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Bob Cavanaugh put out a stylish spread for Eagles fans before the first home game at Lincoln Financial Field. With fare like the seafood and pasta dishes, plus the bursting-its-bun sausage sandwich, top, his reputation isn't likely to be thrown for a loss.

DAVID SWANSON / Inquirer Staff Photographer



Tailgaters touch down

The game plan is food and camaraderie when the football faithful turn stadium lots into vast outdoor kitchens.

By Howard Shapiro

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The aroma of sizzling meat swirled from his six-burner grill as Bob Cavanaugh flipped steaks of filet mignon on a perfect late-summer Sunday. Then he checked the row of sausages browning on the grate, as he prepared lunch for 175.

He was not at a restaurant kitchen, or a catering hall, but among a green sea of Eagles jerseys in the parking lot of Lincoln Financial Field before the first home game. The tailgating began before dawn. By noon, the whole parking lot was eating.

While there's no real living to be made at a tailgate — Cavanaugh's guests pitch in to cover costs — there's definitely a reputation to be maintained.

And Cavanaugh, who had the biggest crowd in sight, was upholding his. He ran through the menu: "Penne pasta with shrimp in a blush creme sauce. Filet mi-

See **TAILGATING** on F2



At Bob Cavanaugh's well-equipped mini-bus, Nicole Brabazon and her mother, Irene Carman, draw draft beer. Cavanaugh has twice won a national award for his tailgating accomplishments; most other cooks in the lots around Lincoln Financial Field are less ambitious.

When tailgaters touch down

TAILGATING from F1
grain sandwich. Hot sausage
with peppers and onion. Bone-
less chicken breast. A seafood
trio of clams, mussels and
shrimp is wise — oh, and don't
forget the pizza. It, like the
roll, Cavanaugh was using,
came from Carla, Cavanaugh's
favorite bakery, in South Phila-
delphia.

Tailgating — from Bob Ca-
avanaugh's high style to the dis-
tinguished — is never in or
out of season these days; it's a
constant, even in winter, in pack-
ing lots at pro and college
sports, community events or,
lately, before concerts.

Even so, the powerful triumph
rate of food, beer and company
built loosely around an event, is
never more compelling than at
this time of year.

Tailgaters live for
football. Historically,
their passion for
outdoor partying
grew around college
football and ex-
tended as the Na-
tional Football
League became an
American rite of autumn.

The partying has become
more elaborate over the last sev-
eral years. Although hamburg-
ers and hot dogs rule on the
grills at the 100,000 seats, you can
also find pulled pork sandw-
iches, barbecued chicken breasts
and wings, elaborate shish ke-
babs, chicken satays and teriyaki
steaks, along with all manner of
dipping sauces and salads.

Some people trace tailgating
to Yale home games in the early
1900s, and others to the first
college football game, between
Rangers and Princeton in 1869,
when fans grilled burgers be-
hind horses that pulled their
carriages. Only the year before,
tailgate came into English as a de-
scribable rear vehicle wall — for
loading, really, not grazing,
boasting and schwinging.

In The Tailgater's Cookbook
(Broadway Books, \$21), author

David Joachim writes that sev-
eral years before college ball, in
1861, folks laid up with food in
Manassas, Va., to witness what
would be a Civil War turning
point, the Battle of Bull Run.
The troops brought the ammuni-
ties. The spectators brought the
pies.

"Tailgating is really the conflu-
ence of several different trends in
our history," says Joachim, whose
book is full of recipes for the park-
ing lot. It also at tailgates but is
also appropriate for Sunday after-
noon couch potatoes.

"One trend in tailgating is our
love of spectacle, and you can
trace that back to the Battle of
Bull Run. ... After Ford released
station wagons in the early
1960s, the popularity of tailgat-
ing grew. Then, our love of out-
door cooking and

barbecue merged
with eating together
before football at
NFL games in park-
ing lots."

