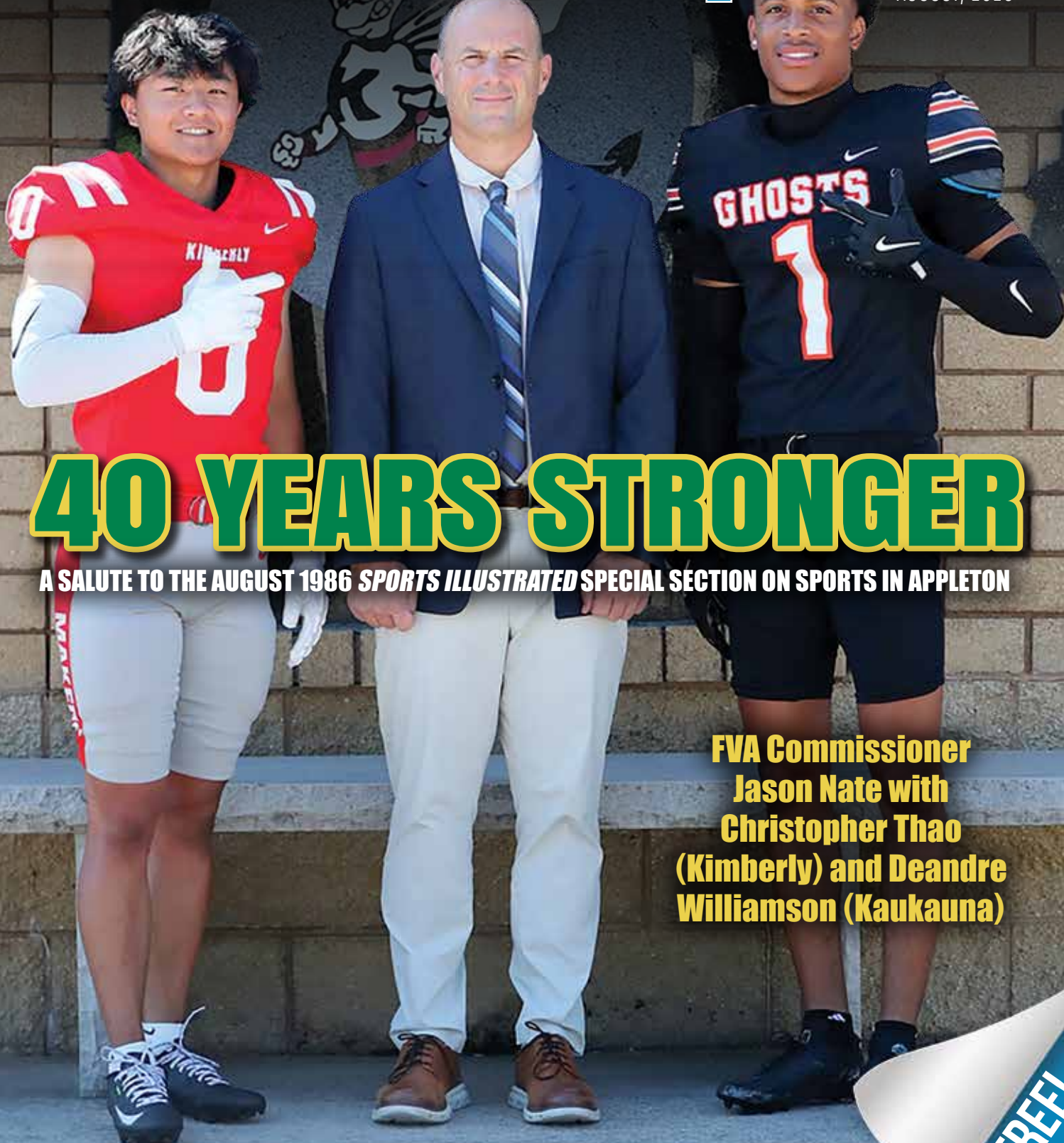


THE FOX VALLEY AT PLAY: SPORTS IN THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

Fox Cities Sports

AUGUST, 2026



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From the Mayor



This summer marks the 40th anniversary of *Sports Illustrated's* "Sports in Appleton" feature of our community. While much has changed in the decades since, if anything, the integral role sports of all kinds play in life here in the Fox Cities has only grown.

Leafing through a tattered copy of that issue of SI, I was struck by the familiarity of the images and people featured. I would not even be born until four years after the article ran, but I recognize my own upbringing in the breadth of sports and activities, even some of the equipment, in those images.

It got me thinking about sports as such a central aspect of life here, and what makes it particularly special in the Fox Cities. One of the consistent themes is that those of us who participate in activities readily welcome those who are interested. We are passionate not only about playing, but also about growing our ranks with enthusiastic newcomers.

Several years ago, I got interested in sailing, having grown up on the water, boating and skiing. I was invited into the Neenah Nodaway Yacht Club by a member who had seen me loading up a little old sailboat I had bought on Craigslist. From there, I got connected with mentors and fellow enthusiasts and have had some of my greatest adventures in sports as a result.

Many of us have stories just like this. And our lives are richer for it.

Another is our shared commitment to creating and preserving the facilities, spaces, and environments our vast array of sports require. Over the years, our communities have invested (publicly and privately) in parks, courts, pitches, fields, courses, tracks, pools, lanes, rinks, and more, and in protecting and enhancing the natural environment, too. And it shows.

We're committed to expanding and maintaining sports accessibility to those with differing abilities — there are too many worthy programs to list them all here, just one being the John Wollner Fox Cities Miracle Field.

In 2024, the field received several important upgrades, including all new fencing, team flagpoles at each dugout, an updated scoreboard, and the replacement of the entire ADA-accessible rubberized playing surface.

Just as SI gave us cause for pride in 1986, we have every reason to continue to be proud today. As we look to the future, we already know what it takes not only to sustain, but to grow, sports: sharing with others, passing on our passion to new generations, and investing in the spaces and places that make our sport(s) of choice possible.

Play on! ■

Mayor Jake Woodford – City of Appleton

— Fox Cities — SPORTS

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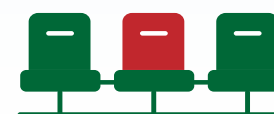
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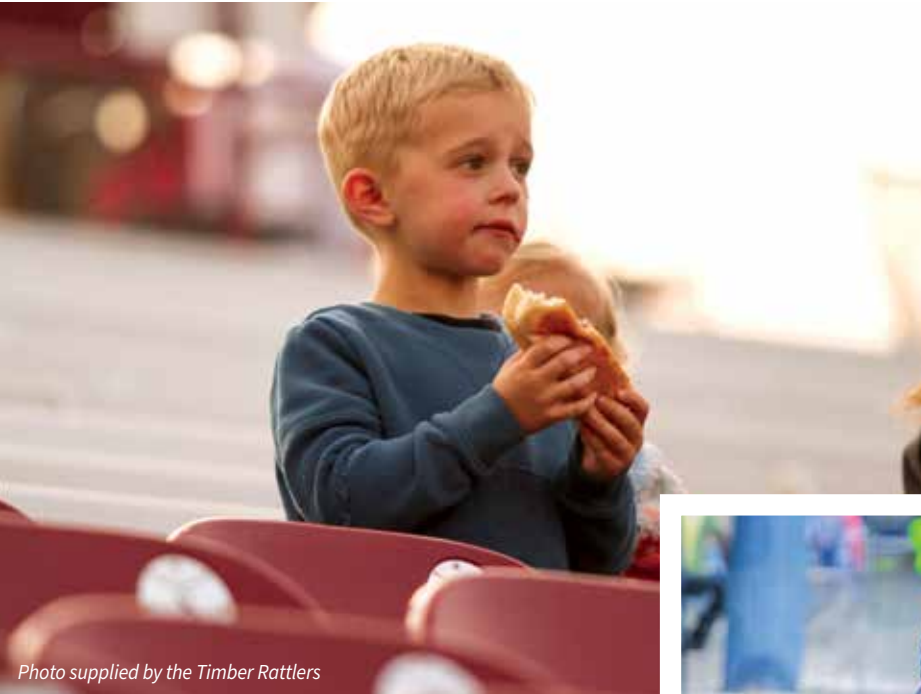


Photo supplied by the Timber Rattlers

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HORRAY, FOX CITIES, U.S.A.
In the summer of 1986, a crew of *Sports Illustrated* photographers descended upon Appleton to complete a photo shoot for the August issue of the magazine. Jack McCallum, who worked for the magazine at the time, was tasked with writing about life in Appleton. We honor that issue 40 years later with our own take on sports in the Fox Valley.



WHAT MAKES SPORTS IN THE FOX CITIES SO SPECIAL?

Success breeds success. It's easy to understand why a kid would want to practice their game and try to emulate stars from the area.



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JILL LIEBER STEEG
"Growing up in the Fox River Valley motivated me to dream big and reach for the stars."

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Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of SI's Appleton Issue

BY JILL LIEBER STEEG

The “dog days of summer” typically occur between July 3 and August 11, according to the National Weather Service. That phrase traces back to ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt, and the rise of Sirius, also known as the Dog Star, which astrology connected with heat, drought, sudden thunderstorms, mad dogs, and bad luck.

At *Sports Illustrated*, we connected “the dog days of summer” to a dreaded break in sports action. We called it “the dog days of sports.” The NBA Championship and NHL Stanley Cup had been decided. Golf had crowned its Open Championship winner. Tennis was weeks away from the US Open, its final major. College football and the NFL would begin their seasons soon after that. And Major League Baseball was past the halfway point of its season, rounding second, on its way to third and heading for home.

And as this lull approached every year, the same questions were raised in SI's editorial meetings. How are we going to fill the magazine when there is not much going on? Where will we find interesting stories? Who is playing meaningful games during the “dog days of sports?”

