

A Badger In Gopherland Suffers 'Sports Shock'

By **LARRY LENNERT**
Golf Course Superintendent
Hillcrest Country Club, St. Paul

Imagine growing up twenty minutes from Lambeau Field and spending seven years at the University of Wisconsin. Then imagine moving to the home of the Vikings and Gophers, your hated NFC Central Division and Big Ten rivals. Please understand if I sound a bit incoherent, but I'm suffering from "sports shock." However, it didn't start out that way.

When I first moved here in April to assume the duties of Golf Course Superintendent of Hillcrest Country Club in St. Paul, the North Stars were just starting their playoff miracles. Since Wisconsin doesn't have a National Hockey League team, I adopted the North Stars and rode their emotional roller coaster all the way to the Stanley Cup finals. Coming from Wisconsin, it was quite a thrill to cheer for a winning team.

I felt my first tinge of "sports shock" when the baseball season opened. I've been to a number of Brewer opening days, and not being able to even listen to the game on the radio made me a little edgy. However, once the Brewers went into the tank, I didn't feel so bad. In fact, when the Twins started their winning streak, I found myself cheering for them. Since the Twins are in the AL West and the Brewers are in the AL East, I could rationalize this split loyalty.

At the time of this writing, the Twins had just defeated Toronto four games to one in the ALCS. Unbelievably, both of my adopted Minnesota teams had reached the championship of their respective sports. What sports euphoria for a winner-starved Cheesehead!

However, even the success of my adopted Minnesota hockey and baseball teams did not lessen the "sports shock" that I fell into when the football season started. Every sportscast, every sports page, on billboards and on buses, all I saw or heard

was Viking or Gopher football. I started to get ill even at just the sight of the color purple or maroon. It wasn't just the saturation of Viking and Gopher propaganda that got to me, but the total lack of information about the Packers and Badgers as well.

The worst day was that first Sunday in more than 20 years that I sat down in front of a television and couldn't watch a Packer game. That's when I knew I had "sports shock." I made a frantic call to my brother in Wisconsin and asked him to tape the game on his VCR and send it to me. I now receive tapes of Packer and Badger games, and I have to watch these games the day I receive them. Anyone who would intentionally watch a Packer or Badger loss after the fact must be ill. I admit I have a problem.

The reason I've shared this story with you is because I think that too many Minnesota sports fans take their teams for granted. Your pro hockey team went to the Stanley Cup Finals and your college hockey team always competes for the WCHA title. Your baseball team won the World Series in 1987 and probably will have won it again by the time your read this. The Vikings and Gophers will finish the season with better records than the Packers and Badgers.

So, the next time you get down about the Vikings or Gophers, just think about this: it could be a lot worse; you could be a Wisconsin sports fan.

* * * *

P.S.: Thanks to all of you for making me feel welcome during my first year in Minnesota.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

By John Harris
The Lafayette Club



As I reflect on my accomplishments and failures of 1991, I can't help thinking of all the people involved that made it happen: Superintendents who gave good advice or lent spendy units free of charge (can I keep this?) . . . loyal staff that put out the same quality product week in and week out, no matter what the conditions or weather . . . sales personnel who more often than not had to deliver yesterday, and usually did.

Without these people and our association, all efforts to advance my career and make some small contribution to this industry would be all for naught.

I would like to thank Turtinen Communications for producing this newsletter. Their experience and professionalism shines in every issue. It's been a pleasure to work with them.

Scott Austin came through on many occasions with member-generated articles when it looked like we would go without. Thank you, Scott.

Also I can't forget about the guru of shutter speeds, Dale Wysocki. His camera made it to every event and then some, and his handiwork is "photogenetically" recorded in every issue.

One improvement that every editor would like to see, and I am no exception, is an increase in member articles. Take a look at a wide variety of topics you could use to get those creative juices flowing.

The "member article" by Larry Lennert that appears in this issue is strictly a personal observation by one of our members and is a pleasure to read. It tells us a little something about the man and his way of thinking, not to mention rivalries between states.

Lastly, I would like to thank the membership for giving me the opportunity to serve. It has been a wonderful and most rewarding experience to be an elected official of this association.

As you know, our annual conference is slated for the 20th-22nd of November at the Northland Inn. The mailing is out, and the deadline for advance registration is November 11.

Don't miss out on a chance to rub elbows with other members and get re-acquainted. Shane Andrews has been hard at it and has an impressive lineup of speakers covering a variety of topics, current with today's concerns on golf course operations. In addition, don't forget to treat yourself to an evening with Alex Cole. His stand-up routine is very entertaining. Hope to see you all there.

