



THE LOMBARDI **“The legend lives** **and the opposition** **is Cancer”**

By Mark Kienert

Perhaps no other name in the history of the sporting world is as symbolic of the best of what a product has to offer as does the name Lombardi toward teamwork success in the National Football League. It is with this same approach towards teamwork success that organizes Wisconsin's largest single-day Celebrity-Amateur golf tournament.

The Vincent T. Lombardi Memorial Golf Classic was established in 1971 about one year after the famed Green Bay Packer coach died of Colon Cancer. It was the idea of Don Tendick Sr., who was chairman of the golf committee of the North Hills Country Club and others to hold a golf tournament to raise money for Cancer research. That first Classic raised \$20,000 for cancer research and was donated to Georgetown University and the American Cancer Society. Realizing the potential of the classic, the Lombardi Board of Directors in 1972 established the Vincent T. Lombardi Colon Cancer Clinic at the Medical College of Wisconsin. To date, \$757,052 has been donated to the Lombardi Cancer Clinic. This money is used as seed money to initiate pilot projects, which if promising in their results, qualify the project for more extensive government and private grants.

Today the Lombardi Cancer Clinic addresses the second and third most frequent forms of Cancer. Colo-rectal cancer is second only to lung cancer in fre-

quency claiming 114,000 new cases last year and 53,000 deaths last year according to the American Cancer Society figures. Breast cancer follows closely with an estimated 109,000 new cases and 36,000 deaths last year. 2,306 patients from around the Midwest took advantage of the clinic in 1984, which is unique because it offers the diagnostic services of its professional staff free of charge. Through its patient care and research work, the classic and clinic increases the lifetime survival chances of Cancer victims by providing convenient access to early detection screening programs and the most techniques in Cancer management. Early detection screening is crucial for optimal management of Cancer.

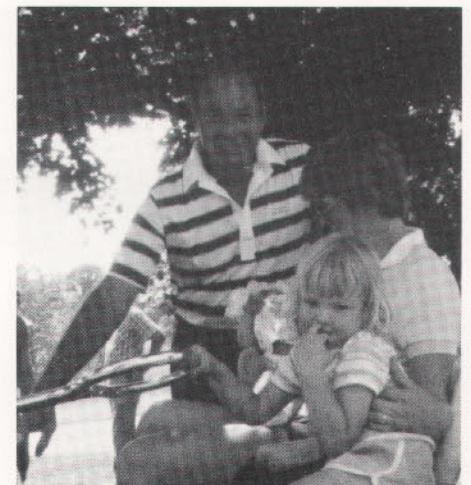
My youth was shaped by the Sunday Gladiators who wore the “green and the gold.” Growing up in Waupaca and starting my career as a caddy at the Waupaca Country Club, opened doors for me to cross paths with the famed Packer coach. It was at the NEWGA 2-man best ball tournament held at the Stevens Point Country Club, Circa 1968, that I was brought in to caddy for our own members playing in this tournament. That day our foursome played one group in front of the coach. I remember best his downhill putt on the old 16 or 17th. It was a two-tiered, severely sloped green. The pin was cut on the lower level close to the break of the two. The coaches ball was above the hole at about ten feet. A member of our group had that same putt and missed leaving himself with a longer putt coming back. The Coach stood over his ball. His face was a picture of intensity as he eyed the break of the putt. With one clean movement the ball was stroked toward the hole and “Wham,” was drained for a birdie. Why that ball never picked up speed or deviated from line is a mystery to me, but I'll bet it knew that if it didn't go in, Hell would be paid for on the next tee shot.

I remember after the round waiting by the old clubhouse when I looked up to see this man coming towards me looking out at me from behind those sunglasses that probably hide many a stare that turned even the strongest of veteran ball players into Jell-o. This was one face that even Foster

Grant couldn't hid the expression he chose to wear. It was then with heart racing and desert-like throat that I weakly squeaked out a “Hell-Hell-o CoCoCoach Lombardi.” That warm broad smile registered on his face and a resounding “Hell-o Son,” filled the air. I just stood there in awestruck honor. At the age of fourteen he was my first seen-in-person celebrity.

Actual preparation for the tournament starts as soon as the last one ends. Our part of the grooming operation starts as soon as we get enough of our summer help back from school to start sand trap edging operations. Actual golf course preparation varies little from day to day. It just becomes more intensive. All management tools are used to get the course to peak on that one Saturday in June.

You get the feeling something big is about to happen about one week before the event when delivery of two 30 yard trash dumpsters are parked in front of our doors. Next, the delivery of eighty brand new Buicks complete with Michigan plates arrive plugging up our already “too small” parking lot. These are the courtesy cars used by the celebrities and participants. The big top tent is erected on Wednesday and is barely finished for Friday night's activities. This tent is surrounded by three smaller tents that each serve a particular purpose. This is the first time I have ever seen a big top with chandeliers. This tent holds a mainstage, dance floor and enough table space to seat and serve 500 people.



Karen Kienert and daughters Cara and Cassie with Bart Starr.