In the summer of 1986, while the powers that be were brainstorming for the August 11th issue, somebody threw out a provocative idea: Why not highlight the sports culture in a city in small town America?

When I got wind of this, my immediate thought was: *How about Appleton, Wisconsin!* But before I could pitch Appleton, I heard that a couple of editors were talking up Iowa.

Iowa? Iowa can't hold a candle to Wisconsin! I said to myself.

That was all it took for me to launch into my campaign for Appleton.

Having been born in Neenah, Wisconsin, grown up in the Fox River Valley, and been raised a die-hard Green Bay Packers fan, I knew first-hand how fortunate I was to have experienced growing up in a small town (pop. 23,000 in the 1970s). I shared snapshots of my life with my editors.

I started with stories about my family. My father, Bill, was a true Neenahite. Born and raised in Neenah — and he never left. He and my mother, Paula, who was from White Plains, New York, met as sophomores at Neenah High School. They attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison and were married more than 50 years until their deaths.

In 1929, my grandfather, Otto Lieber, founded Lieber Lumber Co., and in the 1960s, the family business grew to five lumberyards in the Fox River Valley area. I started working at the Neenah lumber yard when I was in third grade. My father and his brother, Bob, ran the lumber company for decades after my grandfather's death. The Lieber brothers were so close that our families lived on the same street (Plummer Court) as all the Lieber kids were growing up — each family moving twice to two different houses on the street. We spent summers together at our cottages in northern Wisconsin. My father and uncle were big-time Packers' fans, having owned as many as eight season tickets for about sixty years. One of their greatest memories was having attended the NFL Championship (better known as the Ice Bowl) on December 31, 1967. Kickoff temperature was 13 degrees below zero and a windchill of minus 48 degrees.

I told my editors stories about my childhood. Marching in my Brownie and Girl Scout uniforms through downtown Neenah with its one stop light in countless Memorial Day parades. Hanging out at the Dairy

Queen, where my girlfriends and I cruised for high school jocks. Cheering on the Neenah Rockets boys' basketball team on their multiple state high school tournament runs, taping construction paper basketballs with the players' names on my bedroom windows. Regardless of how they finished, when the guys returned home from Madison, they were heralded from the tops of firetrucks and paraded through downtown.

And that was the same treatment given to Santa Claus at Christmas time, except that he rode on firetrucks from one end of Neenah to the other.

There were stories about my small-town sports life, including ice fishing for sturgeon off Waverly Beach, skating on the frozen parking lot at Park 'N' Market grocery store, cross country skiing on Butte des Morts golf course, and my two years as a Neenah Rockets' volleyball and wrestling cheerleader (we were referred to as “Mat Mates”).

The more home-spun stories I told, the more interested the editors became.

The location of the Fox River Valley was a major selling point, too. Having grown up forty miles south of Green Bay and the Packers meant a lot to the editors. As did the fact that some notable athletes hailed from Appleton, including Pittsburgh Steelers' Hall of Fame running back Rocky Bleier, a four-time Super Bowl champion, and broadcaster Tony Kubek, a three-time World Series champion with the New York Yankees. And the local minor-league baseball team, the Appleton Foxes, also piqued the editors' interest.

When the magazine gave the go-ahead for Appleton, I was asked to write an essay about my hometown and the Fox River Valley. I flew home to Neenah, drove around town to visit all my favorite spots, then sat down at the desk in my childhood bedroom and whipped out my life story. Thinking more deeply about where I had grown up further impressed upon me the advantages that I had been so fortunate to have had. The simplicity. The connectiveness. The community spirit. The support of family, friends, teachers, and coaches.

Growing up in the Fox River Valley also motivated me to dream big and reach for the stars — to expand my horizons, to attend Stanford University, to explore the world outside of Neenah. And it instilled in me the love of sports and inspired me to become a pioneering sportswriter (at the Milwaukee Sentinel, *Sports Illustrated*, and USA Today).

Writing that essay, titled “Growing up at the end of the Earth,” was revelatory! It made me so proud — of my family, my hometown, and most certainly of myself. I recognized that through my down-to-earth upbringing and a strong Midwestern work ethic, I could (and did) achieve anything and everything I set my mind to.

But I was not the only one who benefitted from *Sports Illustrated* devoting the August 11, 1986 issue to the small-town sports culture of Appleton. The editors, writers, and photographers at the magazine, especially those who contributed to the efforts, were both excited and moved by the finished product. The response from readers was extremely positive, too. SI received dozens of complimentary, uplifting letters.

The Appleton issue touched my heart, and it clearly touched the hearts of so many others as well. ■

What Makes Sports in the Fox Cities So Special?

BY MATT TEN HAKEN, DIRECTOR OF SPORTS MARKETING, FOX CITIES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

I've had people who live in the state, but not in the Fox Cities, ask me why it always seems there is a team from the Fox Valley competing for a WIAA title. I've had colleagues from around the country ask me how we are able to get such great community support for facility development and event leadership and volunteering. I've had area residents tell me how shocked they were by huge participant numbers for events like a fun run or a youth learn-to-play sports camp. These scenarios have occurred for a multitude of reasons, but I believe two main factors are the pride we have in the history and successes of sports in the area and the passion of the individuals who lead sports in the Fox Cities.

Success breeds success. It's easy to understand why a kid would want to practice their game and try to emulate stars from the area, like Appleton West grad and McDonald's All-American Brian Butch; or Neenah grad, McDonald's All-American, and current UConn Huskie Allie Ziebell; or Appleton Xavier grad Rocky Bleier, who was a four-time Super Bowl Champion with the Pittsburgh Steelers; or Freedom grad and Olympic Greco-Roman Wrestling Bronze medalist Garrett Lowney; or the first woman to play intercollegiate golf at Marquette University, Mary Beth Nienhaus. The list of individuals from the area who have achieved high levels of athletic success truly could go on and on.

And then there are also the dominant athletic programs, like Kaukauna Wrestling, Neenah Tennis, or Kimberly Football.

Not only do the kids watching their hometown teams want to replicate the success they see, but so do the parents, coaches, and administrators throughout the Fox Cities.

If you take a step back, you can see all the individuals it takes to help mold great athletes and teams. Without a doubt, we have a fantastic culture here that has been built through years of effort, great leadership, and sweat equity.

Leaders from area Parks and Recreation Departments and branches of the YMCA of the Fox Cities take pride in keeping their venues in top shape and are constantly refining their programming to tailor their offerings to the needs of the community. Youth sports coaches, at all levels, pour their knowledge and passion into their teams to get the best out of each athlete. Donors support fundraisers for upgraded facilities, equipment, jerseys, and travel costs. Parents are willing to pay the registration fees, do countless pick-ups and drop-offs, and provide the necessary mental and emotional support to help their young athletes through the ups and downs of the season.

All of this leads to High School athletes performing on the big stage, in their school colors, representing their communities. And when they compete at the highest levels, they inspire those who watch them to dream their own athletic dreams ... and the cycle repeats itself. ■



Looking to plan a tournament? *Let us help!*

Contact Matt and Abby at the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau to discuss ways we can help you plan and promote your event and possibly even help you secure grant funding support!



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From the Publisher

Forty years ago, *Sports Illustrated* gave Appleton—and the entire Fox Valley—a distinction few communities have ever received. In its August 11, 1986 issue, the nation's premier sports magazine devoted a 33-page special section, "America at Play: Sports in Appleton, Wisconsin," celebrating the people, programs and traditions that made our community one of America's great sports towns.

The stories captured everything that made local sports special: neighborhood games, youth athletics, high school sports, community volunteers, and hometown athletes. It wasn't simply a collection of articles—it was a tribute to a community where sports were woven into everyday life.

This issue of *Fox Cities Sports* is our way of honoring that remarkable publication. Rather than recreating the original feature, we've taken a fresh look at the Fox Cities sports scene four decades later. You'll find familiar traditions that have stood the test of time, new stories and photos that reflect how our community has grown, and the same passion for sports that inspired *Sports Illustrated* to shine its national spotlight on Appleton in 1986.

If you've never seen the original issue, it's well worth your time. While copyright restrictions prevent us from reproducing pages or images from the original *Sports Illustrated* feature the complete August 11, 1986 edition, including the full "America at Play: Sports in Appleton, Wis." feature, is available to read online through the Internet Archive at:

<https://archive.org/details/sports-illustrated-1986-08-11-jolly-good-show-b/mode/2up>

We hope you'll enjoy comparing the stories from 1986 with the ones in these pages—and see for yourself why the Fox Cities was, and still is, one of America's great sports communities. ■

REMINDER!
Bomber Performance Consulting will be hosting a
Mental Performance for Parents Informational Session on Wednesday, August 12 at 5:30pm

The Zoom session will be geared towards parents of athletes and will highlight key areas such as helping athletes reduce pressure and build confidence and resilience in sport, just in time for fall sports to start ramping up. Please scan the QR code below to register for the event! Tickets are limited, so please register as soon as you are able.

For any questions, please reach out to Anna Bomber at:

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Run Strong. Run Long.

BY DR. JASON D. NOWAK
NORTH SHORE FOOT AND ANKLE

Running is one of the most effective ways to improve cardiovascular health, maintain strength, and support mental well-being. Whether training for a half-marathon, working toward fitness goals, or simply enjoying miles around the neighborhood, running should leave you feeling strong — not sidelined. However, because running places repeated impact forces through the feet and ankles, it's important to support these structures properly to stay healthy and consistent throughout the season.

Running places repetitive forces through the feet and ankles. When training intensity or mileage increases faster than the body can adapt, tendons and muscles can become irritated. Common running-related conditions include shin splints, Achilles tendonitis, plantar fasciitis, and stress reactions of the foot or lower leg.

A common example occurs when a runner returns to training after winter break and quickly ramps up distance. Soreness may develop under the heel or behind the ankle. Rather than signaling a lack of fitness, this discomfort often represents the body's request for slower progression and supportive strength training.

