

Monon Bell Game

On one Saturday each November, DePauw University and Wabash College meet on the gridiron in one of college football's oldest and most colorful rivalries. The teams not only play for pride but also for possession of the 300-pound Monon (pronounced MOE-non) Bell; the trophy that goes to the winning team.

Since 1890, the teams have battled each other 115 times and the series is tied, 53-53-9, while DePauw holds a 37-34-6 lead in the 77 games played for possession of the Monon Bell.

The two schools have met each of the last 98 years dating back to 1911. Only during 1897-1899, inclusive, and in 1902 and 1910 have the two schools on the Monon Railroad Line (now CSX) failed to play one another. The three years in the 1890s during which games did not come about, the schools simply didn't schedule each other for unknown reasons. The teams didn't meet in 1910 due to the death of Wabash's star halfback Ralph Wilson. Wilson died from a concussion suffered in a game against St. Louis.

The actual bell, a gift of the Monon Railroad, entered the famed series in 1932. In a chapel pep session the day before the 1932 DePauw-Wabash game, the Monon Bell was presented by Russell Alexander, the DePauw publicity director, as the official DePauw-Wabash trophy for football. It was to be presented every year to the winner of the traditional battle. In case of a tie, it remained with the previous year's winner.

The idea of a trophy originated in a letter sent to Mr. Bill Fox, (then) sports editor of *The Indianapolis News*, from DePauw alumnus Orien Fifer of the class of 1925. The 1932 game was played on a field covered with ice and snow, the snowfall during the preceding few days being so heavy that it was necessary to clear the field with road scrapers. The game ended in a scoreless tie.

Since the schools are only 27 miles apart, the adversaries in the game are often brothers, cousins, high school classmates or good friends, adding to the rivalry's intensity. The bell has been stolen at least eight times from its temporary owners, but the most famous "thefts" may have occurred in the mid-1960s.

In 1965, a Wabash student appeared on the DePauw campus posing as a Mexican dignitary and interested in developing an exchange program with DePauw. While meeting with the University presi-



dent he asked to see the bell. After learning of its whereabouts, the student returned with friends later and stole it.

DePauw got the bell back in time for the game which the Tigers won 9-7. DePauw students, hoping to keep the bell safely under wraps, stole it from their own school the week after the game and secretly buried it for 11 months in the north end zone of Blackstock Stadium. Only a handful of DePauw students knew of its location, but an unexpected problem arose prior to the big game. The ground froze that week in Greencastle, and the students were barely able to recover it in time for the Wabash team to claim it as the game ended in near darkness.

The Monon Bell game is more than just a game. The week preceding the annual contest has included shared activities between the two schools, such as concerts, debates, an intramural all-star football game, an alumni football game the morning of the varsity contest and other events.

In 1985, Jim Ibbotson, a member of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and a 1969 DePauw graduate, arranged and recorded "The Ballad of the Monon Bell" which was written by 1968 DePauw graduate

and football player Darel Lindquist. Nancy Ford Charles '57 wrote the original music for the ballad and a video was also produced.

The media have long understood the special nature of this famous small college battle. In addition to *Sports Illustrated's* extensive coverage in 1973, CBS-TV's Charles Kuralt did a feature on the game during his "Sunday Morning" show in 1979 and the *Christian Science Monitor* praised it in a 1981 feature. The November 13, 1987, edition of *USA Today* highlighted the rivalry in a feature story in its sports section and in 1988 the CBS Radio Network aired a feature on the rivalry throughout the nation.

The 1998 contest was covered as a feature in the *Wall Street Journal* and the 1999 contest was featured on Fox Sports Net's weekly show, *The Slant*. The centennial game also was featured in the November 22, 1993, issue of *Sports Illustrated*.

The game has been televised regionally on ABC-TV in 1977 and nationally on ESPN2 in 1994 and HDNet in 2003, 2006, 2007 and 2008. The 2004 and 2005 games were the first on DirecTV. This year's contest will again be carried by HDNet.

College Football's Most Played Active Rivalries

Games	Opponents	Record	First Game
144	Lafayette-Lehigh	76-63-5	1884
131	Yale -Princeton	72-49-10	1873
125	Yale-Harvard	65-52-8	1875
123	Williams-Amherst	70-48-5	1884
122	Albion-Kalamazoo	84-34-4	1896
120	Bowdoin-Colby	65-46-9	1892
120	Monmouth (Ill.)-Knox	60-50-10	1888
118	William & Mary-Richmond	59-54-5	1898
118	Coe-Cornell College	62-52-4	1891
118	Minnesota-Wisconsin	59-51-8	1890
117	Kansas-Missouri	55-53-9	1891
115	DePauw-Wabash	53-53-9	1890
115	Texas-Texas A&M	74-36-5	1894
115	Pennsylvania-Cornell	66-44-5	1893
115	Nebraska-Kansas	89-23-3	1892

