



## **INITIAL NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Lightning strike during football game results in three student deaths**

AUBURN, Ala.- Three students have died as the result of a lightning strike and a panic ensued crowd at the Auburn football game on Saturday.

At 2 p.m. a lightening flash and thunder clap prompted officials to immediately delay the football game. Emergency procedures were followed. The teams were sent to their locker rooms, and fans were instructed to evacuate their seats and seek shelter underneath the upper deck and bleachers. Buildings nearby were also unlocked to provide additional shelter.

Following the public safety announcement, the 12,000 students in the student section stayed put and proceeded to take on a party atmosphere. Within 15 minutes, a lightning bolt hit the student section resulting in panicked students running for shelter. One student died from the lightening strike, and two students were trampled to death in the panic.

“The loss of these three students is a devastation to the Auburn Family. Our thoughts and prayers, and deepest condolences, are with their families at this time,” said President Gouge.

The game has been suspended indefinitely, as our primary focus is on mourning the loss of the three students.

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

Auburn University is a designated land-grant institution in the state of Alabama. A land-grant university is an institution that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Act of 1862 and 1890. The Morrill Act was designed for these institutions to teach agriculture, military tactics and the mechanical arts, thus making Auburn the one of the top agriculture schools in the nation. Auburn is ranked as the top university in Alabama, when comparing both public and private institutions.

Auburn sits on more than 1,840 acres and is home to more than 27,000 students. Founded in 1856, Auburn University began as East Alabama Male College. As a comprehensive university, Auburn is devoted to offering high-quality undergraduate, graduate and professional education to its scholars. The university houses 13 schools and colleges. Auburn will provide the highest priority for resource allotment for the future growth of those areas that represent the traditional strengths, standards, reputation and uniqueness of the university and proceed to efficiently respond to the needs of students and other constituents.

The Auburn Athletic Department's core traditions are passion and spirit. These are the key attributes of the Auburn Family, whether the Tigers are competing across the nation or within their own conference. The Auburn Tigers participate in the most competitive level of intercollegiate athletics as a charter member of the Southeastern Conference. With more than 500 student athletes, Auburn is home to 15 varsity teams. Among the 15 varsity teams, Auburn has won 20 National Championships. The Athletics Department, in maintaining the mission of the institution, will seek to comply by regulations, to control its financial affairs in a responsible manner, to teach its student-athletes and to win championships.



## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Kaelin Jackson, Head of University Public Safety and Security**

Kaelin Jackson is head of the university public safety and security, she is responsible for the protection and security of all Auburn University students, faculty and visitors. She manages and administers a comprehensive campus security/emergency program for Auburn University.

Jackson has an extensive background working with law enforcement and public safety. Over the past 10 years, she has worked as police chief where she was responsible for policy development, control, supervision and program implementation.

### **Monique Willmer, Director of Athletics**

Monique Willmer serves as the director of athletics for Auburn University. In this capacity she is responsible for ensuring the university complies with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and Southeastern Conference (SEC) regulations. She coordinates security and safety with Division of Public Safety and Crowd Management Services.

Prior to working for Auburn University, Willmer worked as the assistant director of athletics for the University of Georgia. It was her job to supervise the coordination of athletic events. She managed 19 different sports teams and each of their events.

### **Melissa Parker, City of Auburn Fire Chief**

Melissa Parker is the City of Auburn Fire Chief and is responsible for administering duties to firefighters performing rescue and medical response services. She ensures that firefighters are following established policies and procedures.

Parker has accumulated years of education, training and experience working as a firefighter for the City of Auburn for 12 years. She earned her bachelor's degree in fire service management at Auburn University, and continued her education through the US National Fire Academy.

**Lindsey Engles,  
Public Information Officer**

Lindsey Engles serves as Auburn University's public information officer. She develops and implements the strategic communications plan for the Athletic Department. She is responsible for managing and overseeing crisis communication efforts for the department. Engles is the primary liaison between the public and the university and is responsible for relaying the news to the media and public.

Engles worked as a public relations practitioner for Edelman, an international public relations firm. At Edelman, Engles' primary focus was on crisis management, she developed emergency plans in the public and private sectors. She released 245 crisis news releases during that time.



## QUOTES

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Chance Corbett

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“Tragically, there were three deaths in the Jordan-Hare Stadium on Saturday night resulting from severe weather and the panic that surrounded it. We send our condolences and love to all of those affected and promise to amend our emergency protocols to ensure that nothing like this ever happens again.”

City of Auburn Fire Chief

Chief John Lankford

334- 501-3110

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“While the Auburn University emergency plan was well-thought the urgency didn’t translate to fans. Unfortunately, this resulted in the deaths of three students. Moving forward, the key to keeping fans safe in the stadium will rely on strictly enforcing emergency protocol.”

University President

Jay Gogue

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“We lost three members of the Auburn family last night. Our hearts go out to the friends and families of the students who perished in Jordan-Hare Stadium. Please don’t hesitate to take advantage of our free counseling services if you find yourself in need.”