Most running-related injuries stem from progressing too quickly. Increasing weekly mileage by no more than 10% gives the body space to adapt. Strength training that targets calves, hips, and core muscles improves shock absorption and alignment. Running shoes lose cushioning over time and generally need to be replaced every 300 to 500 miles.

Before running, dynamic warm-ups — such as gentle jogging or mobility drills — prepare tissues for repetitive loading. After

running, stretching restores flexibility and reduces next-day tightness.

If pain starts altering stride, persists despite reduced training, or localizes sharply, early evaluation can prevent longer interruptions. With thoughtful progression and supportive training, running can remain a sustainable, enjoyable part of long-term wellness. ■



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HOORAY, FOX CITIES, U.S.A.!

by Nicole Campuzano

The Fox Cities is a place where people take their sports seriously—but never forget why they play. Sports help define the character of this remarkable region. This special section offers a glimpse into the passion, pride, and spirit that make the Fox Cities a great sports community!



■ Left to right: Jody Andropolis (Cyclist), Claire Pfrang (Fox Valley Lutheran), Owen Lloyd (Neenah), Faith Kolosso (Little Chute), Ava Calhoon (Freedom), Vivie Auth (St. Mary Catholic), Bruce Wiegman (Golfer), Evan Lesselyong (Hortonville), Maddux Hermus (Kimberly), Bauer Seefeldt (Appleton West), Madison Koschnic (Kaukauna), Will Zachor (Appleton East), Gavin Wiese (Xavier), Ethan Pasholk (Appleton West), Isabella Stephani (Menasha), Dewa Ketut Alit Adnyana (Pickleball), Hunter Bill (Lawrence University), and Kailey Heindel (Appleton North).

CONTINUED

FOX CITIES *continued*



In the summer of 1986, a crew of *Sports Illustrated* photographers descended upon Appleton to complete a photo shoot for the August issue of the magazine. Jack McCallum, who worked for the magazine at the time, was tasked with writing about life in Appleton. The article sought to “examine the sporting life, and life in general, of an American town,” said McCallum. McCallum painted a quaint and idyllic picture of Appleton in 1986.

It’s been 40 years since that article — titled “Hooray, Appleton!” — appeared in print. Four decades will inevitably bring innumerable transformations to any community, but there are some things that have remained relatively unchanged here. However, Appleton and the Fox Cities have grown tremendously over the years, and it’s no surprise, really. This area has so much to offer.

The Fox Cities was an outstanding place to live, play, and raise a family in 1986, and it remains so today.



PHOTOGENIC

In 1986, Lisa Clemens worked for the City of Appleton Parks and Recreation Department. *Sports Illustrated* contacted her director with a request to gather as many people as possible to take photos on top of the YMCA parking ramp. Clemens, who was only 23 at the time, is pictured in the front row holding a huge fish. Comically, Clemens was not a big fishing person. She ended up in the photo with the fish simply because the photographers wanted a fisher. “I was like, okay, we need a fish,” Clemens recalls. She called her brother-in-law, who was an actual fisherman, showed up at his house, took a fish, and left with it.



City of Kaukauna
Mayor Tony Penterman

Kaukauna is a community built on a tradition of excellence. From state championship wrestling and softball programs to successful teams across many sports, winning has become part of the city’s identity. What makes Kaukauna special is that athletic success is supported by an entire community: students, coaches, families, and fans who take pride in representing the city. Sports make Kaukauna special by bringing people together, teaching discipline and teamwork, and creating lasting memories that span generations.

The Galloping Ghosts’ tradition of success inspires future athletes and strengthens the community spirit that defines Kaukauna. And when a state title is brought home, a celebratory parade through the city, with police cars and fire trucks, is had to honor their accomplishment.

Allan Olson, another Appleton native, had a similarly interesting story about how he ended up in that photo. He was a firefighter at Fire Station Number 1. That fateful day, he was just finishing up his lunch break when he was approached by the chief. Olson recounts that the chief said, “Al, *Sports Illustrated* called. They want to take your picture tonight.” Olson remembers thinking, “Okay, what’s the punchline here? What’s the joke?” It turned out the magazine had been out scouting at Memorial Park where they’d seen the softball team Olson played on. Olson thinks it wasn’t so much that they wanted him specifically, as much as

■ *Lawrence University’s Banta Bowl is home to the Vikings and offers an array of athletic opportunities.*

Action from the Waupaca Boatride Volleyball Tournament in Oshkosh. The World’s Largest Outdoor Volleyball Tournament with 3,900 teams playing on 500 courts!

they wanted “a warm body” sporting an “Appleton” jersey for the photo.

Olson was on duty that night, but the chief told him to take the rig and drive home for his uniform. Olson recalls, “It was a Friday night, and there was a thunderstorm rolling in. I told the photographer that he might want to hurry because I might get a call. Just as they got done, it started to storm. We did end up going out on a call, too!”

Despite all the photos that were taken that afternoon, the magazine wasn’t satisfied with the way they turned out. That Monday, they reshot the whole thing. “The photos that ended up in the magazine only had about half of the people who were in the original photo shoot!” Olson explains with a chuckle.

Rebecca Childers’ son, Aaron, was photographed individually by a *Sports Illustrated* photographer while he was at the concession stand at a Foxes game. Her son came back from getting his snack and told her, “They took my picture; it’s going to be in the paper!” When she found out that it was actually for *Sports Illustrated*, and not a local paper, she was surprised.

Childers says, “I never imagined they would actually print the photo! I’m sure they took a lot of pictures. We bought the issue, and I was so excited that it was there.”

Though their experiences may differ when it comes to how they ended up in the photos, Clemens, Olson, and Childers all have one thing in common: They all agree that Appleton was and still is a phenomenal community to live in. “There’s so much opportunity for the kids [in the area],” Clemens says. Olson adds, “It’s still a great place to live and bring up kids. It’s safe and there’s good schools. I’m really proud of where I’m from.”

GROWTH AND CHANGE

In the years since the article was written, Appleton and the Fox Cities have grown tremendously. In 1986, the population of Appleton was 65,695, and that of the Fox Cities was between 180,000 and 190,000. Today, those numbers are approximately 75,000 and 400,000 respectively. With this growth comes a richness in diversity and culture that enhances the area and adds value to the shared experiences of the population who lives here.

One thing that has changed considerably over the last 40 years is the type of industry found in the area. The once-booming paper industry, which still consisted of about 20 paper mills in



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Hortonville Area School District
District Administrator Todd Timm

The Village of Hortonville is defined by its strong commitment to youth, recreation, and community involvement. Through Hortonville Youth Sports, dedicated parents play an active role in providing athletic opportunities for local children. A longstanding partnership among the Village, the Village Board, and the Hortonville Area School District helps maintain a diverse system of high-quality parks and recreational facilities. This collaboration ensures that children and families have safe, accessible spaces to enjoy leisure activities, build connections, and participate in athletics year-round.

1986, has shrunk considerably. With this change comes new job opportunities that have filled the gap left by the closing of the mills. Health care, manufacturing, and construction are just a few industries that are ever-growing in the Fox Cities. ThedaCare Regional Medical Center and Ascension/St. Elizabeth’s, Miller Electric, Pierce Manufacturing, and Boldt construction are some of the largest employers in the area.

And of course, some of the paper companies have adapted and shifted to meet the modern needs of the world. Appvion and Kimberly-Clark are just two survivors from the long history of the original industry that helped build the community.

One unfortunate aspect of the legacy left by the paper industry is the continued issues of the pollution of the Fox River. The 1986 *Sports Illustrated* article mentions the cleanup effort underway on the Fox, but years later, there would be a massive \$1.3 billion cleanup project that would span the years between 2004 and 2020. For decades, seven paper companies dumped polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, which are cancer-causing chemicals, into the river. It was decided that these companies would be held financially responsible for the cleanup costs. In all, 6.5 million cubic yards of toxic PCB sediment were removed from a 39-mile stretch of the Lower Fox River.

Although the project is considered complete, water quality will continue to be monitored for some time. There have been positive results from the project, but experts expect it will take

Photo supplied by Fox Communities Credit Union.

FOX CITIES *continued*

another 30 years or more before the fish caught from the Fox River would be considered safe for human consumption.

As of 2026, the project has fallen under some scrutiny; it was revealed that the multi-year dredging operations exposed those working on the project to dangerous chemicals, resulting in ongoing health and cancer concerns. The unfortunate reality is that no community is without its issues, and the consequences of our actions today will always reach far into the future. Current and subsequent generations will have to carry the torch in the cleanup efforts and continue to advocate for the environment.

SPORTS AND ATHLETICS

One aspect of the Fox Cities that has flourished over the decades is sports



and athletics. Since 1986, many sports facilities and complexes have been built. For example, the Neuroscience Group Field at Fox Cities Stadium in Grand Chute, which can hold up to 5,900 people, was built in 1995. It's home to the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers (once known as the Appleton Foxes).

There's also the Community First Champion Center, a 164,000-square-foot indoor sports center used for youth and community sporting events located in Grand Chute, which opened in November 2019. Then there's the Appleton Family Ice Center, which operates year-round and was built in 1999. This is a place where youth and junior hockey players and figure skaters can obtain expert instruction, and where the public has access to ice skating, as well.

The USA Youth Sports Complex, located off Evergreen Drive in Appleton, is considered one of the finest youth sports facilities in the state. State, regional, and national competitions are regularly held on the 80 acres of parkland that features 15 soccer fields, two Little League

■ Appleton Legion Baseball is one of the oldest Legion baseball programs in America – now in its 100th year.

Rayne Winans, Wingz Disc Golf, lines up her shot at the Grignon Disc Golf Course in Kaukauna.



Village of Kimberly
President Chuck Kuen

Competitive, committed, cooperative, community. Four words that lead to excellence.

