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After the Crowd Clears: The Crew That Resets David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium

Piles of trash left behind in the student section of David Booth Memorial Stadium after Kansas' home opener against Fresno State University on Aug. 23, 2025.

David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium is the lifeblood of the University of Kansas, a place that holds the passion and spirit of over 40,000 fans who bleed crimson and blue. But once the roar of the crowd fades and the last fan heads home, who takes on the massive task of cleaning up the stadium?

Keeping the decade-old venue in prime condition is a critical undertaking, and preserving the stadium's cleanliness is a top priority, which is why KU partnered with Oak View Group, a venue development and management company.

KU announced its partnership with Oak View Group in 2024, and the company serves as the stadium operator for the Gateway District and oversees the day-to-day operations of the football stadium. Brian Puza, assistant general manager at OVG, is responsible for restoring the stadium to pristine condition once the final whistle blows.

"We oversee all maintenance, operations, event setups, event teardowns, security and housekeeping for the stadium, so every time somebody walks into the stadium, I'm treating it like it's the first time they're setting foot in the venue," Puza said. "I want to make sure it's as clean and pristine as the day it was handed over to us."

Cleaning the stadium is not a one-man job, and Puza has around 120 individuals who assist in tidying up after thousands of Jayhawk fans.

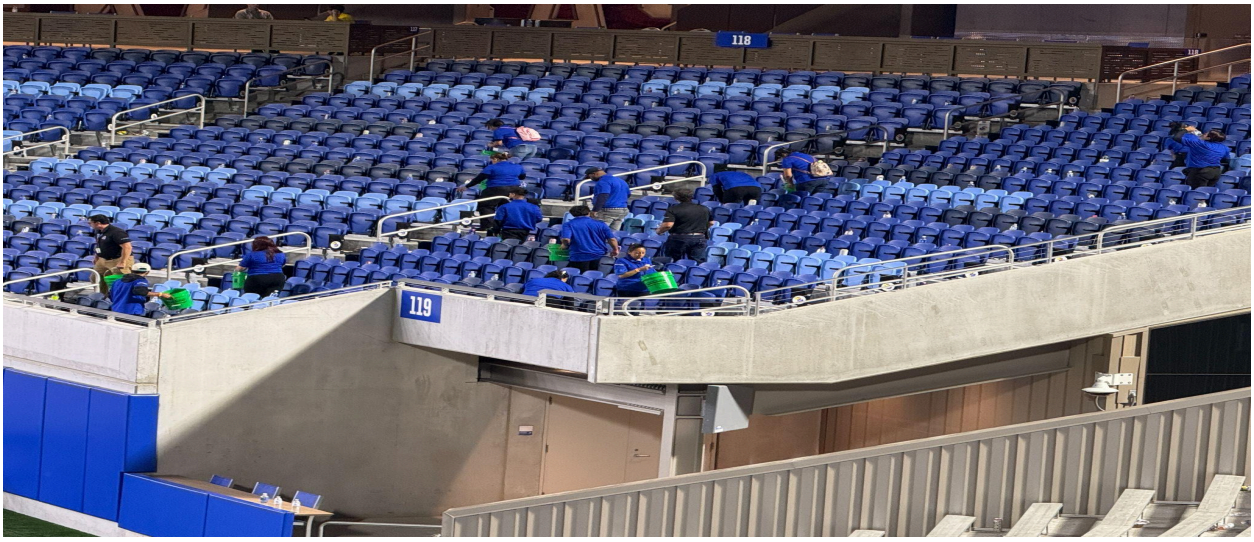
The cleaning process begins 90 minutes after the final snap has been played, allowing time for all the fans to clear out of the seats and bleachers. Then the work begins.

Forty to 50 members of the cleanup crew are responsible for clearing up the trash left in the general admission seating area, as well as the bleachers in the student section.

Gabriel Davis, a member of the cleanup crew, says that the process runs smoothly, and the team rarely encounters any obstacles.

