



Dan Nielsen

August 31, 1965 –
December 12, 2005

Dan Nielsen, golf course superintendent of Golf Club of Illinois, passed away peacefully at his home on December 12, 2005 after a valiant battle with pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife, Kira; sons Zachary, Tyler, Nick and Travis; parents Dennis and Sandra Nielsen; and his brother, Michael Nielsen.

Dan Nielsen began his career as a golf course superintendent with the Golf Club of Illinois in 1996. It was here until his final days that Dan served the game of golf with great distinction, inspiring and touching the lives of everyone with whom he worked. Before his tenure at the Golf Club of Illinois, Dan served as an assistant at Midlane Country Club and Westmoreland Country Club.

It is a mark of Dan's humility that so few of us were even aware of the fact that Dan was an exceptionally gifted athlete. While studying criminal justice at Western Michigan University, Dan set and still holds several pitching records there.



*The Dan Nielsen family
(L to R): Tyler, Nick, Kira, Zachary, Travis and Dan.*



34 DAN NIELSEN

Pitcher

R-R, 6-2, 205, So., Northville. . . earned All-MAC honors as a freshman and was unbeaten against five league opponents, which included four complete games. . . his mark was also best by a MAC hurler and WMU's tops since 1979. . . had a two-hit 2-0 shutout over Ohio State. . . has excellent fastball, slider, and control. . . good leader.

■■■ was all-league pitcher during senior year of high school as he compiled a 7-2 mound mark. . . also played outfield. . . earned two letters in baseball, plus basketball and football. . . defensive tackle and tight end in latter sport and all-league pick.

□□□ business major. . . born August 31, 1965.

Year	IP	R-ER	BB	SO	W-L	ERA
'85	59.1	30-26	19	46	7-0	3.94

This entry in the 1986 Western Michigan University yearbook chronicles some of Dan's exceptional achievements as a pitcher.

Before choosing greenkeeping as his profession, Dan pitched for two years in the Pittsburgh Pirates minor league system. Dan might have been brought up into the major leagues had he not injured his throwing arm. He never told me how he blew out his arm, but knowing Dan, I think it is safe to assume that his misfortune was owing to his no-holds-barred style. Probably he should have eased up a little on his fastball, but Dan just wasn't wired to ever back down from a contest of will or endurance.

Dan had a huge heart for greenkeeping. He threw himself into it when he discovered it. And one of the things that he enjoyed most about our profession is the camaraderie that we have. The passion that Dan put into his work was equaled by the devotion that he had towards his family and friends. When Dan passed away, many of us lost our best friend.

When one of our own is taken in the prime of his life, I think that it should get our attention. I am hoping that we will all honor Dan's memory by cultivating stronger friendships,



Dan with his Harley.


and by being thankful every day for the gift of life.

Donations to the family of Dan Nielsen may be made care of the MAGCS.



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