2026 Football Home Opener

Campus Update

September 16, 2026

The Ave Maria University campus was alive with Gyrene spirit on Saturday evening as football fans gathered for the 2026 home opener against Cumberland. Though the team fell short on the scoreboard with a 31-10 loss, the day was marked by tremendous energy and community pride. The revitalized gameday experience featured an expanded student section relocated near the Booster tent, creating an exciting new hub of enthusiasm right in the heart of the action. From enhanced food and beverage options to the spirited cheers of our Gyrene cheerleaders, every element of the day reflected a renewed commitment to celebrating our athletic program and fostering school spirit.

The Booster Club surpassed all expectations, bringing together alumni, donors, faculty, and staff in unprecedented numbers to support our Gyrenes. The camaraderie and shared purpose among this diverse group demonstrated the deep connection that binds our AMU family together. Whether you were cheering from the stands, enjoying the expanded concessions, or catching up with fellow supporters, Saturday's atmosphere showcased the very best of our community.

On the field, the Gyrenes showed resilience and determination in the second half, with several bright spots offering hope for the season ahead. Quarterback Joe Thole connected with Mitchel Soltau for a stunning 78-yard touchdown reception to cap an impressive third-quarter drive, while the defense recorded five tackles for loss. As Ave Maria looks ahead to next week's road matchup at Fort Lauderdale, there is optimism that the momentum and spirit built on Saturday will carry forward.

We are looking forward to sharing the Booster Tent with our alumni at Homecoming Oct. 24th and encourage all alumni to stay connected with Gyrene football and our entire athletic program. Mark your calendars for upcoming home games, join us in the stands, and be part of the growing community celebrating Ave Maria's athletic achievements. Go Gyrenes!

Read online for photos and videos:

https://alumni.avemaria.edu/news/2026-football-home-opener