

Boston College Gridiron Club Gazette

Grid Club membership fun for one and all

By John Ingoldsby

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CHESTNUT HILL – As a lifelong college football fan who grew up in the shadow of Penn State’s Beaver Stadium, I have been seeking a way to satiate my appetite for big-time collegiate gridiron action since moving to New England years ago.

I finally took the first step last year when I bought a pair of Boston College season tickets as soon as the move to the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) became official. This was an easy decision since it reminded me of when I bought Patriots season tickets the day after Bill Parcells was hired as coach, and look how that turned out. The Eagles, much like the Pats 13 years ago, are clearly ready for prime time.

However, one huge difference between the two purchases was price. The BC season ticket for six home games was just \$210, or \$35 per game, for a total of \$420 for the pair. You simply cannot beat that price to watch a Top 25 Division 1A team play. It was also family entertainment extraordinaire, since I wanted my nine-year-old son to experience the pageantry I had the pleasure to watch as a 10-year-old seeing my first PSU game, which later led to my selling soda during games at Beaver Stadium in my teenage years.

My second, and equally significant, step was to join the Boston College Gridiron Club. I am not a BC graduate and have no “official” ties to BC, except for a sister-in-law and nephew who matriculated there.

Although both steps have proven to be fruitful, being a member of the Gridiron Club has elevated the overall college football experience significantly. Again, the price is right at just \$50 to join, and I have already gotten my money’s worth and more, even though I did not join until late October.

However, in this short time I have already attended four events and been welcomed with open arms by the dozens of fellow members I have met, particularly Club President Paul Criscione, Gazette Editor Jeff Muir, and Dave Sansevero of the BC Football Office. In fact, I have yet to have a single conversation with any member in which the subject of where I went to college has come up.

My first event was taking my son to the Club’s Family Friendly Tailgate beside the FanFest at the Flynn Recreation Complex before the evening North Carolina State game. It was warm inside, the discounted-price food was excellent, and he had a ball participating in all the children’s football-fantasy activities.

My second event a few days later was the annual Sportswriters Dinner at the Yawkey Center, which was right up my alley since I have been a full-time and free-lance sportswriter for many years. In addition to a fascinating and spirited panel discussion, I had the opportunity after the event to speak individually with each media panelist.

My third event was the 67th Annual Scanlan Award Dinner honoring the 2005 Eagles football team, which was held in December at the Sheraton Needham Hotel. The Sunday afternoon affair was filled with emotion by graduating senior award winners and full of friendly Eagles fans that I conversed with non-stop.

My most recent outing was the annual Recruiting Dinner on Feb. 1 at the Yawkey Center, packed with hundreds of Gridiron Club members who got to hear Coach Tom O'Brien's perspective on this year's successful class, combined with film of the incoming high school stars.

All this for \$50, and I have not even attended an away game (let alone a bowl game), where I could participate in the organization's signature Gridiron Club Nights on the Road. Still ahead are the Members-Only Spring Scrimmage in April and the Club's Golf Tournament in June.

As if that is not enough, I have won raffles at two events and received a pair of new high-quality BC shirts. All in all, a pretty good deal with fun for all ages, regardless of where you went to school.

(BC Gridiron Club member John Ingoldsby is president of Ingoldsby IR Sports, Inc. at www.ingoldsbyir.com.)