From:	Nathan Brown
To:	Plan Commission Comments; Common Council Executive Committee
Subject:	Save Wisconsin Track & Field - Change Camp Randall Facility Plan
Date:	Monday, December 2, 2024 9:27:28 AM
Attachments:	Letter of Concern - UW Athletics.pdf Save Wisconsin Track & Field.pdf

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Dear City of Madison Planning Commission and Common Council Executive Committee:

Today I mailed my attached letter to Chris McIntosh and the University of Wisconsin Athletic Department, to urge design reconsideration of the current plan for the $285M Camp Randall Training Center (that your committees have approved) which:

- Eliminates the only competition venue for indoor track and field in Dane County
- Eliminates critical indoor field event practice space for Wisconsin Track and Field, such as pole vault, high jump and throwing events.
- Replaces prior competitive 6-lane racing track with 3 jogging lanes with non-standard tight corners hanging 25 feet above the football practice area.
- Raises Title IX concerns in the treatment of football athletes versus opportunities created for women's athletes.
- Eliminates use of prior venue by youth and adult running clubs in Madison

The largest project ever for UW Athletics threatens the existence of Wisconsin Track and Field teams in their historically championship form. But it also removes a Madison community resource for track and field sport that was once available to community running clubs and youth teams at the UW Shell, literally for generations. The issue of how this facility affects Madison, especially the opportunities for the youth and adult running community was not properly vetted or fully disclosed by UW Athletics.

I urge you to educate yourself on the issue and then use your influence to encourage modification to the current plans for Camp Randall Training Center, so that competitive indoor track and field sport opportunities can stay here in Madison, available for current and future generations, including youth and adult running clubs and others to enjoy. The loss of the UW Shell and its longstanding role as a community resource in Madison needs further review by your planning boards due to its adverse impact and its prior lack of disclosure.

Student-athlete petition of 5000+ signatures:
https://www.change.org/p/save-wisconsin-track-and-field-revise-the-camp-randall-redevelopment-project

Former NCAA Championship coach Ed Nuttycombe discussing the impact of planned facility:
https://youtu.be/W6M7_NUogFE

Thanks for taking a look!

Sincerely,

Nate Brown

Big Ten Champion Decathlon and Indoor Heptathlon 2006
Former Captain of UW Men's Track and Field 2005-2007
Emergency Medicine Physician & Major USAF ANG
Madison resident, father of four

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To UW Athletic Department & Athletic Director Chris McIntosh:

Few local football dreamers get the thrill I once had. At summer camp in 2001, Barry Alvarez offered me a full-ride scholarship. I'm a Madison boy, making me a Badger from birth. But I was slow to commit, I had many scholarship offers and wanted to compare the schools. Tour travel during my team's senior season I feared would be a distraction.

That same year, UW Athletics was penalized by the NCAA for poor oversight of an extra benefits scheme for athletes: "The Shoe Box scandal". The UW Football team was required to rescind 3 scholarships. It rescinded mine. Tim Davis (TE coach) recruited in-state athletes; he called during dinner to say the thrill was over.

After losing the UW scholarship, I did tour the other schools; but playing at another school didn't feel right. Walk-on to UW Football? It also no longer fit. UW coaching staff had downplayed the 'extra benefits' violations, never owning the outcome. Calls and outreach dried up. Football recruitment seemed transactional, undermining my love of the game.

I started seriously thinking about walking away from football. As an athlete in three sports (realistically, two at D1 level), the prospect of being a Badger was not a singular dream. Ed Nuttycombe and Mark Napier saw a quote of mine in the Wisconsin State Journal, excited about track championships, decathletes in particular. Never considering I'd leave football, they called me. UW Decathlon was a rebirth I needed, and no longer an afterthought.

It took 5 years longer to realize I was never created to be an Olympian or a professional. For most athletes, competition shapes us for life *beyond* sport. Athletics are simply a venue of high challenge, success fairly judged, and defeat mercilessly exposed in public. My Big Ten 2006 Heptathlon and 2006 Decathlon championships are irreplaceable memories; my inglorious no-mark in pole vault at 2007 Big Tens (my last competition) is even more penetrating. I cried in front of everyone, no matter how I tried NOT to cry.

Yet the far more indelible experience was making a mark on a talented and committed team. A team of Big Ten Triple Crowns, NCAA Titles, who wanted for more. The imperative to keep moving, finish a day, no matter how draining, no matter how far you fall. Put whatever points you can on the board. This was the rawest lesson I ever had in sports.

