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Just what is the history of the relationship between the Packers and St. Norbert College?

Deirdre Gehant

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August 2009

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

Now August is here it will be preseason for football. Just what is the history of the relationship between the Packers and St. Norbert College? Is it true they hold their training camp on campus? Are the Green Knight cheerleaders also Packer cheerleaders? Is one of our priests also the priest to the Packers team? Any other interesting tidbits to share?

Deirdre Gehant, parent and Packer fan

Answer:

Deirdre,

Thank you kindly for your question! The legacy of this relationship is most interesting to many.

In the spring of 1957, the president of the Packers, Russ Bogda, and then head coach Lisle Blackbourn first approached St. Norbert College about headquartering the team's training camp on campus. At that time, the Packers practiced at UW-Stevens Point. In 1958, Coach Scooter McLean and his staff brought the players to Frank J. Sensenbrenner Residence Hall as their living quarters on campus, to various classrooms for training sessions, and to the dining facilities at the hall on the river bank that is now known as Burke Hall.

Over the years, various halls have been used by the team, but the string of successive summers at St. Norbert College has never been broken. Contractual agreements were completed with St. Norbert College by Dominic Olejniczak. Olejniczak



Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

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was the successor to Russ Bogda, who had retired due to illness. In 1959, newly appointed head coach Vincent Lombardi confirmed the summer camp location and formed a friendship with Fr. Dennis Burke, O.Praem., '26. Succeeding coaches and Packer presidents over the years have found the facilities much to their liking.

The Packers reside in Victor McCormick Hall during training camp. The organization provides its own air conditioners and beds, which the college stores for them when they are not in use. Our very own Fr. Jim Baraniak, O.Praem., '88, pastor of the college parish, is beginning his 11th year of association with the Green Bay Packers. He serves them at home and on the road, as the team's Roman Catholic chaplain. The college cheerleaders cheer for all home Packer Games under the direction of Cheryl Reed (Athletics). They have been cheering for the Green Bay Packers since 1997.

As you can see, the legacy is of long standing. Every year, I look forward to seeing the players and coaches back on campus!

Responses to "Ask the Abbot" questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, O.Praem., who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.

St. Norbert College

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