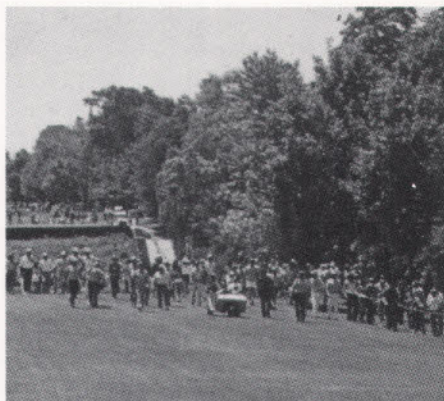
The first sign of celebrities is seen as early as Thursday night. Packers, both current and former greats, Hollywood movie and TV stars, Bucks, Brewers and other pro athletes from the midwest come to register and to play a few holes.

Friday a special par-3 event is held for all participants and corporate sponsors. It is this day that the last of the grooming takes place. Mounds, bunkers, fairways are all given that last minute inspection. Friday night the gallery ropes and corporate hole sponsor signs are put up. Concession stands are built by the clubhouse maintenance crew. Details like the hanging of the flower baskets around the exterior of the clubhouse add a special touch of color. The three local television stations broadcast their sports segments live from select vantage points in and around the clubhouse grounds. The grand old lady is putting on her Sunday best.

On Friday night the big top is used for the first time as it houses a fund raising dinner and auction. (Wisconsin Turf is a regular contributor to this event.) The Menomonee Falls Police and Fire Departments set up temporary offices in the grounds maintenance shop. They tour the golf course through the night to ward off the ever present threat of vandalism.

Saturday starts early, usually around 4:30 a.m. Greens are cut and traps are given that final touch of perfection. About 7 a.m., the first of the crowd begins to show up. Course marshals are enlisted and directed to their respective holes. Caddies arrive from other courses. The first five-some tees off promptly at 8 a.m. and the play of the day is a team scramble tournament. Each team consists of a celebrity and four sponsors. Celebrities are paired with teams through the blind luck of a draw. If you could bet on the favorite team, put your moeny on Lynn Dickey's team as he or Greg Koch are always in the running for team champion.

Our work for the day is only half completed at this time. Clean up starts as soon as the event is over. It is our challenge to return the course to a point of condition that it appears as if nothing happened, barring the gallery scars of



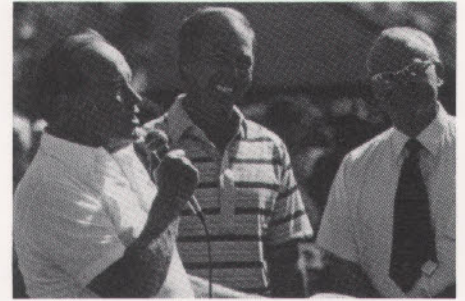
The colorful caddies and crowds, the beautiful North Hills course make the Lombardi an event to enjoy and remember.

trampled turf.

Crowd size is proportional to the number of big name Hollywood stars and athletic greats present. Bob Hope, Henry Aaron, Ernie Banks, Phil Donahue, Bob Uecker, Mickey Mantle, Mclean Stevenson, Fred McMurry, George C. Scott are just to name a few. Even Past-President Gerald R. Ford added to his reputation by unfortunately knocking a drive off from someone's skull. Crowd size can range from 5,000 to 20,000 spectators. 400 cases of beer, 650 dozen hot dog buns, 1,600 pounds of brats and hot dogs are consumed in a matter of six hours.

The event winds down with a large raffle. Trips, cars, boats and

For the second and final time we punch the clock to bring in the



Bob Hope, Bart Starr and Woody Hayes pause on the 18th green and thank the fans for their great support.

microwaves are raffled off with the proceeds all going into the kitty for the Cancer clinic.

gallery ropes, stakes and signs. All concession stands are torn down and those large dumpsters now seem too small. The parking lot and clubhouse grounds are cleaned and hand watered down to give them that clean fresh appearance.

The highlight of the event for the sponsors is the grand ball held on Saturday night. This is an appreciation dinner for those who participated, the celebrities and sponsors. It is worth the price of admission alone just to watch the limousines return with their well dressed patrons. The state of dress or in some cases undress makes me wonder about the old saying that it's the clothes that make the man. This definitely doesn't apply to some very lovely ladies in attendance.

As the name Lombardi symbolized hard work and sweat to the Packers of the "Glory Days," it also means tiresome sweaty long days to the various personnel of the North Hills Country Club. The legend lives on in the name of a golf tournament. A tournament that serves a dual purpose by forcing use into a race with a deadline but at the same time creating a standard by which our grooming practices are compared to for the rest of the golfing season.

I personally feel every golf course should have a tournament in which all the stops are pulled out to put on the best show possible each year. Our membership sacrifices their course for one weekend every season, but benefits in the long run for the rest of the season due to the crews' new personal standard of dedication and commitment toward excellence.

I wonder if the coach would be proud?