
Digger Stadium: Old-timers have cherished memories of iconic field

It's hard to say goodbye to the historic gathering place for the community

By Deb Hurley Brobst

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Saying goodbye to Golddigger Stadium isn't easy for the Clear Creek High School old-timers.



Sara Hertwig

From left, Clear Creek High School old-timers Rick Steele, Chuck Howard, Dick Davis, retired teacher and football coach Conradt Fredell and Bob Davis enjoy reminiscing about days of yesteryear, including playing and coaching at iconic Golddigger Stadium.

Whether they bleed purple and gold – the school's colors until 1981 – or blue and gold – the school's current colors – one thing is certain: They have fond memories of the football field.

Several Clear Creek alums who graduated between the late 1950s and the mid-1960s meet daily at the Frothy Cup in Idaho Springs. They are joined by Conradt Fredell, who taught and was an assistant football coach at CCHS for 30 years, retiring in 2011. One day last week, they reminisced about the fun times at Digger Stadium.

"A lot of people know about that field," said Lee Campbell, class of 1958. "(Cars on Interstate 70) would honk to greet us."

"They were cheering us on," added Jeannie Turner Schuessler, class of 1963.

Some said when they have traveled and told people they were from Idaho Springs, people would ask about the field because it's so

famous.

“Even before they ask about Beau Jo’s (pizza),” one alum quipped.

They called the field and the games played there a chance for the community to gather, and a way for Idaho Springs businesses and residents to support the school and the team since the field is in the middle of town.

“It was easy to get to,” Chuck Howard, class of 1965, said. “The townspeople always supported us.”

“Kids would come to the games, and they could see what it meant to be a Golddigger,” Schuessler said.

They told of a bus driver who let the townspeople know that the football team was back after away games by driving a bus through town honking the horn.

“It didn’t matter what time it was,” Fredell said.

“She was somebody (the players) could talk to because she put in the time and effort for them,” Schuessler added.

They reminisced about many football games in the snow, remembering how sometimes after snowstorms, parents and community members would bring shovels to clear the field.

“They shoveled so we could have a game,” Fredell said. “It took hours and hours. The community came out, so we could play.”

Schuessler, a cheerleader while at CCHS, said the Pep Club was large and rowdy when she was there, and most of the girls were members since there were no girls sports at the time.

“It was a great time in my life,” she said. “We had great camaraderie.”

She remembered some really cold nights at football games, and the cheerleaders wore wool pants to keep warm.

The old-timers said being on the team’s chain gang for home games during the 1980s and 1990s was a coveted position.

“People would ask how they could get on the chain gang,” Schuessler said, “Basically someone had to die for a spot to open up. People were on it for 20 years.”

The field has come a long way since its beginnings in the late 1950s when it wasn't level and water would settle on parts of the field.

"It's a unique field," Fredell added.

For many years, the Georgetown to Idaho Springs Half Marathon has ended at the football field, another testament to the community nature of the field. The half marathon is the large fundraiser for the Clear Creek Boosters, which donates money to the school's clubs and teams.

Fredell remembered one year, the volunteers were throwing melons over the fence to get them onto the field for the runners to eat after the race. Unfortunately, a few didn't hit the mark and splattered onto the field, making a mess for the cleanup crew.

Fredell called the field generational because three and four generations of families played football on it since it opened in 1958.

"Everybody knows everybody," Fredell said.

While the old-timers aren't excited about losing the historic field, they realize that change is inevitable.

"There are a lot of memories there for me," Schuessler said. "The changes are coming pretty fast."

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