Source: NCAA Record Book

Televised Monon Bell Games

1977	ABC-TV (regional)
1984	SPN (Satellite Program Network)
1985	SPN (Satellit Program Network)
1986	SPN (Satellite Program Network)
1987	Tempo TV
1988	Tempo TV
1991	Satellite feed carried regionally
1993	Satellite feed carried regionally
1994	ESPN2
1996	WNDY (Indianapolis)
1997	WNDY (Indianapolis)
1998	WFYI (Indianapolis)
1999	WFYI (Indianapolis)
2000	WHMB (Indianapolis)
2001	WFYI (Indianapolis)
2002	WFYI (Indianapolis)
2003	HDNet
2004	WHMB (Indianapolis) and DirecTV
2005	WHMB (Indianapolis) and DirecTV
2006	HDNet
2007	HDNet
2008	HDNet

Monon Bell Game

DePauw-Wabash Series

Series tied 53-53-9; DePauw leads Monon Bell games 37-34-6

1890	DePauw	34-5	1952	Wabash	47-0
1891	DePauw	1-0(For)	1953	Wabash	41-0
1892	DePauw	42-4	1954	Wabash	28-0
1893	DePauw	48-34	1955	DePauw	23-20
1894	Wabash	16-4	1956	Tie	7-7
1895	Wabash	6-0	1957	DePauw	37-6
1896	DePauw	20-0	1958	DePauw	24-8
1900	DePauw	26-11	1959	Tie	6-6
	Wabash	6-0	1960	DePauw	14-13
1901	DePauw	31-2	1961	DePauw	20-7
	DePauw	35-5	1962	DePauw	13-10
1903	Wabash	10-0	1963	DePauw	17-0
1905	Wabash	52-0	1964	DePauw	22-21
1906	Wabash	7-0	1965	Wabash	16-6
1907	Wabash	11-4	1966	DePauw	9-7
1908	Wabash	12-0	1967	Wabash	7-0
1909	Tie	0-0	1968	DePauw	18-7
1911	Tie	0-0	1969	DePauw	17-7
1912	Wabash	62-0	1970	DePauw	14-13
1913	DePauw	7-0	1971	Wabash	16-7
1914	DePauw	3-0	1972	Wabash	20-14
1915	Wabash	34-0	1973	DePauw	28-21
1916	Wabash	26-13	1974	DePauw	15-12
1917	DePauw	7-0	1975	DePauw	14-8
1918	DePauw	28-6	1976	Wabash	14-7
1919	Tie	0-0	1977	Wabash	30-6
1920	DePauw	3-0	1978	Wabash	11-3
1921	Wabash	22-0	1979	Wabash	16-13
1922	Wabash	30-0	1980	Tie	22-22
1923	Wabash	17-0	1981	DePauw	21-14
1924	Wabash	21-0	1982	Wabash	31-6
1925	Wabash	22-0	1983	DePauw	16-10
1926	Wabash	6-0	1984	Wabash	41-26
1927	Wabash	13-7	1985	Wabash	28-8
1928	DePauw	20-12	1986	Wabash	24-23
1929	Wabash	8-7	1987	DePauw	33-11
1930	DePauw	7-6	1988	DePauw	24-14
1931	DePauw	13-7	1989	DePauw	41-14
1932	Tie	0-0	1990	DePauw	20-13
1933	DePauw	14-0	1991	Wabash	23-18
1934	Wabash	7-6	1992	Tie	17-17
1935	Tie	0-0	1993	Wabash	40-26
1936	Wabash	19-0	1994	Wabash	28-24
1937	DePauw	32-0	1995	Wabash	7-2
1938	DePauw	7-0	1996	DePauw	31-13
1939	DePauw	7-0	1997	DePauw	14-7
1940	Wabash	17-13	1998	DePauw	42-7
1941	Wabash	27-19	1999	DePauw	21-7
1942	DePauw	6-3	2000	DePauw	27-17
1943	DePauw	33-0	2001	Wabash	27-21
1944	Wabash	14-7	2002	Wabash	35-7
1945	DePauw	13-7	2003	Wabash	37-20
1946	Wabash	26-0	2004	DePauw	14-7
1947	Wabash	27-7	2005	Wabash	17-14
1948	DePauw	8-0	2006	Wabash	23-20
1949	Wabash	25-21	2007	DePauw	24-21
1950	Wabash	34-20	2008	DePauw	36-14
1951	Wabash	41-12			

The Ballad of the Monon Bell

Long before the cannonball travelled through her towns
The state of Indiana owned the jewel of the crown
The train, they called the Monon, the stories they still tell
The Cavemen and the Tigers playing for her bell

It rode like a masthead on engine ninety-nine
Crawfordsville to Greencastle, then further down the line
The Cavemen came from Wabash, the Tigers from DePauw
Since eighteen-ninety they have played the last game ev'ry fall

Many years they played for pride, oh the stories they could tell
Then in thirty-two the Monon train gave up her precious bell
They said, "Here take this symbol of smoke and fire and grit
And give it to the winner, a symbol not to quit."