“The only thing that’s not fun to clean up is puke,” Davis said. “I usually only find it in the student section, though.”

The cleanup begins with a process known as a “wet pick,” during which crew members move through the stadium, collecting half-full beer bottles, soda cans and plastic cups, and emptying any remaining liquid into buckets.



Members of the OVG cleaning crew begin the “wet pick” process in the general admission section of Memorial Stadium after a game against Wagner on Aug. 29, 2025.

Once the buckets reach their limit, crew members dispose of the collected liquids and leave the now-empty bottles, cans or cups in the seat cupholders to be thrown away during the next step of the cleaning process.

After the wet pick is complete, the cleanup crew begins to collect any large pieces of trash, such as popcorn buckets, promotional materials and food containers, and discard them in trash bags.

When the seats and bleachers are cleared of half-full liquid containers and large debris, crew members snake through the rows with leaf blowers, pushing smaller trash — like peanut shells and popcorn — into piles that are then swept up and bagged.

The filled trash bags are hauled to dumpsters or the stadium’s trash compactor, then collected the next morning by the City of Lawrence. Puza receives an invoice for the service, and the OVG crew disposes of more than four tons of trash after each game.

While cleaning the seating areas is a major part of the process, OVG also gives equal attention to other parts of the stadium that require thorough care.

The remaining 60 to 70 crew members focus on cleaning suites, bathrooms, the concourse and spaces such as the media room.

“The rest of the crew is going around and cleaning individual rooms, vacuuming, doing carpet extraction, pulling trash bags down to the dumpsters or trash compactors and mopping,” Puza said.

While OVG performs a significant amount of the cleaning, they do hire outside help to assist them in their endeavor.

“We contract our housekeeping services through Pritchard Sports and Entertainment,” Puza said. “They’re an industry leader and partnered with us to help us with our services.”

Pritchard Sports and Entertainment specializes in providing cleaning services for sports and entertainment venues, keeping venues spotless for athletes and spectators.

Half-full soda bottles and empty popcorn boxes discarded in the bleachers after Kansas’ opening game against Fresno State on Aug. 23, 2025.

With the combined forces of OVG and Pritchard Sports and Entertainment, the cleaning process takes an average of six to 10 hours, swiftly creating a welcoming, enjoyable environment for the next guests.

“This is a big stadium, and coordinating members to get everything cleaned is a task of its own,” Davis said. “It can be tiring walking around on the stadium’s prestressed concrete for hours, but there’s nothing too challenging about this job.

Cleaning Memorial Stadium requires significant resources and manpower outside the stadium, just as much as inside.