Now in 2024, it is 2001 all over again. When Tim Davis' call from UW Football came 23 years ago, it came as a shock that revealed a mudslide of football's extra benefits, NCAA judgments, money problems, and 'inevitable' impacts. No new thing under the sun.

Many have written how the Camp Randall Redevelopment plan is deceptive. To enhance football amenities, it omits bare necessities of championship track & field, and decathlon. A downgrade from dismantled Shell. For example: no indoor pole vault space in winter snow. Ask Olympians, decorated coaches, and world-record holders. Joe Detmer returned his "W" letter jacket. Ed Nuttycombe says UW Athletic Department statements have been

"misleading and not correct". Zach Ziemek has called attention to the situation. A petition has been signed by over 5000 supporters. I mean to echo them; their words are strong also.

As a young man who crossed both football and track worlds, this is NOT THE FIRST TIME I've felt misled by UW Football, with assurances so out of touch with the *true* IMPACT on the athlete. Sport is *not* transactional. You can't buy an NCAA title with buildings or free shoes. Sport is *inspired*. Olympic sports make it clearer, so other sports don't lose perspective.

While I've been a "Badger from birth", my enthusiasm for UW football still has a taint from handling of the 2001 NCAA Shoe Box scandal. And now it's Deja vu all over again: Where's the thrill now? I took 7- and 9-year-old sons to this past weekend's Badger football game, prepared for a moment I would fighting back tears. Track and Field cannot be collateral damage. Why on earth is there no capital campaign for Track & Field facilities, with passionate alumni and athletes?? The mantle of inevitability is unbelievable; there should be no finger-pointing anywhere but *within* Wisconsin Athletics. When I served on Athletic Board and as SAAC President in 2006, I would have asked why our women must pole vault in the snow, to clear the way for professional-tier football lounges and "wet spaces".

Like past defeats, I hope and pray a new life will emerge from disappointment and disguise. Points can still be put on the board; but it tests my faith that a greater good for all Wisconsin athletes is driving discussions behind closed doors. Badgers do better.

Sincerely,

Nate Brown, MD, MSc

UW Men's Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field 2002-2007 (Co-Captain 2005-2007)

- Big Ten Indoor Heptathlon Champion 2006
- Big Ten Outdoor Decathlon Champion 2006
- Two-Time NCAA Championship qualifier
- Three-time Academic All-American
- ESPN Academic All-American of the Year 2007
- Big Ten Medal of Honor 2006
- President - Univ. of Wisc. Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) 2005-06
- Student-Athlete Representative - Univ. of Wisc. Athletic Board 2005-06

Inductee - Madison Sports Hall of Fame 2024
UW Medical School and Public Health - Class of 2011
Emergency Medicine Physician - St. Mary's Hospital Madison
Information Security Officer - Madison Emergency Physicians
Major - USAF Air National Guard 115th Fighter Wing MDG DET1 CERFP - Truax Field

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The WIS Club was formed in September of 1975. It was the first women's booster club in the Big Ten. In the early days, it significantly contributed to the funding efforts needed to support women's sports at Wisconsin. Notable fundraising campaigns included creating cookbooks, selling Christmas trees on campus and holding golf outings. It later expanded to include the Ribs 'N' Rock Fest and a Billie Jean King appearance, among other creative endeavors.
HELP SAVE THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN TRACK PROGRAM
"The project will be the home of ...men's and women's track programs providing critical space needs for each athletic department" – Letter of Intent
"UW athletic facilities need to close the gap in training facilities available to remain competitive with peer institutions for new recruits and to retain current student athletes" – Letter of Intent
UW Whitewater
Division 3 Schools Have Better Facilities
UW La Crosse
SIGN THE PETITION
Make your voice heard and help save the program! (if you donate, it goes to the platform, not the Wisconsin cause)
STAY IN THE KNOW
Sign up for email to hear about the latest progress and how to best support
DONATE TO PROTECT TITLE IX RIGHTS
Help fund law making efforts to better protect Title IX
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52%
77%
SINCE 1972, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A TIME MORE CRITICAL TO PROTECT FEMALE SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES
The NCAA is in a state of disruption. To allow one Athletic Department to set this precedent has VAST negative conequences to the 52 years of Title IX progress and society at large. We need sport, not just for championships, but to build future female leaders.
Follow: @women.sports.help.society
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