Ring the Bell for Wabash, ring for old DePauw
Ring the bell for victory in the last game ev'ry fall
Ring the Bell for Wabash, ring for old DePauw
Ring the bell for victory in the last game ev'ry fall

Suddenly the boys of autumn had fire in their eyes
Blood and spit, but never quit, fighting for the prize
The medal to the victor, the symbol to the school
Wabash and DePauw became a yearly duel

Ring the Bell for Wabash, ring for old DePauw
Ring the bell for victory in the last game ev'ry fall
Ring the Bell for Wabash, ring for old DePauw
Ring the bell for victory in the last game ev'ry fall

Now history has recorded the players and their games
And to this day they still play for the Bell in Monon's name
Those who've gone before return each November day
Swapping stories and the legends for those who did not play

Ring the Bell for Wabash, ring for old DePauw
Ring the bell for victory in the last game ev'ry fall
Ring the Bell for Wabash, ring for old DePauw
Ring the bell for victory in the last game ev'ry fall

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The Making of "The Ballad"

The Ballad of the Monon Bell was introduced the week of the 1985 game at DePauw. The music is by Nancy Ford Charles, DePauw '57 and the lyrics are by Darel Lindquist, DePauw '68. The concept of the ballad originated with Patrick Aikman, DePauw '57. The ballad has been recorded by Jim Ibbotson, DePauw '69.

Monon Bell Facts and Series Highlights

Where it Stands in History

The DePauw-Wabash rivalry is the sixth most-played Division III rivalry and equals the 12th-most played in college football. The rivalry was touted for years as the oldest continuous rivalry west of the Alleghenies, but in fact it is not. The oldest active rivalry west of the eastern U.S. mountain range is the Albion-Olivet series which began in 1884. The longest uninterrupted series west of the Alleghenies is between Kansas and Nebraska which have met 102 straight years since 1906.

Weight of the Bell

Despite some reports that the Monon Bell weighs anywhere from 200 to 400 pounds, the actual weight of the trophy is approximately 300 pounds.

Throw out the Records?

It's often said that the records of the teams entering the game can be disregarded in trying to predict a winner. Since the Monon Bell came into the series in 1932, DePauw and Wabash have squared off in each team's final game 73 times. The team with the better winning percentage entering the game has a 41-26-6 record for a .603 winning percentage.

Monon Bell Record

Since the Monon Bell was introduced into the series in 1932, DePauw leads the rivalry 37-34-6.

Home Field Advantage?

In the 109 games played on either of the two campuses, home teams have posted a 52-48-8 record.

Series Dominance

Even though the overall series is tied, there have been stretches where one team has dominated the other. In the early 1920s Wabash won seven straight, including the first six via shutout. The Little Giants later won six straight from 1949 to 1954. The Tigers then won eight of the next 10, but kept possession of the Bell for 10 years because of two ties. In fact from 1955 to 1975, Wabash only beat the Tigers four times. The Tigers won only twice from 1976 to 1986, but then won four straight from 1987-90. Wabash held the bell from 1991-95, but DePauw won the next five games. Wabash won three straight prior to DePauw's victory in 2004. Possession of the bell changed hands for the second straight year after Wabash's 2005 victory marking the first time that occurred since 1983.

Tie Games?

The longstanding rule has been that the team in possession of the bell entering the game retains possession in the case of the tie. Early rules indicated that the schools shared possession (each keeping it six months) following a tie. The first Monon Bell game in 1932 ended in a 0-0 tie, but since neither team had possession, it remained in hiding for the entire year. The introduction of overtime to NCAA football in 1996 assured possession will go to the winning team.

Fantastic Finishes

The DePauw-Wabash rivalry has had its share of great games many of which weren't decided until the closing moments. In fact the last four have been decided by seven or fewer points and 22 of the last 36 games have been decided by eight or fewer points. Included here are some of those great finishes:

2007: Jordan Havercamp's 47-yard field goal as time expired lifted DePauw to a 24-21 win at Blackstock Stadium. The kick was his first field goal attempt as a Tiger and capped a nine-play, 67-yard drive in the final 1:23. The play was selected as one of ESPN Sportscenter's Top 10 Plays of the Day.