Yes, a supportive community, cooperative parents and coaches, committed athletes, coaches, and parents teamed with a competitive spirit, all lead to impressive results in Kimberly sports.

That competitive spirit, commitment to excellence, and support from the community lead to success beyond the court, the pitch, the ball field, or gridiron. Excellence in classroom performance, stellar performers in band and drama, debate or dance; success — striving for excellence — makes Kimberly special.

Kimberly has been and continues to be dedicated to excellence along with humility and grace.

As a father of four Kimberly grads I have witnessed this dedication, lived through lean years and wonderful results on the fields, courts, and stage. It remains “the people,” the community, that fosters success.

diamonds, and two large baseball diamonds. There are thousands of local kids who play baseball or soccer, so having access to a facility such as this is another wonderful asset.

Though the Appleton YMCA has been a staple in the community since 1888, in 2000 the Appleton and Neenah-Menasha YMCAs voted to unite, forming the YMCA of the Fox Cities. The united YMCA serves more than 52,000 members across its six branches in the Fox Valley.

Outagamie County recently partnered with the YMCA to open a new childcare center, scheduled to begin operations in August 2027 in Grand Chute.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

There are also many places to go for less-organized recreation. For instance, the Fox Cities is home to 10 public golf courses for people of all skill levels to enjoy. Pickleball is also a wildly popular sport that is growing every year. Just nine years ago, in 2017, there was only one location to play pickleball in the area; as of 2022, there were 28 locations and a total of 82 courts across the Fox Cities.

Local philanthropists like Mary Beth Nienhaus have made commitments to invest in the future of sports in the community. From her generous donations and fund-raising efforts came the Mary Beth Nienhaus Activity Center for seniors, the Nienhaus Sports Complex at Appleton West High School, and Mary Beth Nienhaus Pickleball Complex at Telulah Park, just to name a few. Nienhaus and many others ensure that the sports legacy of the community lives on.

Over the years, there has also been an effort to expand the walking, hiking, and biking trails in the Fox Cities. There are now more than 100 miles of trails throughout the area. Interconnected trails allow bikers to ride across multiple municipalities continuously, making the Fox Cities a terrific place for cyclists.

MORE THAN SPORTS

Though the sports scene is strong in the Fox Cities, there are many other qualities that make this area worth living in. For example, there are more than 60 excellent schools throughout the Fox Cities that parents and teachers alike find attractive. The students from the Appleton, Freedom, Hortonville, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Little Chute, Menasha, and Neenah school districts are consistently high-performing on state testing. And several charter and magnet schools, such as TESLA, ATECH,



■ A special league for special kids. The Miracle League of the Fox Valley, a program of Goodwill NCW, gives children with disabilities the opportunity to play baseball at the fully accessible John Wollner Fox Cities Miracle Field in Memorial Park in Appleton.



Town of Freedom
Administrator/Economic
Development Director
Adam Ruechel

Freedom has a sports culture that starts with a deep community backing. Key factors are the multiple sports organizations that ensure a massive portion of our youth are active in a wide variety of recreational and tournament leagues and have the ability to be active from early ages.

The Town of Freedom boasts impressive sports and recreational amenities at our main sport complex facility VFW Park, where amazing community and organizational partners assist the town on continual updates and improvements.

Along with Freedom High School — producing conference, sectional, and state championship teams yearly — this makes Freedom a special sports community.

and the Fox River Academy, provide a variety of options to suit any student's learning interests.

As in 1986, College Avenue in Appleton continues to be home to many thriving local businesses, as well as a spectacular farmers market and tremendous festivals that take place throughout the year. There are numerous restaurants, taverns, and shops that line the downtown area, and anything one can't find in Appleton is likely to be found in a neighboring town just a short drive away.

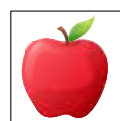
The Appleton farmers market was officially launched in 1983 with only 25 vendors in a downtown parking lot. As it grew, it was relocated to College Avenue in 2002. Today, it features more than 100 vendors and attracts upwards of 8,000 community members each weekend between June and October. There are also farmers markets in Kaukauna, Little Chute, Menasha, and Neenah.

There is no lack of entertainment in the area, either. Every August since 2013, the Mile of Music festival has drawn crowds to listen to incredible music in Downtown Appleton. Back in 1986 when McCallum was writing his article for *Sports Illustrated*,

Paperfest in Kimberly was about to burst into reality; it's been an annual festival since 1989. The Fox Cities Festival of Lights, held in Darboy, features a beautiful half-mile of wooded trail decorated by more than 200,000 lights beginning at the end of November each year. The Downtown Appleton Christmas Parade is widely known as the largest holiday parade in the Midwest, drawing more than 80,000 spectators each year.

All of these fun and unique festivals and events provide spectacular entertainment and a cohesive sense of community for attendees.

Though the Fox Cities have grown and changed, this region remains an exceptional place to live, work, and play. It may not be the same quaint community that McCallum wrote about in *Sports Illustrated* in 1986, but it still shines brightly. It's difficult to imagine or predict what the Fox Cities may be like in another 40 years, though with so much to offer and so many outstanding people, it's safe to assume it will still be an amazing place to call home. ■



Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, to Neuroscience Group Field, home of the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, the Midwest League affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers.

It's 2026, and this ballpark is 31 years old. People not from around here wouldn't believe that if you told them. Of course, if you showed people not from around here a picture of the stadium when it first opened back in

1995, they wouldn't believe it's the same stadium.

A DREAM AND A PLOT OF LAND

Fox Cities Stadium — as it started life — began as a plot of land on the west side of Highway 41 and a dream. A dream to save professional baseball in Northeastern Wisconsin.

Goodland Field, a stadium that opened in 1940 for the old Appleton Papermakers of the Wisconsin State League, was the home of the Appleton

Foxes from 1958 to 1994. By the end of 1993, Goodland Field on Spencer Street, as romantic and filled to the brim of the grandstand roof as it was, had reached the end of its usefulness to baseball.

There were demands for stadium improvements. Lighting had to be upgraded. The field had to be improved. Player amenities needed to join the 1990s instead of being stuck in the 1960s. Something had to change, or the Foxes would go the way of the Wausau Timbers, Madison Muskies,

Photos provided by the Timber Rattlers

Folks in the Fox Cities have a major thing going with the minor league Timber Rattlers

by **Chris Mehring**

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME!



Fans old and young enjoy game day. From the grandstand to the grass hillside – there's not a bad seat in the house.



and Kenosha Twins. In other words, the Foxes would have been heading out of state. Minor League Baseball wouldn't be back anywhere near the Fox Cities if the Foxes left town.

It didn't matter that Earl Weaver managed the franchise to a Three-I League Championship in 1960. So what if Cy Young Award Winners like Dean Chance, LaMarr Hoyt, and Sparky Lyle pitched on the mound? Who cared that Hall of Famer Goose Gossage won 18 games in a season as a starter for the Foxes? Three straight Midwest League titles (1982, 1983, and 1984) or that magical, almost-unbeatable 1978 pennant-winning team, plus a quarter would have bought you a tap beer at the bar Rocky Bleier's family ran on Walnut Street.

Even Alex Rodriguez making his professional debut for the Foxes in 1994 would not have been enough to save professional baseball in the Fox Cities. The only thing that could have would grow from that dream and that patch of land on the west side of Highway 41.

A LIVING THING

Fox Cities Stadium was alive on the night of its first game. Workers were still putting finishing touches on the ballpark on April 20, 1995 moments before the gates opened on a frigid night. More than 3,000 fans braved the

conditions — and delayed start due to a tantrum by the opposing manager who thought it was too cold — to see history. Unfortunately, those fans did not see the end of the game that night, as it had to be halted later in the evening, with the game tied.

A stadium is a living thing. It can also be a growing thing that constantly evolves with the right care and a proper plan. The stadium was a basic ballpark when it opened. It is far from basic now.

First, a picnic pavilion was built to protect large group outings from the weather. Then, a home run porch was built in the outfield for 2007. The old dot matrix scoreboard was replaced by a state-of-the-art videoboard in 2008.

A seat in the Fox Club behind home plate affords a goodly view of Neuroscience Group Field.

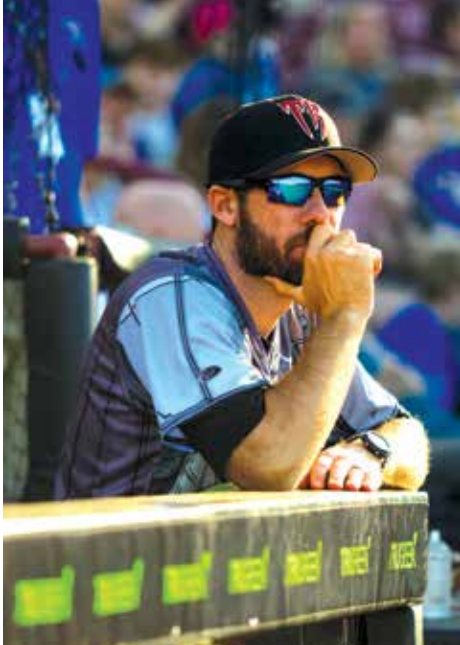


The franchise received a huge jolt after the 2008 season when the Milwaukee Brewers became the parent club of the Rattlers. This was the first time Appleton Professional Baseball Club was affiliated with a Milwaukee MLB team since 1953, when the Braves and Papermakers partnered for one season before the Papermakers and Wisconsin State League folded.

The current partnership with Milwaukee has succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectations.

The attendance for home games in 2009 was over 250,000 and brought on a new round of renovations. A variety of new seating areas were put in alongside both dugouts as the bullpens were moved beyond the outfield fence. Those seating areas included an All-You-Can-Eat section and sections of patio tables along with more box seats and a beach. Yes, a beach that could be accessed by a boardwalk that allowed fans to walk out to watch pitchers warm up in the new bullpens.