Essentially, we're
talking here about
an American picnic
— on a grand scale.
"Tailgates can be very elaborate
events," says Joachim, who
lives near Allentown, and
whose everyone-can-cook book,
A Man, a Gun, a Ham, selected
the reserve of many a male cus-
tomers. "People spare no ef-
fort to put on a good party
and outdo everyone else in the
parking lot. It's your way of com-
peting, along with the team
chant competing."

In his attempt to codify the
culinary part of all this,
Joachim offers everything from
a tailgating tool list to safety
rules for dealing with food in
the outdoors.

And, of course, he offers re-
cipes, frequently soaked, mopped
or somehow treated with in-
hibitors. His beer-butt chicken,
for instance, is a tasty template
for a popular tailgate show-off
meal: the chicken grills over the
coals as it sits upright, on a half-

filled can of beer shoved into
what would be called, in almost
uncommonly polite tailgating
circles, its lower cavity. (See ac-
companying recipe.)

In a thoroughly American way,
tailgating — the very picture of
occasional informality — has
become a formal institution. Not
only is Joachim's book new to
street shelves, so are two others,
The Tailgating Cookbook by Bob
Slone (Chronicle Books, \$13.95)
and Tailgates to Trachidoro by
Nina Swan Kohler (Willing Veneer
Books, \$18.95). There's an Ameri-
can Tailgaters Association, which
says it represents the interests of
more than 20 million tailgaters an-
nually, and Web sites include the
large, www.tailgating.com. Jack
Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey of-
fers a much-used tailgating mar-
nade — and a national award for
tailgating prowess.

Bob Cavanaugh, the classy tai-
lgater at every home game at the
line, won that award twice, and
the plaques show nicely on the
mini-bus he pulls into the park-
ing lot, painted Eagles green. In-
side the bus, his cousin Jim looks
after the flow of beer and Jack
Daniel's. Outside, peeping from
a passenger-side wall, two tape
poor Youngfellow and Coors Light.

Cavanaugh, who works for
PGW and lives in the city's
Northeast, says he began throw-
ing tailgates 20 years ago, when
he was 19. He prides to the bus
and smiles. "Since I bought the
bus, things are out of control!"

Not really. The swarm of tai-
lgaters is happy, revved for both
the food and the team. "Come
see this," Cavanaugh beckons,
showing his Coleman Event
grill, balanced atop two metal
benches. A few other tailgaters
sport the king of tailgating
grills, but Cavanaugh's was dif-
ferent. He had covers, an accor-
dion Coleman does not make
for the model.

"I built my own lid," he said,
pointing with pride to the Ea-
gles insignia engraved by a rela-
tive on the lid's steel handles.

Kevin Ochs, who has known
Cavanaugh since grade school,
was enjoying the spread, the
company and the day, in a way
essential to tailgating and what-
by Philadelphia: He was happy
to be among several people he'd
known a very long time.

"I love going to Eagles
games," he said, "but to be here
out with you, the tailgaters read-
ily do it for me. I'm here with
friends I played basketball and
Little League with. We've
known each other since we
were 8 or 9 years old."

In the middle of the massive
parking lot, Cavanaugh cooked at
a steady pace for his family and
friends and their friends. He had
the look of a contented man, a
man for whom the day, in its long-
est sense, was one big family.

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Bob Cavanaugh's Seafood Trio

Makes 4 entree servings; 6-8
appetizer servings

- 2 dozen littleneck clams
- 2 pounds mussels (shells
removed)
- 2/3 bottle white wine
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper
- 1/2 tablespoon sweet garlic
- 1 pound large smoked
shrimp, heads and tails
left on
- 1/2 stick butter
- Chopped parsley for garnish

1. Soak clams and mussels in cold water for 20 minutes, so
they eject sand, and place the shellfish in large stockpot.
 2. Put wine, pepper and garlic in stockpot, cover pot, and
cook over high heat until clams and mussels begin to open,
about 5 minutes.
 3. Add shrimp and butter, cover and cook until shrimp shells
are pink and butter is melted, about 2 minutes. Garnish with
parsley.
- Note:** After seafood is rinsed at home, this recipe can be
cooked in a stockpot on top of the grill in the parking lot.
**Per serving based on 4x200 calories, 41 grams protein, 9 grams
carbohydrates, 13.3 grams sugar, 13 grams fat, 166 milligrams cholesterol,
881 milligrams sodium, 0.2 gram dietary fiber.**