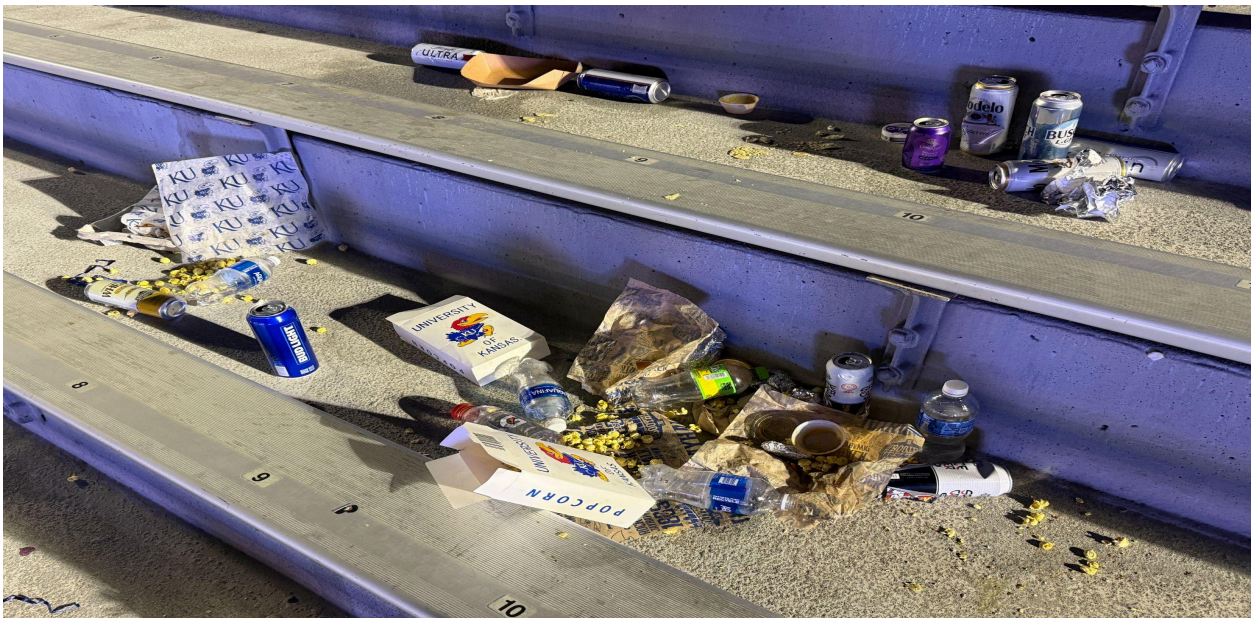
Tad Dunn, KU assistant athletic director of facilities, is in charge of cleaning up after tailgaters and any spectators who leave trash on the hill facing the stadium.

“We have a group that comes in and goes through the tailgate lots and picks up trash, and also on the hill,” Dunn said. “It’s outside the stadium, so therefore, it’s outside the purview of Oak View Group, and we still coordinate that.”

Until 2023, the upkeep of the stadium was managed by Dunn and KU Athletics. Before OVG was contracted, the post-game clean-up was managed in an entirely different way.

“Before OVG, we relied heavily on students and not-for-profit organizations to come in and do the post-game clean,” Dunn said. “They’d pick up the heavy bulk of trash and do the major spills, and then our staff would come in and fine-tune everything.”

Common organizations that lent their services to clean the stadium included sororities and fraternities, KU Ultimate Frisbee and Jayhawk Motorsports. Clubs and organizations agreed to clean the stadium in exchange for a fee, which usually went toward fundraising or funding for their group.



An array of trash scattered in the top rows of the student section after a game against West Virginia on Sept. 20, 2025.

Dunn also used the assistance of outside services by hiring Jani-King to help clean the other spaces in the stadium. Jani-King is recognized as one of the largest commercial cleaning companies worldwide.

“During the week after the game, we had four Jani-King individuals that went through and fine-tuned the concourses, the restrooms, the concessions and all the spaces that weren’t touching seats,” Dunn said.

Because clubs and organizations weren’t required to clean other parts of the stadium, it took them around 5 to 6 hours on average to completely clean all seating areas from top to bottom.

Dunn said one of the biggest challenges of having groups handle cleanup was finding people motivated enough to see the job through.

“It’s pretty straightforward, you see trash and you pick it up, but some of the downfalls of groups are that they don’t understand the undertaking it entails when cleaning up after fans,” Dunn said. “When some groups first walk in, they feel like the trash never ends.”

While the task can be daunting, the crew members of OVG and Pritchard Sports and Entertainment don’t shy away from the gargantuan effort it takes to transform the stadium into game day shape.

Dunn, Puza and their teams take extreme pride in the work they do. Their combined efforts improve the health and safety of guests, prolong facility life and enhance the fan experience.

“I’m proud that we can make the stadium game-ready and recruit-ready every day,” Dunn said. “Watching our teams perform, strive for excellence and succeed is great, and I take a lot of satisfaction knowing I played a small part in that.”

The spotlight may shine brightest on the field, but the stadium’s upkeep depends on the dedication of those working behind the scenes. Their work turns chaos back into order, guaranteeing the stadium is ready once more for the roar of the Jayhawk faithful.