—John Harris
Editor



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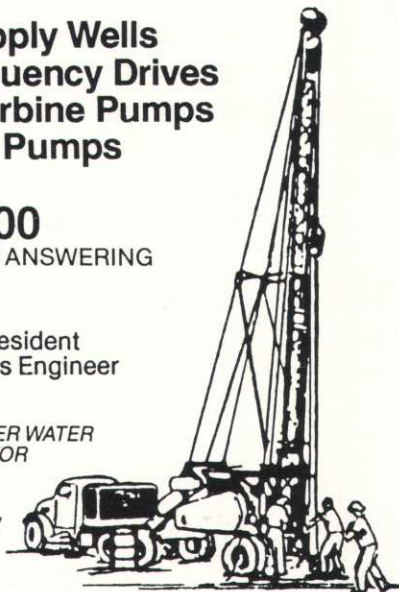
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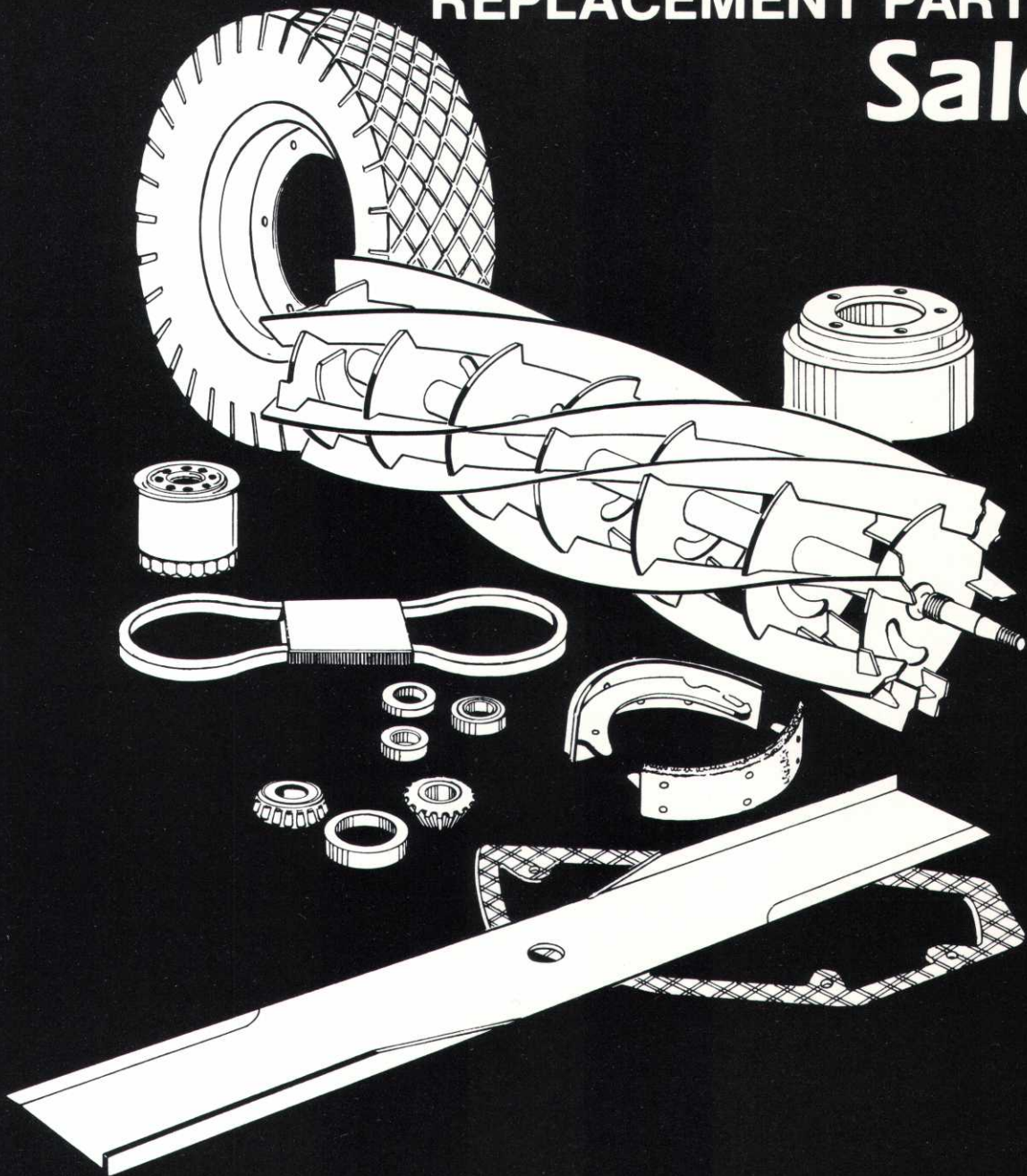
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