The stadium kept growing as the Brewers grew into the relationship with



Field Manager Nick Stanley keeps a watchful eye on his players.

the Rattlers. Plans were already in the works for major renovations as the 2012 Rattlers marched to the first Midwest League title since 1984. The demolition of parts of the stadium started the morning the team left for Game Three of the Championship Series in Fort Wayne and was well underway by the time the team returned from Indiana with the trophy.



It was like a brand-new stadium when the team opened the 2013 season. A second level was added with six suites. The Fox Club, a nod to the history of the franchise, would be open year-round. The team store, the home clubhouse, concessions stands, and the front office work area were all expanded, too.

A quick aside about the front office. The Foxes were run for many years by a full-time general manager and a seasonal assistant general manager from a single office at Goodland Field with help from a volunteer board of directors. The Timber Rattlers now have over 30 full-time employees.

THE BUSINESS OF BASEBALL

The business of baseball was humming along just fine. Until the sudden stop. The stadium and the people running it met the challenges of no season in 2020 and the contraction of minor league teams for the start of 2021.

Third Base Ventures stepped in as the new owners of both the team and the stadium in December 2020. In February 2021, the Timber Rattlers signed a 10-year agreement with the Brewers to remain their Midwest League affiliate as the league moved up to the High-A Classification.

In 2022, another major renovation was announced as part of the changing landscape of baseball. This one would include a lot for the players.

A new clubhouse was built from scratch for the Timber Rattlers players. A new weight room, batting cage, commissary, player lounge, training room, and other rooms mandated by Major League Baseball were built, leading one player to marvel after seeing it for the first time: "Can I sign a ten-year contract with the Timber Rattlers?"

Fans were not forgotten in this round of renovations. They got their perks. A new seating area above the left field wall was constructed, and the boardwalk was extended behind the left field wall to allow a 360-degree walk around Neuroscience Group Field.

A slide that is reminiscent of Bernie's at American Family Field was constructed. Timber Rattlers fans are allowed to ride this one.

Change is constant in baseball and to keep up with the times, Diamond

Eric Bitonti waits for a throw to first on a pickoff play during a recent game against the Peoria Chiefs.

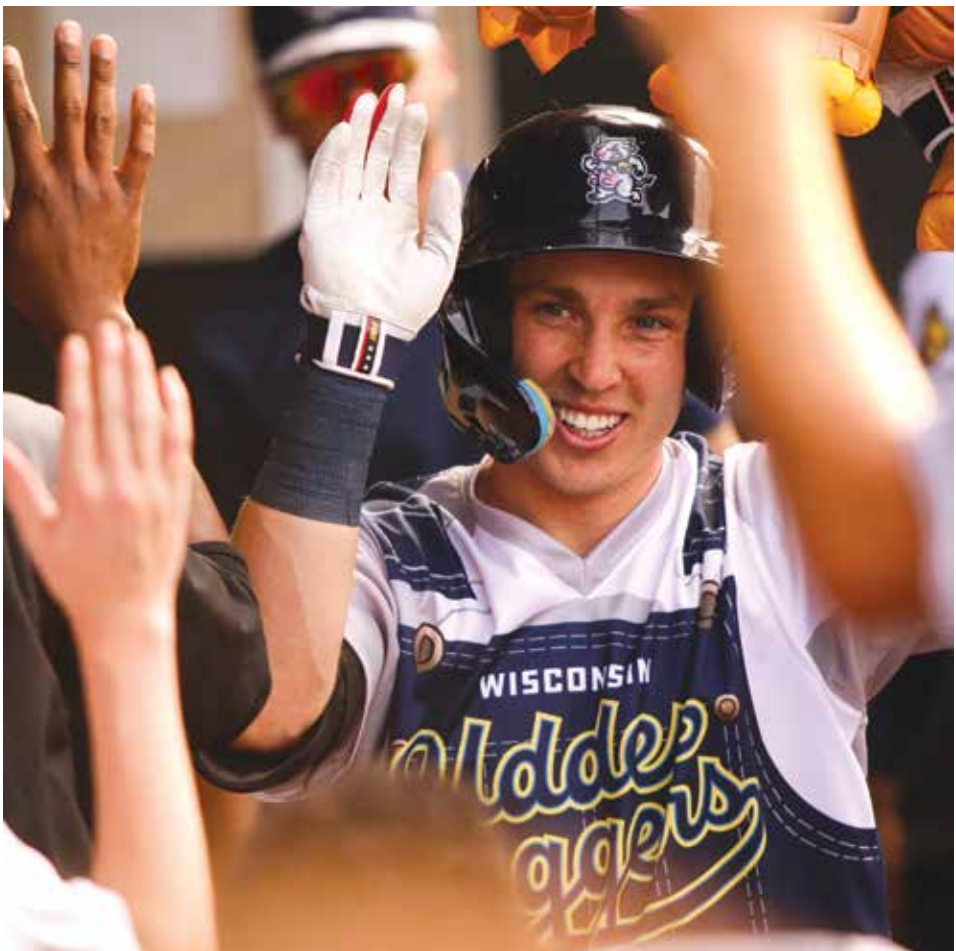
Baseball Holdings purchased the Timber Rattlers in May 2025. The only thing the average fan will notice will be the installation of the new Whiffleball Field behind the left field berm that opened this year for future Timber Rattlers to live out their dreams.

The people in charge of the day-to-day operations are still the same. The Brewers keep sending exciting prospects like Jackson Chourio, Jacob Misiorowski, Cooper Pratt, Luis Lara, Jesús Made, Luis Peña, and Andrew Fischer to play in front of the fans who love coming to this beautiful ballpark that started as a dream and became a jewel on a patch of land west of what is now Interstate 41. ■

Come see what's brewin'!

Originally developed for the Salute the Cows promotion during Dairy Month in June, the Wisconsin Udder Tuggers became a beloved alter-ego that still captures the spirit of the state and its notable dairy industry.

Young fans have reason to be excited for this year's team.





SPORTS REPLAY

Brought to you by the



Sports Illustrated Photo Shoot ...Take Two!

BY JON HAGEN

In 1986, *Sports Illustrated* had decided to feature Appleton and the surrounding area for a big story on sports in Middle America, USA. Neenah native Jill Lieber, a columnist for the magazine, was a driving force for Appleton being chosen for the 33-page layout, titled "America at Play. Sports in Appleton, Wisconsin." The cover featured NFL players William "Refrigerator" Perry and Ed "Too Tall" Jones. The date of the issue was August 11, 1986.



Al Olson as a member of the Appleton Fire Department in 1986 working out of Station One.

Sports Illustrated sent some scouts to research the Appleton sporting scene to get ideas for their stories. They noticed firefighters in their red uniforms playing in the rec softball league at Memorial Park. They wanted the red "Appleton Fire Fighters" uniform in the "big photo" that would be the centerfold of the magazine. One day, a representative from

the magazine called the Appleton Fire Department and explained what they wanted. The secretary who answered the call said she knew Al Olson was on the team, and he was working at Station One when they called. She told Chief Rich Davis about the unusual request.

It was just after 1:00 p.m. and Al was not supposed to be in the kitchen at Fire Station #1, drinking coffee. He should have been outside, doing training. Davis approached Olson, who thought he was going to be in trouble. Davis said, "Al, *Sports Illustrated* called and they want to take a picture of you tonight." Al was surprised that Chief Davis, who had been hired only a short time earlier, even knew his name, and he thought this "*Sports Illustrated* photo shoot" was some sort of a gag, a firehouse prank. The chief said, "They want you in your softball uniform, on the top level of the parking ramp." Chief Davis gave Al permission to go home and get his AFD uniform for the late afternoon photo shoot.

Olson and his lieutenant went to the top of the parking ramp behind the Paper Valley Hotel. Olson was still on-duty. As the magazine's photographer worked to get everyone in position for the photos, the late-afternoon sky darkened as a big storm was



Al Olson (left) 40 years after the *Sports Illustrated* photo, this time posing with Michael Wiese (an Appleton firefighter) and his son Gavin.

approaching from the west. Al told the photographer that the fire department often received calls for help during storms, and he'd have to leave if he was paged out for an emergency. Shortly after the shoot was completed, Al did have to respond to a storm-related call.

A couple of days later, Al got another call from *Sports Illustrated*. The film had been flown to New York overnight and the photo editors were not satisfied with the photos that had been taken. They felt there were too many people in the original photos, and they wanted to schedule a second photo shoot.

So on a Monday evening, a smaller group was positioned at the parking ramp and more photos were taken. That is the one that appeared in *Sports Illustrated*. Al had to put his AFD uniform on that night anyway ... the firefighters had a game at Memorial Park later that night. ■

Al is an Appleton native and a graduate of Appleton West High School. He served as an Appleton firefighter for almost 34 years. He and his wife Cyd have two children and three grandchildren.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS ARE BACK!

The 2026 high school football season is here! The Patriots, Lightning, Terrors, Foxes, Fighting Irish, Polar Bears, Ghosts, Papermakers, Mustangs, Bluejays, Rockets, Zephyrs, and Hawks are all returning to the gridiron.

Seniors are playing their final high school games, looking to leave their mark. Underclassmen are pushing themselves in practices and scrimmages working hard to earn playing time, and coaches are busy drawing up game plans. Fans pack the bleachers, cheering on their hometown heroes with unwavering support.

Beyond the action on the field, high school football fosters camaraderie among teammates, school pride, and community unity. From marching band halftime shows to gathering at the concession stand, the whole town gets involved. As the season unfolds, every game promises thrilling rivalry, leadership growth, and unforgettable memories. High school football is back—and it's better than ever. ■

A heartfelt thank you to these sponsors for their community spirit!

Please support the businesses that support high school athletics!



