

"We're on our turf"

August 25, 2014 12:00 PM Johanna Gretschel
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Members of the Tulane University Marching Band, from left, drum major Lauren Stevens, featured twirler Erin Ketterman and drum major Liz King practice their moves during band camp which was held for two weeks before the start of the fall semester. (Photos by Cheryl Gerber)

The football team isn't the only Tulane University squad doing two-a-days lately. Members of the [Tulane University Marching Band](#) have endured two weeks of 13-hour practice sessions to prepare for Sept. 6 ? the date of the Green Wave's sold-out home opener versus Georgia Tech, which will also serve as the unveiling of Yulman Stadium.

Band camp consists of morning marching sessions, afternoon music rehearsal and evening run-throughs of the entire routine ? all in the shadow of the brand-new stadium.

“In practice the other day when we were about to start the run onto the field [right before the "Roll On" song],” said drum major Liz King, “we saw them putting up the letters on the stadium and we were like, "Oh they're coming up, they're coming up, it's official!"”

Band director Barry Spanier, a two-time director of Olympic ceremonies, was hired in 2004 to revitalize the program.

“We've worked over these past nine years to redevelop a tradition,” Spanier said. “[The stadium] is the next step. It will all be much more effective visually, acoustically.”

The stadium has boosted interest in joining the band's ranks, as 31 members of the 77-person program are first-year students.

Many believe that the entire Tulane student experience will change ? for the better.

“It means so much,” said King, a rising senior. “There's going to be so much noise on campus, there's no way there's going to be a freshman in the dorm wondering, "what am I going to do tonight?"”

Game day will now begin 90 minutes before kickoff, when the pregame tailgate parade launches on Newcomb Quad, complete with the color guard, dance team, baton twirlers and cheerleaders.

The theme for opening day is “Celebration,” featuring upbeat tunes from local brass bands.

“Our first show is all about New Orleans music,” Spanier said. “We're back, we're on campus, and we're on our turf.”

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