



PURPOSE

DESIGNED WITH PURPOSE

HOW JSU'S ATHLETIC CENTER PREPARES ATHLETES FOR GAMEDAY

— BY RACHEL CRAFTON-STIVER —

THE CRISP FALL AIR ushers in a much-anticipated time of year—college football season. To many, football means tailgating, relaxing weekends, and cheering for their favorite team with friends and family. As a stadium fills with fans and boisterous chants, athletes wait anxiously to make their entrance. The first chord from a marching band rings out, humming with excitement as players storm out. Game day means more when one is on the field.

For football players and coaches, the nervous energy that fills the locker room before kickoff explodes into a visceral performance of physical and mental preparation. The groundwork is laid in the off-season and is supported by a facility that focuses on functionality, convenience, efficiency, and athlete experience. Using these guiding design principles, Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) designed the new Jacksonville State University Loring and Debbie White Football Performance Center.



A TRAINING UPGRADE

Jacksonville State University (JSU) unveiled the Gamecocks' new, state-of-the-art football operations building for the 2024 season. Located along the west end zone, the facility offers an auspicious game day occasion for players, coaches, and fans.

Prior to putting pencil to paper, the design team interviewed coaches, staff, and the administration to establish the project's guiding principles—the backbone of the project to gauge success. The required area dedicated

to each space, desired adjacencies, and amenities were all developed and tested against the guiding principles. To enhance efficiency and movement throughout the building, the design team studied the athletes' sequence of events and matched the architecture to support a common path that reduces unnecessary movement.

Upon entry, players will retrieve their equipment from cubbies in the athlete corridor. These are backloaded from the equipment room, which allows for efficiency for all users. The

locker room highlights the JSU branding and culminates outside the locker room doors. Purposefully celebrated, the terminus is a daily reminder of the pre-game huddle before taking the field.

The locker room was designed with a central focal point that allows the coach to address the entire team, support half-time meetings, lead team celebrations, and, more importantly, highlight the team's success. Since the facility is utilized for both practice and game day, it was important to provide individual lockers that are spacious, personalized,

and comfortable. Modern locker rooms provide a space that offers additional infrastructure to maintain a clean and healthy environment. A mudroom is available upon entry to store dirty cleats on dryers. A mechanical system provides continuous fresh air to remove odors.

In addition to the team bathrooms and showers, direct access to the training room—equipped with hydrotherapy tubs and space for athletic trainers—is provided. The distance between the locker room and hydrotherapy was crucial to reduce athlete travel after exiting the cold plunge. The training room also has the benefit of direct access to the field, helping reduce walking distance during any in-game injuries and visibility of practice during daily training.

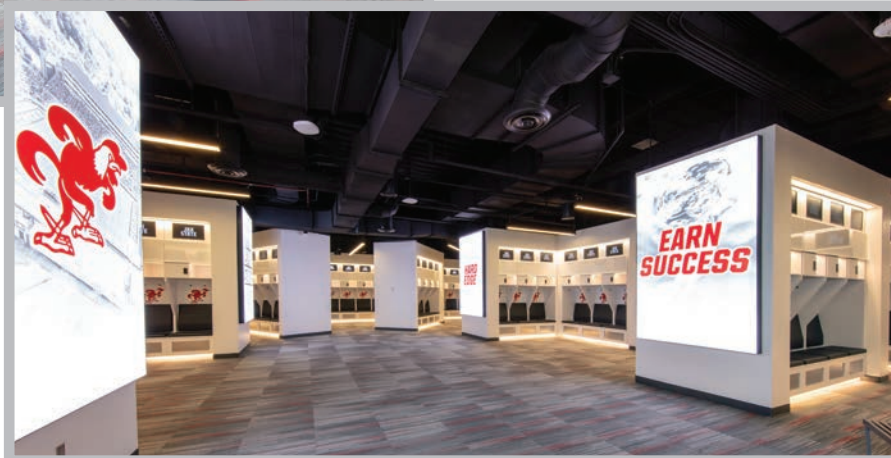
EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE

Beyond the training spaces and locker rooms, the new performance center introduces areas that elevate the athlete experience even further. A dedicated players' lounge gives JSU athletes a chance to unwind and recharge, outfitted

with televisions, video game consoles, arcade machines, and a fully stocked nutrition bar. It's not only a place to relax but also a thoughtful extension of the support system designed to keep players mentally sharp and physically fueled.

Upstairs, the facility continues its commitment to efficiency and performance. A series of team meeting rooms is designed to accommodate everything from full-squad, film-review sessions to focused, position-specific breakdowns. Coaches' offices, including a gameday suite for the head coach, overlook the action and remain closely connected to the athletes' daily routine. A private stairwell from the locker room offers players seamless access to the second floor, reinforcing the building's intentional flow and athlete-first layout.

But perhaps more important than function is what this facility represents: a home. For many student-athletes, JSU is hundreds of miles from their hometown. The Loring and Debbie White Football Performance Center becomes a second home as a place of routine, camaraderie, and connection. Designed with purpose, the facility provides space not only for practice and preparation but also





for academics, reflection, and team-bonding. It's a powerful element of the game-day machine, creating a comfortable, supportive environment that prepares players for the moments under the lights.

Fans, too, are brought closer to the action than ever before. The players' lounge transforms into a premium club space on game days, offering an exclusive look as athletes pass through en route to the field. Nine private suites line the upper level, complete with roll-up doors, outdoor seating, and panoramic views of Burgess-Snow Field. The design merges performance and pageantry, ensuring game day feels special from every angle, whether one is on the field, in the locker room, or cheering from above.

From concept to kickoff, GMC's multidisciplinary team—including architecture, civil engineering, landscape architecture, geotechnical engineering, construction materials testing, and interior design—brought the vision to life. With the 2024 season as its debut, the performance center signaled a new era for JSU football, built for the present and ready for what's next. **PRB+**

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