2001: After DePauw evened the score at 21-21 with 14 seconds left, Wabash won on the game's last play as Jake Knott's pass went off of Ryan Short and into Kurt Casper's hands. The play, which covered 52 yards, gave Wabash a 27-21 win.

2000: DePauw trailed 17-9 with just under seven minutes to play, but scored three touchdowns in a span of 5:48 to take a 27-17 victory.

1997: DePauw built a 14-0 lead in the fourth, but Wabash scored to cut the lead in half and was in possession of the ball as time expired with DePauw winning 14-7.

1994: The Tigers trailed 28-6 at halftime, but battled back to within four before falling, 28-24. The game, televised nationally by ESPN2, opened with each team returning a kickoff for a touchdown.

1992: Wabash's Alex Costa kicked a 25-yard field goal with nine seconds left to tie the score at 17.

1986: The Tigers ran out of timeouts and couldn't get the field goal unit on the field in time and lost 24-23.

1983: DePauw freshman Eric Rawe batted down a Wabash pass in the end zone as time expired to preserve a 16-10 win.

1974: DePauw won 15-12 after a Wabash receiver dropped a pass in the end zone with 18 seconds left.

1973: DePauw won 28-21 after intercepting a Wabash pass on the DePauw 19 with 3:40 left.

1970: DePauw won 14-13 as a Wabash pass is intercepted on the DePauw 20 as time expired.

1966: DePauw's Tim Feemster kicked a 22-yard field goal with 40 seconds for a 9-7 DePauw win.

1964: Wabash failed on a two-point conversion in the final minutes and DePauw won, 22-21.

1960: DePauw's John Rubush scored on a two-point conversion play with 28 seconds left to give the Tigers a 14-13 win.

1955: Fred Williams booted an 18-yard field goal as time expired to give the Tigers a 23-20 win.

1940: Wabash right halfback Gray plunged in from the four-yard line on fourth down in the last four minutes of the game to give the Little Giants a 17-13 win.

1927: Wabash scored two touchdowns in the fourth quarter for a 13-7 win.

1926: Wabash fullback Stew Meyers scored on a six-yard run with two minutes left following a DePauw fumble to give Wabash a 6-0 win.

1920: DePauw quarterback "Galloping" Galloway booted a 52-yard drop kick with three minutes left to give DePauw a 3-0 win at Indianapolis' Washington Park.

1914: During a snowstorm, DePauw fullback Rowan drop-kicks a goal in the last quarter for the 3-0 win.

Monon Bell Thefts

1998: Wabash students stayed overnight in the Lilly Center on Halloween and took the bell from the fieldhouse where it was perched high above the floor. The bell was returned to DePauw two days before the game. DePauw won the game on the field 42-7 and knocked the previously unbeaten Little Giants from postseason play.

1988: In late January, less than a week after the Tigers' number-one ranked basketball team crushed Wabash at the Lilly Center, the bell was stolen from the building by Wabash students. Apparently the students entered the building before it closed and stayed, hidden, until everyone was gone. The bell wasn't returned until just prior to the 1988 game.

1979: DePauw students stole the bell (it was reported missing on August 28) from Wabash and Wabash men began making trips to DePauw to "borrow" composites and other valuable items from DePauw fraternity houses. The schools traded the stolen items in an isolated area at Parkersburg between Greencastle and Crawfordsville.

1978: The bell disappeared from Wabash's gymnasium just two weeks before the game. Apparently it was stolen by members of Sigma Chi. Reportedly 300 Wabash men invaded the DePauw campus in an effort to recover it. In all, 11 students were arrested in the confrontation.

1966: DePauw students, hoping to keep the bell safely under wraps, stole it from their own school the week after the 1966 win and buried it for 11 months in the north end zone of Blackstock Stadium. The Bell was unearthed during the third quarter in a rainstorm, but made only one trip around the stadium before it was taken to Crawfordsville by its new owners.

1965: A Wabash student appeared on the DePauw campus posing as a Mexican dignitary and interested in developing an exchange program with DePauw. While meeting with the University president he asked to see the Bell. After learning of its whereabouts, the student returned with friends later and stole it.

1959: A Wabash student posed as a prospective student who was also interested in writing a story for the Crawfordsville High School newspaper. After 'casing' Bowman Gymnasium he returned later with friends and stole the Bell.

1941: Wabash authorities announced that the Bell was stolen from the Crawfordsville campus. An *Indianapolis News* account of the announcement stated: "The general consensus is that efforts might be made to sell the bell because of its scrap iron value." The Bell was later found in front of Jordan Hall on the Butler University campus.