



Busbey Natatorium

For over 35 years, Cleveland State's natatorium has earned its place among the elite swimming facilities in the United States and has enjoyed a rich history of championships and outstanding swimmers.

A new chapter in that history was written in the fall of 1999 when the facility was officially dedicated as The Robert F. Busbey Natatorium after CSU's long-time swimming coach and athletic director, Bob Busbey. Despite all the prestige, however, the one part of the natatorium that has continued to stand out over the years is how advanced the pool's design is when compared to others around the country.

When it opened in 1973 as the CSU Natatorium, it was considered special simply because it was one of only two university indoor pools in the state of Ohio that was 50 meters in length. Since there were not many other pools like it in the country, it received immediate notice from the rest of the swimming community.

However, there were other aspects of the pool that made it unusual. The one feature that immediately stood out was the pool's large gutters, which made it extremely fast compared to those of other schools. In March of 1975, the NCAA decided to examine the theory itself when it scheduled the NCAA Division I and II Championships in Cleveland for the very first time. Over the course of consecutive weekends, the NCAA came to the conclusion that the Busbey Natatorium was one of a kind.

Following this historic meet, the NCAA gave in to the demands of swimmers and coaches alike and decided to return the championship meet to Cleveland State. When the 1977 Division I Championships were completed, there was no doubt left as to which pool was superior in the United States. The meet featured the shattering of sixteen NCAA records; a mark that still stands today. In fact, the 1977 finals were later termed as "The greatest swimmers in the fastest pool at the greatest meet in history" by none other than the NCAA itself.

Two years later, the meet returned to Cleveland, and, after a five year lapse, it was back again for a fourth time in 1984 to sellout crowds yet again. Since that time, the Busbey Natatorium has also served as host to other top-notch collegiate championships. The pool has been an eleven-time host site of the Eastern Intercollegiate Championships and hosted the Penn-Ohio Conference Championships a staggering 17 times.

The natatorium has been the site of championships of all shapes and sizes during its history, including four Midwestern Collegiate Conference championships and the 2003 Horizon League Championship under current CSU Aquatics Director and Men's Swimming Coach Wally Morton's tenure. What may stand out the most is the variety of the 16 national aquatic championships that have been held at Cleveland State. These events include United States international diving meets, AAU and YMCA national championships, the National Water Polo Championships, and even the World Swimming Games for the Deaf.

The natatorium has remained dear to the hearts of United States swimmers as it has been used by the 1976 United States Olympic Swimming and Diving Teams, the 1980 Olympic Diving Team and the 1984 Olympic Swim Team for their practices. The pool has even witnessed record breaking performances by United States gold medal winners Tom Jager, Matt Biondi, Greg Louganis and Pablo Morales. In addition, the October 22, 2002 issue of Sports Illustrated ranked the Busbey Natatorium the sixth fastest pool in America.

The structure of the Busbey Natatorium itself is even unique. The fact that an incredible 933,000 gallons of water are needed to fill the pool is unusual. The natatorium measures 50 meters in length (with nine eight-foot competitive lanes) by 25 yards wide (with 23 seven-foot competitive lanes) with racing lanes measuring 12 to 16-1/2 feet deep. Below the surface, the pool features underwater speakers and six underwater windows which provide the CSU staff with an excellent coaching tool.

Also, the pool utilizes an automatic touchpad timing system for up to ten lanes during meets. In terms of diving competitions, the natatorium includes two one-meter maxiflex boards, two three-meter maxiflex boards, and a diving tower with platforms at 5, 7-1/2, and 10 meters.

For the swimming spectator, the Busbey Natatorium has a seating capacity of 1,500 fans. To boost the number of potential viewers, the university has constructed permanent television broadcast and camera platforms which have been used by the ABC, CBS, NBC and ESPN networks during the pool's illustrious history.

The pool's uniqueness is not limited to simply the main pool itself. The south stands feature a 25-yard instructional pool which is also very useful as a warm up/cool down pool for competitions.

[In ceremonies held on October 2, 1999](#), the CSU Natatorium was officially renamed The Robert F. Busbey Natatorium, in honor of long-time swimming coach and athletic director, Bob Busbey. Over a span of nearly a half-century, beginning with his enrollment at Fenn College in 1946, Busbey impacted the University's sports program as only a special few men have at any collegiate institution.

As a four-sport athlete (swimming, baseball, track and fencing), Busbey was Fenn's first All-American, gaining national prominence by winning that honor as a swimmer in both 1948 and 1949 and failing by the tiniest margin to qualify for the U.S. Olympic team in 1950. He went on to serve as head coach of his alma mater (named Cleveland State University in 1964) for 30 years. During his coaching tenure, he was named Assistant Coach for the 1964 United States Olympic Team, served as chairman of the NCAA Swimming Committee and was responsible for bringing an NCAA Division II and four NCAA Division I Swimming Championships to Cleveland State between 1975 and 1982 -- a virtually unprecedented feat.

For his accomplishments, Busbey was honored with the 1982 National Collegiate & Scholastic Swimming Trophy, one of the sport's highest awards.

In 1966, Busbey succeeded Homer E. Woodling as Cleveland State's Director of Athletics. Over a span of 24 years in that position, he developed a flourishing program of 18 intercollegiate sports for men and women and became a prime force in the planning and building of CSU's athletic facilities -- Krenzler Field (hailed as one of the best college soccer stadiums in the country when it opened in 1985); the CSU Convocation Center (considered one of the premier arenas in college athletics); and the Physical Education Building, housing Woodling Gymnasium and the world-class Natatorium.

Unanimously voted a charter member of the Cleveland State Athletic Hall of Fame when it opened in 1975, Busbey became Associate Vice President for Athletic Affairs in 1990 and continued to serve his alma mater until his retirement in 1994.

For all its special features and the number of events it has hosted in its 29 years, The Robert F. Busbey Natatorium truly enjoys one of the most fascinating histories of any aquatic facility in the United States.

Robert F. Busbey Natatorium Dedicated Lanes

25-Yard Course

Lane 1 - Michael H. Davidson
Lane 2 - Dave Guinther
Lane 3 - Jim & Susan Smith
Lane 4 - Robert F. Busbey
Lane 5 - Chuch Kunsman
Lane 6 - James F. Hoffmaster
Lane 7 - Mike Slabe
Lane 8 - Lorry Wagner
Lane 9 - Thomas P. Meehan
Lane 10 - Mr. & Mrs. William Dorenkott

50-Meter Course

Lane 3 - John P. Wilson
Lane 4 - Sharon Knecht Beinker and Craig Beinker
Lane 5 - The Lamers Family
Lane 6 - Danferd C. Avis
Lane 7 - Mr. & Mrs. David Zavagno
Lane 8 - Dr. Walter B. Waetjen (President Emeritus)
Lane 9 - Dieter Kulicke

3-Meter Diving Board

Richard J. Karban

10-Meter Platform

Jeff Arnold