

Facilities attract national attention

OSU FOOTBALL | RECRUITS ARE IMPRESSED WITH COWBOYS' STATE-OF-THE ART DIGS

BY BRANDON CHATMON

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STILLWATER — There has been a buzz around the nation about the Oklahoma State football program. And it has nothing to do with what happened between the lines in stadiums across the Big 12 last season.

It's all about the renovated west end zone of Boone Pickens Stadium and the state-of-the art facilities the Cowboys now call home.

Recruits from across the nation are hearing about the Cowboys' locker room, the theater/film room and the weight room from fellow recruits, high school coaches or pretty much anybody who has seen them in person.

Tight ends coach Doug Meachem said players who were not interested in OSU simply wanted to see the facilities.

"And by the time they left, they were interested," he said.

This summer, while recruits were taking unofficial visits in Stillwater, OSU coach Mike Gundy often heard how impressive the Cowboys' new digs were.

"We had a couple recruits in this week," Gundy told the Oklahoma City Cowboy Caravan in late July. "Both commented on how amazing the new facility is. They had been to a number of facilities in the SEC and other places... and nobody could touch them."

That's what T. Boone Pickens had in mind when he donated \$165 million to OSU in December 2005.

"It's good for recruiting, no question," Pickens said after taking a tour of the new facility on Monday. "When a recruit sees what we have, they know we're serious. You don't have these type of facilities and have a lackluster attitude about whether we're going to win or not."

Said OSU president Burns Hargis: "Boone was talking to our trainers, and he asked one question: 'Is it the best?' They said, 'Yes sir.' and that's the way this whole thing is and that's what we want to be."

Having football facilities that compare favorably with the best hasn't gone unnoticed.

Millwood football coach Tony Henry took a group of his players to a one-day camp in Stillwater and said his Falcon players came away impressed.

"They all thought they were great," Henry said of OSU's facilities. "It's a bigtime recruiting tool. They're extremely nice. I haven't been a lot of places, but I haven't seen a place nicer than that."

While the OSU's facilities are expected to pay off 10-fold in the future, they've already paid dividends in the Cowboys' past few recruiting classes and the current group of commitments.

Shortly after making an oral commitment to OSU, offensive lineman Dan Koenig of Cape Coral, Fla., told Rivals.com, "The new facilities are the best in the country, and I think everything they've put into the program is going to pay off."



Oklahoma State athletic director Mike Holder, left, and OSU President Burns Hargis, right, listen to T. Boone Pickens after taking a tour of the west end zone of Boone Pickens Stadium's facilities on Monday. PHOTO BY STEVE GOOCH, THE OKLAHOMAN