APPLETON EAST

- AUG 21** @ Pulaski Red Raiders
- AUG 28** GB Preble Hornets
- SEP 04** @ Neenah Rockets
- SEP 10** Kimberly Papermakers
- SEP 18** @ Fond du Lac Cardinals
- SEP 25** Hortonville Polar Bears
- OCT 02** @ Oshkosh West Indians
- OCT 09** Appleton North Lightning
- OCT 16** Kaukauna Ghosts

APPLETON NORTH

- AUG 20** Mukwonago Indians
- AUG 27** @ West De Pere Phantoms
- SEP 04** Hortonville Polar Bears
- SEP 10** @ Fond du Lac Cardinals
- SEP 18** Kaukauna Ghosts
- SEP 25** @ Neenah Rockets
- OCT 02** Kimberly Papermakers
- OCT 09** @ Appleton East Patriots
- OCT 16** Oshkosh West Wildcats





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AUG 27	@ Sheboygan South Red Wings	AUG 27	@ Little Chute Mustangs
SEP 04	GB Southwest Fighting Trojans	SEP 04	Seymour Thunder
SEP 11	@ De Pere Redbirds	SEP 11	@ Winneconne Wolves
SEP 17	West De Pere Phantoms	SEP 18	New London Bulldogs
SEP 25	Bay Port Pirates	SEP 26	@ Shawano Hawks
OCT 02	@ GB Preble Hornets	OCT 02	Kohler/Lutheran/Christian Crusaders
OCT 09	Ashwaubenon Jaguars	OCT 09	Waupaca Comets
OCT 16	@ Pulaski Red Raiders	OCT 16	@ Xavier Hawks



FREEDOM		HORTONVILLE	
AUG 21	Lake Mills L-Cats	AUG 21	@ Greenfield Hustlin Hawks
AUG 28	@ Xavier Hawks	AUG 28	Pulaski Red Raiders
SEP 04	New London Bulldogs	SEP 04	@ Appleton North Lightning
SEP 11	Denmark Vikings	SEP 10	Oshkosh West Wildcats
SEP 18	@ Kohler Co-op Blue Bombers	SEP 18	Kimberly Papermakers
SEP 25	Little Chute Mustangs	SEP 25	@ Appleton East Patriots
OCT 02	@ Wrightstown Tigers	OCT 02	Kaukauna Ghosts
OCT 09	Luxemburg Casco Spartans	OCT 09	@ Neenah Rockets
OCT 16	@ Sheboygan Falls Falcons	OCT 16	@ Fond du Lac Cardinals



KAUKAUNA		KIMBERLY	
AUG 21	@ West Allis Hale Huskies	AUG 20	Sussex Hamilton Chargers
AUG 28	@ GB Notre Dame Academy	AUG 27	@ Bay Port Pirates
SEP 04	@ Kimberly Papermakers	SEP 04	Kaukauna Ghosts
SEP 10	Neenah Rockets	SEP 10	@ Appleton East Patriots
SEP 18	@ Appleton North Lightning	SEP 18	@ Hortonville Polar Bears
SEP 25	Fond du Lac Cardinals	SEP 25	Oshkosh West Wildcats
OCT 02	@ Hortonville Polar Bears	OCT 02	@ Appleton North Lightning
OCT 09	Oshkosh West Wildcats	OCT 09	Fond du Lac Cardinals
OCT 16	@ Appleton East Patriots	OCT 16	@ Neenah Rockets



LITTLE CHUTE		MENASHA	
AUG 21	@ Xavier Hawks	AUG 21	Plymouth Panthers
AUG 27	Fox Valley Lutheran Foxes	AUG 28	@ Mosinee Indians
SEP 04	Wrightstown Tigers	SEP 04	@ Oshkosh North Spartans
SEP 11	@ Luxemburg Casco Spartans	SEP 11	@ Manitowoc Lincoln Ships
SEP 18	Sheboygan Falls Falcons	SEP 17	Green Bay West Wildcats
SEP 25	@ Freedom Irish	SEP 25	@ Sheboygan North Golden Raiders
OCT 02	Denmark Vikings	OCT 02	Notre Dame Tritons
OCT 09	@ Kohler Co-op Blue Bombers	OCT 09	@ Sheboygan South Redwings
OCT 16	@ Waupaca Wolves	OCT 16	Green Bay East Red Devils



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First Break All the Rules for Coaches

BY MICHAEL BOYLE

As I was reading Marcus Buckingham's management book, First Break All the Rules, I couldn't help but think about my daughter's recent experience in youth hockey.

By most standards, she had a great year. She was her team's leading scorer, and the team qualified for the national tournament for her age bracket. However, if I asked her how the year went, she would have seen things differently. In spite of her success, the season was tough on her.



While Buckingham's book is focused on employees, I realized athletes are motivated by the same things. What motivates people at work (and probably at practice) is not money, and it's not power. It's not success on the field, court, or ice.

What really motivates employees? I was both surprised and embarrassed when I read the list:

- Do I have the materials and equipment I need to work right?*
- Do I have the opportunity at work to do what I do best, every day?*
- In the past seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?*
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?*
- Do my opinions seem to count?*
- Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?*
- Do I have a best friend at work?*
- In the past six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?*
- This past year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?*

Keep in mind these are the actual things that employees identified as important in Buckingham's book. As a coach, ask yourself those same questions. Relate them to your players.

1. In the last seven days, have I praised or recognized every one of my players for doing good work? Make a list and do this either in private or publicly in front of the team. To maintain team dynamics, it might need to be a little of both.
2. Do I seem to care about my players as people? Ask yourself if you know anything about your players. Are they doing well in school? Do you collect report cards?
3. Do I encourage my players' development? This might be the easiest one to say "yes" to, from a coach's perspective.

4. At practice, do players' opinions seem to count? This might seem like the inmates running the asylum, but it could be as simple as "what should we do for the last five minutes?"
5. Are all team members committed to doing quality work? Are practices good? Does everyone put forth an effort? How's attendance?
6. Does everyone seem to have a best friend on the team? This may not seem important, but based on Buckingham's research, it is. Happiness on the team is enhanced by friendships.
7. In the past six months, have I talked to each player about their progress? This is tedious, but necessary, and it relates to numbers one, two, three, and six. A talk about progress is a chance to recognize a player, show you care, and encourage development. In addition, you can ask a simple question: "Who is your best friend on the team?"
8. This past year, has each player had opportunities to learn and grow? If you are doing a good job, this should be an easy "yes."

I am convinced that we can become better bosses — and better coaches — by studying what goes on in the business world. An employee is a team member. What makes for happy employees makes for good teams. Review the eight questions above and ask yourself if you are creating an environment for success. ■

NEENAH	ST. MARY CATHOLIC
AUG 21 GB Notre Dame Academy	AUG 21 Hilbert Wolves
AUG 28 Arrowhead Warhawks	AUG 27 @ Manawa Wolves
SEP 04 Appleton East Patriots	SEP 04 @ Two Rivers Purple Raiders
SEP 10 @ Kaukauna Ghosts	SEP 10 Chilton Tigers
SEP 18 @ Oshkosh West Wildcats	SEP 18 @ Valders Vikings
SEP 25 Appleton North Lightning	SEP 25 New Holstein Huskies
OCT 02 @ Fond du Lac Cardinals	OCT 02 @ Roncalli Jets
OCT 09 Hortonville Polar Bears	OCT 09 @ Kiel Raiders
OCT 16 Kimberly Papermakers	OCT 16 Brillion Lions



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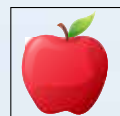
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A PLACE TO PLAY



Sports is a way of life in the Fox Cities just as surely as the Fox River flows through the Valley. As in much of America, the ethos of the Fox Cities is: Work hard, play hard. So when the sun rises here, the games are just beginning.

photographs by Paul Stumpf

■ Paul Grasse of Hortonville shooting hoops in his driveway.



■ Anne Wiegman, Donna Hintz, Nancy Brux, and Mary Kelly enjoying the day at the bocce ball court at Jefferson Park in Menasha.

Troy Martin showing off his skills at Odyssey Climbing + Fitness in Appleton. He is part of Up Ending Parkinsons, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides guided rock climbing for people living with Parkinsons Disease. Visit www.upendingparkinsons.org.

Gage Zietlow reaching for the top of the warped wall at USA Ninja Challenge in Appleton.

AUGUST 2026



■ The Kaukauna High School pom and dance squad practicing their routine this summer. Front row left to right: Savannah Nackers, Norah Verhagen, Marli Sanderfoot, and Hattie Mader. Back row left to right: Charlotte Cronin, Shaylyn Beversdorf, Leighton Kelly, and Kaylee Behling.



■ Keegan Johnson, a cold drink in one hand and a cornhole bag in the other, enjoying a family reunion in the Fox Valley. What could be more American than good family, good friends, and a little backyard competition?

Jeanne Loehnis, Michele Biese, Cyd Olsen , and Bobby Lamontange play at The Mary Beth Nienhaus Pickleball Complex at Telulah Park in Appleton.
The Neenah-Nodaway Yacht Club (NNYC) has been in existence since 1864, making it one of the oldest Yacht Clubs in the country.





■ Liam Seubert keeping second base free of dirt ensures that softball at Harrison Field is just good clean fun.

REID GOLF COURSE

Fun For Every Season

by Nicole Campuzano



Ashley and Greg LeSage, and Kirby and Robin Allen, finishing up on the 10th hole at Reid Golf Course in Appleton.



Reid Golf Course has been a mainstay in the Appleton community for nearly one hundred years. Located at 1100 East Fremont Street, this 18-hole course, complete with a clubhouse, offers a beautiful space, conveniently located, for golfers of any age or skill level to enjoy a great golfing experience and spend the day outdoors.

Additionally, the fun at Reid doesn't stop when the weather grows cold; there are winter activities on offer, too! Over the years, the golf course has grown and changed, but it remains a great and affordable attraction today.