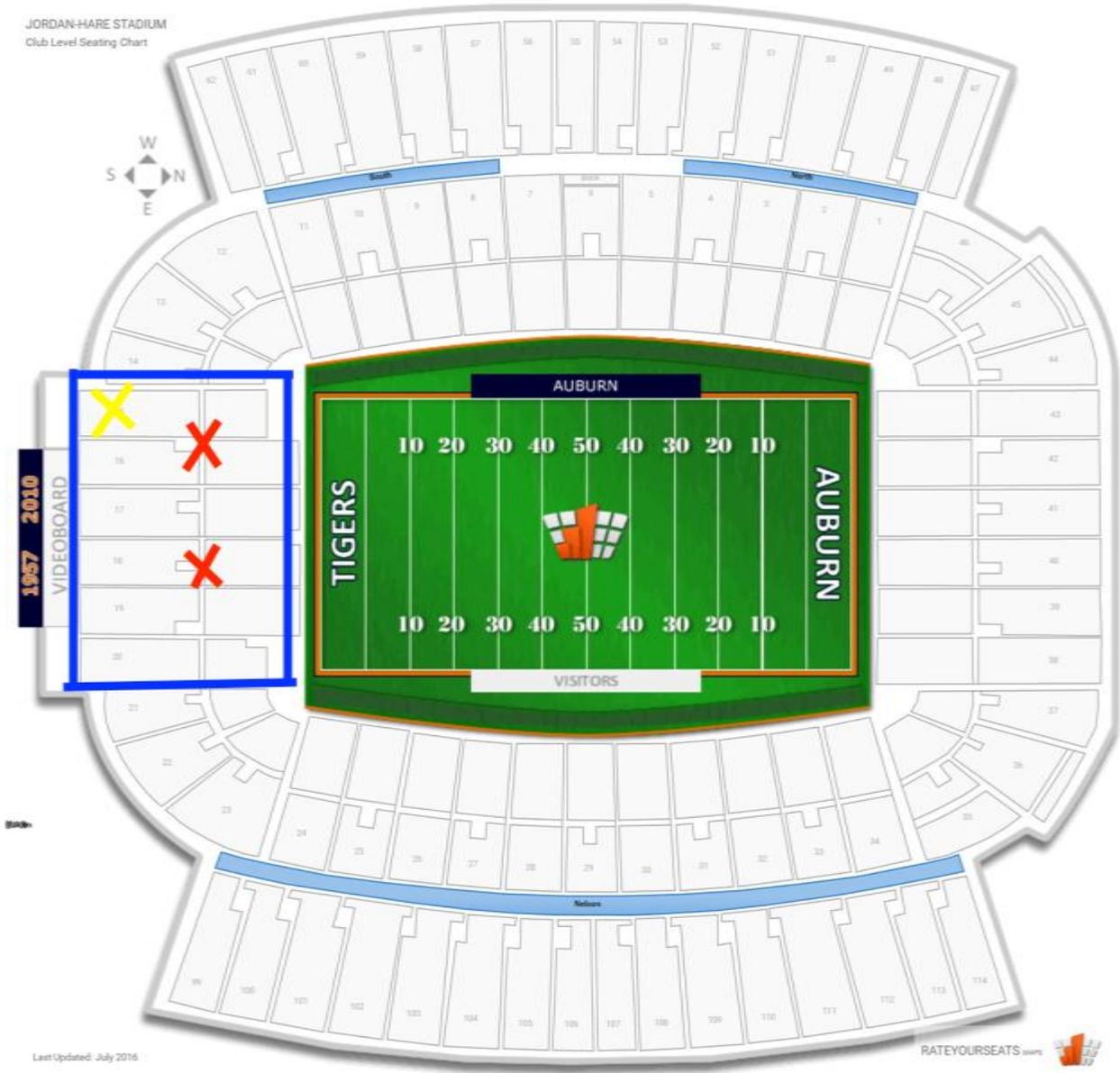
# AUBURN STADIUM DIAGRAM



- LEGEND**
- Gates
  - Express Gates
  - Medical Bag Entry
  - Water Fountain
  - ATM
  - Charging Station
  - Guest Services
  - Tiger Babies
  - First Aid
  - Heisman Statues
  - Elevators
  - Student Section  
GOLF TO NOW STUDENTS

MAP INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Visit [AUBGAMEDAY.COM](http://AUBGAMEDAY.COM) for updates to this map and other game day information.

JORDAN-HARE STADIUM  
Club Level Seating Chart



-  = Student section where students stayed in the stadium during the storm
-  = Where lightning struck
-  = Where students were trampled trying to exit



**Detailed description of organization's facilities:**

Jordan-Hare seats 87,451 fans. 12,000 of those fans are students.

Students may enter the stadium through Gates 6, 7, & 8.

There are 24 total gates

In weather emergencies, players go into locker rooms and fans are to go underneath the upper deck and bleacher area. Nearby buildings are to be unlocked to provide additional shelter.