

Peru  
State  
College

1867-2017

# Nebraska's First College

SHAPING THE FUTURE SINCE 1867

DAN SULLIVAN



*The first football game was played on a shortened field with only one goalpost.*

## The Oak Bowl

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, Peru's students knew their new field was a special setting.

The 1902 yearbook noted, "The new athletic field when fully completed will be one of the best athletic fields in the West, for surrounded on all sides by a natural amphitheater in which nature has so bountifully done her part, certainly no more appropriate spot could be selected in all Nebraska."

The site was just down the hill from Old Main in a natural setting for a field. Spectators for early games sat on the dirt on the slope facing the playing surface. Bleachers were later added on the west side of the field.

The field's stunning surroundings led it to be christened, "The Oak Bowl."

The field was later widened and lengthened to a 207-by-600-foot area, and drainage was installed. When the work was finished, the athletic facility included a football field with a track around it and two tennis courts.



*The Peru State Normal's 1901 football team was the first to be officially sanctioned by the school. Among the team members was Jess Harshbarger of Stella (bottom row, third from the left), the grandfather of current Associate Athletic Director Ted Harshbarger.*



*Football players wore leather helmets, still a relatively new innovation when play began at the Oak Bowl.*



*Wooden bleachers were added in 1910, with additional seating on the opposite side in 1915.*

*Students performed a "snake dance" before a game as the band played.*