The history of the golf course begins on Labor Day of 1928. That autumn, the city of Appleton officially opened the Appleton Municipal Golf Course. At that time, it was a nine-hole course, designed by area golfers. Jeff Plasschaert, the current Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) at Reid Golf Course, explains, "Although Reid Golf Course is a municipal course, it's actually considered an enterprise fund within the City of Appleton's umbrella, which means that Reid operates as a self-sustaining business, not subsidized by taxpayers, following Appleton's policies. Many residents do not know that Reid does not get tax assistance, and they assume that it does. Many municipal golf courses do get subsidies, but Reid needs to make money to spend money."

Often, municipal golf courses are subsidized much like a public park, pool, or senior center. A municipal golf course — a "muni," as they are often called today — gives access to all, not just to those who have a membership, as is often the case at private courses.

Over the past twenty or so years, across the nation, there has been an increase in the number of municipal golf courses. Presently, there are between 2,500 and 3,000 municipal golf courses across the United States, representing about 18% of the total number of courses.

Plasschaert says, "Municipal golf is the place where everyone can learn the game at a low cost of entry and everyone is allowed to play. For example, Reid offers free junior rental clubs for their round a day at the range. We are here to grow the game."

Although the golf course began as a nine-hole, city officials sought to grow the course. In 1931, city officials considered expanding the course, but they felt the cost was too high. By then the Great Depression was in full swing and financial times were difficult. Nine years later, in 1940, city officials again considered an expansion. However, some of the land they wanted to use was outside city limits, which created a barrier for them.

It wasn't until Estelle Reid stepped up to make a generous financial gift that the expansion project was able to go forward. Estelle's

father, Thomas Reid, had bequeathed her money meant to enhance the city of Appleton. Ms. Reid also used some of the money to establish the Library of Science scholarship at Lawrence University, and some went to recreational opportunities, such as parks and playgrounds in the area. And some of it went to the golf course.

In September 1940, the Park Board purchased 52 acres of land. Construction began a week later. The following April, the newly expanded 18-hole golf course opened. They officially changed the name from the Appleton Municipal Golf Course to Reid Municipal Golf Course on July 23, 1941, in honor of Estelle Reid's legacy.

The stone clubhouse was opened and dedicated nine years later, on July 30, 1950. It remained largely unchanged for the next 45 years, until an extensive remodel was performed in 1995. In the clubhouse today, they offer a variety of food and drinks for remarkably reasonable prices. For instance, a guest could enjoy a cheeseburger and French fries for less than \$10!

More recently, in 2013–2014, Reid underwent a major renovation, creating two stormwater ponds to benefit neighborhoods near the golf course. Plasschaert says, "We are always looking to improve the property, whether it be paving cart paths, adding drainage, or painting the clubhouse."

The golf course has hosted several events over the years. One of them, the Appleton City Golf Tournament, has been held every June since 1946. This two-day 36-hole stroke play event features men's, women's, and senior divisions, with participants competing for the city title.

There's also the Fox Cities Amateur Golf Tournament, which began in the 1950s. This tournament was discontinued for several years but resumed in 1967. It "is traditionally a 36-hole stroke play tournament broken into several competitive categories, including Championship, A, B, and C flights," and is sponsored by the Post Crescent. Some upcoming events which will be held at Reid Golf Course are the Fox Cities Championship, held on August 14, 15, and 16; a 2-Pin Challenge (date TBD); and a Family Golf Day on August 23.

Reid Golf Course also hosts more than 20 independently run leagues and offers a junior golf program. The junior golf program features golf lessons for

kids ages 7–13, ages 11–17, and junior golf tournaments.

When the weather grows cold and snow covers the grounds, there are some great winter activities available, as well. On the grounds are a sledding hill and groomed trails for cross country skiing, fat tire biking, and snowshoeing, all available to the public. And the best part: These activities are all free of charge! Plasschaert adds, "Appleton Recreation opens the clubhouse, weather permitting, as a warming shelter, selling hot chocolate, candy, and popcorn, [which is] great for families."

Plasschaert says the golf course is an asset to the community in a variety of ways. He explains, "For me, Reid is more than a golf course. For those who do not play golf, Reid is still green space helping with the urban heat effect, and it is an urban wildlife sanctuary. Wildlife does not have a lot of areas to call their own in urban environments, but Reid offers a natural safe setting. Reid is also an asset as it is a stormwater filtration location. Stormwater flows into two ponds on the golf course from surrounding areas where nutrients are allowed to settle out and cleaner water travels towards the Fox River."

He goes on to explain that "Reid has been and will continue to be a great place for people to congregate and enjoy a round of golf at a reasonable rate. We hear from many people who spent many summer hours growing up here and families often reminisce about using the sledding hill or winter amenities."

Plasschaert says that over the past three years, more than 45,000 rounds of golf have been played at Reid, and the clientele ranges in age "from young kids to grandparents who are happy to be on the course!" Clearly, this is a place that offers value to people of all ages.

Generations of Appletonians have enjoyed a leisurely afternoon out on the grassy fairway, sharpening their skills and creating memories with family and friends, or slipping down the sledding hill on a chilly winter day. This treasure right in our own backyard provides a great golfing experience at a relatively affordable price, as well as excellent winter fun for the whole family.

So, if you're looking for some healthy, local entertainment, look no further than Reid Golf Course. ■



Todd Heid hitting out of the bunker at Reid Golf Course in Appleton.

Popping Up Success:

Local Kettle Corn Fundraisers Score Big for Area Youth Teams

BY JIM AND HANNA GRIESE

In communities all across Wisconsin, youth sports build more than athletes — they develop character, confidence, and lifelong friendships.

Yet rising costs for league fees, uniforms, travel, equipment, and ice time create real barriers for many families.

When expenses climb faster than budgets, smart fundraising becomes essential to keeping kids in the game.

Local organizations know this reality well.

"Fundraising partnerships with families and our Booster Clubs are crucial in providing the overall experience for our incredible student athletes," said the Kasey Smith, Athletic Director at Kaukauna High School. "The reality is our communities desire quality facilities, equipment, uniforms and student athlete experiences that simply would not happen without fundraising."

Heat Volleyball Club operates as a non-profit with the goal of affordability. "Fundraising allows us to offer our programs to players at a significantly reduced cost," representatives shared. "We have one whole club fundraiser for the betterment of the entire club while offering a variety of opportunities for families who need additional support.

"Each year we have multiple players who use fundraising to cover a good portion of their player fees to participate."

The Appleton Area Hockey Association echoes this challenge: "Fundraising is critical to youth hockey specifically because the cost of ice time and facility rentals continues to rise each year. These efforts help keep the sport accessible and affordable for all families in our community, ensuring every child has the opportunity to participate."

One local company has emerged as a reliable partner in these efforts. Your Favorite Concessions, owned by Jim and Hanna Griese, specializes in premium kettle corn and gourmet popcorn fundraisers that consistently deliver strong results.

Their program returns up to 50% of proceeds directly back to teams and clubs, providing meaningful support for fees, uniforms, and program needs.

Jim and Hanna have experienced the costs firsthand as sports parents, so they understand the impact.

"We had kids in sports and the costs can really add up — beyond club dues, there are uniforms, travel and hotels, and meals on the road. Having fundraisers really helped us to offset those costs and allow our kids to be involved in sports."

What makes a great fundraising product? High perceived value, an affordable price point, broad appeal across all ages, ease of selling, and strong repeat purchase potential.

Kettle corn and flavored popcorn check every box. They're fresh, delicious, and feel like a premium treat rather than just another fundraiser item.

Keys to raising more money include setting a realistic team goal and breaking it into individual targets, choosing the right product that families feel good selling, creating friendly competition with small incentives for top sellers, and establishing clear deadlines to maintain momentum.

Your Favorite Concessions works as a true partner — not just a supplier — by helping teams implement these strategies for maximum success.

When teams partner with Your Favorite Concessions, they gain more than funds. They gain a simple, enjoyable way to bring communities together while keeping local youth sports strong and accessible.

For clubs looking to score big off the field, premium kettle corn fundraisers offer a winning play.

Contact Your Favorite Concessions today to learn how their fundraiser program can support your team. ■



Contact: Find out more at yourfavoriteconcessions.com
Call Jim or Hanna at (920) 221-1202 click on the code to be taken directly to the fundraiser page.



1986: An Unforgettable Year in Sports

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BEARS SHUFFLE TO TITLE

The Bears demolished New England 46-10 in Super Bowl XX on Jan. 26. The lopsided victory punctuated a 18-1 season.

SPUD WEBB SOARS

The 5-foot-7 guard scored perfect 50s on both of his dunks in the finals to edge Hawks teammate and defending champion Dominique Wilkins in the NBA's slam dunk contest.

CINDERELLA CRASHES DANCE

Cleveland State, a 14th seed, stunned Indiana in the first round and St. Joseph's in the second round to make the Sweet 16, where it lost to seventh-seeded Navy.

THOMAS IS GOLDEN

No African-American figure skater had ever won a U.S. title or world championship until Debi Thomas accomplished both in 1986.

NICKLAUS WINS MASTERS

The Golden Bear fired a 30 on the back nine to blow past his younger rivals.

CLEMENS FANS 20

Boston's Roger Clemens set a Major League record when he struck out 20 in a 3-1 victory against the Mariners on April 29.

OWN GOAL DOOMS OILERS

Rookie defenseman Steve Smith attempted a cross-ice pass from next to his own net. The puck hit Oilers goalie Grant Fuhr's leg and wound up in the net.

SHOEMAKER WINS DERBY

Willie Shoemaker rode 17-1 long shot Ferdinand to a 2-1/2-length victory and became the oldest jockey in history to win the Run for the Roses.