Bob Cavanaugh's Filet Mignon Sandwich

Makes 6 servings

- | | |
|--|--|
| For the Jack Daniel's marinade: | For the sandwiches: |
| 1/4 cup Jack Daniel's whiskey | 6 1-inch-thick rounds of filet
mignon |
| 1/4 cup soy sauce | 2 bell peppers, any color |
| 1/4 cup Dijon-style mustard | 1 onion |
| 1/4 cup minced green onions | 1 1/2-cup can of beer |
| 1/4 cup packed light brown
sugar | American cheese (optional) |
| 1 teaspoon salt | 6 round sandwich rolls |
| Dash of Worcestershire sauce | |

1. On the night before the tailgate, combine all marinade
ingredients and blend well.
 2. Pound filet rounds with a kitchen mallet, place in a plastic
zipper bag, add the blended marinade and refrigerate even-
ing.
 3. Cut peppers and onion into 1-inch chunks and refrigerate
in plastic bag.
 4. At the tailgate, saute pepper and onion chunks in beer,
over medium heat. For every inch height of vegetables, use 1/2
inch of beer. Saute vegetables until al dente, about 10 min-
utes. Remove.
 5. Grill the steaks over medium-high heat, about three
minutes per side for medium-rare.
 6. Place a steak in each sandwich roll, top with peppers and
onions and with cheese, if using.
- Per serving:** 713 calories, 39 grams protein, 46 grams carbohydrates,
13 grams sugar, 36 grams fat, 114 milligrams cholesterol, 1,546 milligrams
sodium, 3 grams dietary fiber.

Beer-Butt Chicken

Makes 4 to 5 servings

- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black
pepper
- 1 chicken, about 4 pounds
- 1 12-ounce can of beer
- 1/4 cup cooking oil or
cooking oil from spray can

1. On tailgate morning, mix the paprika, brown sugar, salt,
cayenne pepper, dry mustard, garlic powder, onion powder and
black pepper.
2. Remove giblets and fat from inside of chicken and set
aside for another recipe or discard. Rinse chicken inside and
out and pat dry with paper towels.
3. Rub a teaspoon of olive oil inside the chicken.
4. Brush outside of chicken with cooking oil or coat with oil
spray. Rub chicken all over with spice mix, especially under
wings and legs. Save any leftover spice rub into any spare apple.
5. In the parking lot, remove chicken 20 minutes before grill-
ing and scatter remaining spice rub onto any spare apple.
6. Open beer can. Drink 6 ounces.
7. If you have an old-fashioned poultry can opener, punch
extra holes in the beer can lid to spread the steam, but the
can's normal opening will also vent steam without additional
holes.
8. Heat grill to medium-heat on one side, leaving another side
off, on three-section grill, heat two outside sections to medium
low and leave middle section off.
9. Hold chicken upright and slide its bottom over the beer
can until snug. Tuck wings behind the bird's back, and stand
bird up on the unbaked grill section. The chicken should stand
as if on a tripod, on its two legs and on the beer can.
10. Cover and cook until steam is heavy and crisp and juices
run clear, about 380 degrees on an instant-read thermometer
inserted into the thick part of the thigh without touching the
bone. Total grilling time should be 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 hours. If using
charcoal, add hot coals when all coals burn out.
11. Using tongs or cooking mitts, transfer chicken to a cut-
ting board and let rest on the can 5 minutes. Lift bird off the
can and onto the cutting board. Carve and serve.

— Adapted from The Tailgater's Cookbook (Broadway Books 2001)
**Per serving based on 5x1,081 calories, 74 grams protein, 6 grams
carbohydrates, 1 gram sugar, 37 grams fat, 291 milligrams cholesterol,
1,616 milligrams sodium, 1 gram dietary fiber.**