearbook was christened, The Volunteer.

In 1902, the Atlanta Constitution used the term "Volunteers" to describe the football team when recounting a game between UT and Georgia Tech. However, the university sports teams continued to operate without an official nickname until 1905. In March of that year an article in the Knoxville Journal announced a nickname had been chosen.

"One of the admirers of the old school has suggested 'the Volunteers,'" the newspaper reported. In classic understatement the report concludes, "The name sounds good, and it is likely that it will stick."

### THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

There have been other men who symbolized the indomitable Tennessee Volunteer spirit on and off the field of battle. One of the most famous proved to be Alvin York in World War I. York was drafted and nearly single-handedly captured 132 Germans, took out about 35 machine guns which had been decimating his battalion and killed no fewer than 25 of the enemy, according to officers' reports. Indeed, Marshall Ferdinand Foch said of York's heroism, "What you did was the greatest thing accomplished by any private soldier of all the armies of Europe."

Humbly, the reluctant hero returned home to Tennessee as the toast of the nation. Yet York wasn't interested in celebrity or cashing in on his fame, saying, "This uniform ain't for sale."

Tennessee Volunteers took part in every theater of World War II, whether helping secure the deadly beaches of Normandy to working in their own backyard in Oak Ridge on The Manhattan Project and the atomic bomb that brought an end to war in the Pacific.

Not every Volunteer story was forged in wartime. Part of the Volunteer legend deals with self-sacrifice for the good of others. Take Tennessee train engineer Casey Jones, for instance. Steaming full-bore in the early morning in Vaughan, Miss., in 1900, Jones saw boxcars in the distance on the tracks in front of him. When it became apparent the passenger train he was driving was destined for a catastrophic collision, Jones was faced with a desperate choice — he could jump out of the engine and save his life before the crash or he could stay in the engine and try to slow the train enough to save more passengers' lives. After ordering his fireman to jump from the racing locomotive and save himself, Jones died that day saving dozens of lives in an amazing display of self-sacrifice. But his story and heroism live in the ballad devoted to the Tennessean who saved so many lives that day in his casket of splintered wood and twisted steel.

The legend of the Tennessee Volunteer also applies to great minds who create items of great cultural value in interesting ways. The first constitution ever written by white men in America was drafted in 1772 by the Watauga Association near present day Elizabethton. Take the example of the Cherokee silversmith Sequoyah, the only known man in the history of the world to single-handedly create an alphabet, the first written language for a Native American people.

Similarly, Tennessean Alex Haley became one of America's most famous authors after recounting the experience of African-Americans in his highly-acclaimed "Roots." Haley chose to make his home in Norris, just a short drive from the University of Tennessee.

Every time since the nation's birth to this very day, when the U.S. needs an extraordinary effort to brush back the dark curtain of hopelessness, the Tennessee Volunteers are called. The bravery, heroism, wisdom and ferocity of the Volunteers place them on a pedestal of great American legends.

— by Nathan Kirkham,  
Rockwood, Tennessee



ANDREW JACKSON



DAVID CROCKETT