ROY LIFTS CANADIENS

Rookie goaltender Patrick Roy

led the Canadiens to a five-game victory against Calgary in the Stanley Cup finals.

BO KNOWS BASEBALL

Bo Jackson was the top pick in the NFL draft (by Tampa Bay) and a fourth-round pick in the baseball draft (by Kansas City) in 1986.

MARADONA DAZZLES

Diego Maradona led Argentina to the title against West Germany. The infamous Hand of God goal and his Goal of the Century.

LEMOND MAKES HISTORY

Greg LeMond claimed the first of his three Tour de Frances in 1986, when he became the first American to win the race.

MARTINA VS. STEFFI

29-year-old Martina Navratilova fought off three match points and outlasted 17-year-old

Steffi Graf in the U.S. Open semifinals.

METS WIN EPIC WORLD SERIES

The Mets capped a miracle Game 6 rally when Bill Buckner's infamous error allowed the winning run to score in the 10th. Mets go on to win Game 7.

TYSON REACHES TOP

Mike Tyson, 20, became the youngest heavyweight champion when he knocked out Trevor Berbick in the second round.

GRETZKY SETS POINTS RECORD

Wayne Gretzky established an NHL record with 215 points in 1985-86.

BIAS DIES TRAGICALLY

22-year-old Len Bias died from cardiac arrest caused by a cocaine overdose. ■

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~ Peyton, Julia, and Layla Tamith

I thought I was strong when I arrived. You made me so much stronger now. You found my weaknesses and built me up. Thanks for the push and believing in me.
~ Easton



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What Has Changed in Nutrition And Exercise Over the Past 40 Years?

BY KATE HARRELL JENKINS, MS, RD, CSSD, LD, YMCA DIETITIAN AND PERSONAL TRAINER, NEENAH-MENASHA

I am grateful for everything I've learned in my past 20+ years in the wellness fields of both dietetics and exercise, as well as the years that came before. I remember working out to Jane Fonda with my mom on cassette tape back in the 1980s!

In my opinion, the primary influencers of change have been the speed with which we can access information and advances in technology. This certainly has made things easier for the consumer, but also harder on the practitioners who help clients navigate the wealth of information and misinformation available 24/7.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The internet, influencers, AI, oh my! Certainly, one of the biggest changes (and challenges) in both fields is the speed with which we can access information — accurate or not.

It is rare to get through a week or even a day without hearing “I read on the internet ...” The ease with which we can gather information is astounding, helpful but not without pitfalls. We have become a culture that wants a quick answer and the quick fix — the “summary” first, without looking at the details or where the information originated from. The quick answer may not be the research-based, qualified answer you need for success, and it might not be the answer that best fits you.

This quick access to information also leads to a quick spread of fads and trends in both nutrition and exercise realms. Again, good and bad. Looking back at just the past few years, intermittent fasting, keto, new weight-loss drugs, supplements galore! No wonder it is confusing as to what we should be doing.

At the same time, research has continued to evolve. Thinking back a few decades, recall:

- The low-fat, fat-free era of the '90s eventually led us to realize that replacing fats with sugars and simple carbohydrates is not the best choice for health.
- That led to a hyper-focus on sugars and low-carbohydrate

diets like keto — which may affect nutrient intake, gut health, and more.

- Along the way, we learned more about the health impact of artificial sweeteners and sugar substitutes. Aspartame made its way onto the World Health Organization's Group 2b carcinogen classification list.
- Protein has maintained a stronghold in past years. I remember walking into Target and the whole end aisle display was foods with PROTEIN added. *Please note, protein is found in real foods too!*

EXERCISE OPTIONS FOR ALL AGES

Just as access to information has increased, so have options for exercise and activity for all ages, abilities, and even chronic conditions. As a practitioner working with Parkinson's clients, I see the amazing growth of the Rock Steady Boxing (RSB) program: Since 2006, RSB has grown to more than 800 affiliates, covering every state and found in 14 different countries!

Since moving back to the area in 2015, I have seen considerable growth in exercise and activity options for all, including exercise machines in the local parks. Kids' programs encourage movement from a very young age, and the number of people running races has grown. Whether on the road or the trails, it is inspiring to see those inspired to train and move their bodies!

Modes of exercise have also expanded. There are new group fitness options and sports, like pickleball, that have led to the redesigning of our local parks to support the numbers that love to play. Competitions such as Tough Mudder and now Hyrox have fueled competition-specific training and motivate people to move in new and different ways.

TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS FOR TRAINING

I remember stopping to check my pulse *manually* with my basic digital watch. Now, we have data on EVERYTHING, and our watches alone are personal encyclopedias of our health. Many now rely on technology to tell them how they are feeling. But this is a double-edged sword. I have heard from many clients that functions like monitoring sleep actually deter from quality sleep, since they know the watch is watching.

But I do think there is much value in the data we can gather. For example, Heart Rate Variability has become increasingly popular and helpful in guiding recovery and mindfulness of how stress, sleep, and recovery can improve our overall health.

I joke that I wear a “stupid watch” instead of a smart watch, but it's important for me that I can check in with myself and sense how I am feeling. Am I rested? Did I sleep well? Is my heart rate elevated? Do I feel an increase in blood pressure? Am I fatigued during a workout that would normally feel “easy”? Do I need to slow down or perhaps take a walk with the dog today

rather than a hard workout? We can all decide what works best for us among ALL the options available.

Technology also has made exercise more accessible for many. In the past, if we had a major snowstorm, we would have simply canceled class, but now we can just hop on Zoom or choose an online option and off we go. During COVID, I reconnected with a former member of my gym in Portland, and since that time have been personal training virtually every week. If it is difficult to leave your home to exercise, or if you are intimidated by the gym, there are many options you can use at home. Peloton is a great example, and even the local YMCAs have added YMCA 360 so members have options outside of the physical gym space.

We have seen advances in nutrition tracking technology as well. Cronometer's Professional option allows me to see what my clients track via the app. This has significantly enhanced my practice. Consumers can get feedback much more readily than in years past.

Advanced modes of communication have enhanced the practitioner/client relationship and improved the success of exercise and nutrition programs. Forty years ago, we barely had email access. Now, with texting alone, we can communicate in seconds.

SPECIFICITY

There has been a significant shift in specificity of information and training. In the field of Dietetics, sports nutrition has grown considerably. In 2013, I sat for my first Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics exam, a credential that became available in 2005–2006. Advances in sports nutrition have added specific recommendations for all ages, sports, and more. Professional and collegiate sports teams will often have their own sports dietitian or even professional chef.

There have also been advances in Functional Aging. Age does NOT have to limit you, and both nutrition and exercise can improve function as we age. Just watch the movie *Nyad*, about swimmer Diana Nyad, who at age 64 completed the swim from Cuba to Florida. Nutrition and exercise research has shown us we can continue to live enjoyable, quality, functional lives, despite what aging throws at us.

Yes, our body changes as we age, but that does not mean we give up. Exercise is truly medicine, no matter what condition you are dealing with. I see this shift especially in my work with Parkinson's patients, but also those with conditions such as arthritis. Exercise can help people live a more functional, independent, enjoyable life into their later years.

I love the movement for building strong women — “lift heavy s***” as one of my clients stated — and although the current “skinny is in” trend is alarming, I see many women standing up to that and promoting strong over skinny. Let's keep that going!

A FULL-CIRCLE MOMENT

When I was an instructor at UWO, the last slide of my nutrition class presentation featured my grandpa. He was a farmer, and lived to the age of 100, still living on his farm. My point was that exercise and nutrition do not have to be complicated:

- Eat real, whole foods.
- Move your body, often. All movement counts.

Even at 100, my grandpa took pride in eating food he had grown, especially his own potatoes and fresh-from-the-orchard apples that he would make into applesauce. I believe we are starting to reconnect with real, whole food as we see the impact of processed foods on our bodies. There are many risks associated with a diet rich in processed and ultra-processed foods.

Did my grandpa go to the gym? Heck no! But even with the aches and pain of arthritis, he moved on the farm daily.

“The best resistance training program is the one you'll actually stick with,” said Stuart M. Phillips, PhD, FACSM, a professor in the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster University. “Training all major muscle groups at least twice a week matters far more than chasing the idea of a ‘perfect’ or complex training plan. Whether it's barbells, bands, or bodyweight, consistency and effort drive results.”

The 2026 resistance training guidelines from the American College of Sports Medicine highlight the importance of consistency and effort. I love their five key recommendations:

1. Consistency beats perfection. Doing something is the biggest win.
2. Same tools, different setting: Fine-tune your workouts based on what you want the most.
3. Make it personal: The best plan is one you'll stick with.
4. You don't need a gym: You can build strength and improve function without fancy equipment.
5. You don't need extreme methods to get results.

As advanced as we have become, sometimes getting back to the basics may actually be the true “fix” or cure. It's neat to see how far we have come, and I am curious to see what the next 40 years will bring. Hopefully, I will be retired by then and can write a refresher of this article from a different lens! ■

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SMILE LIKE A CHAMP!

Outdoors

WITH GREG SEUBERT

Big Crowd Turns Out for Annual Maple Syrup Days Open House

What started as a way to teach Scouts the art of making maple syrup now draws hundreds of people each year to an out-of-the-way place in northern Wisconsin.

Hundreds of people, from babies in strollers to senior citizens, headed to Bear Paw Scout Camp east of Mountain in April for the Bear Paw Maple Syrup Days Open House.

"This is the only maple syrup Scouting program in the nation where we teach kids how to do it, and we've been running this program here at Bear Paw for over 20 years now," event organizer Jason Brefczynski said at the start of this year's event, held April 11. "Last year was our 20th year."

Brefczynski is a volunteer with the Appleton-based Bay-Lakes Council, which operates the camp that sits on the shore of Bear Paw Lake in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

"Today's event is an open house event for all ages," he said. "For most of that 20 years, we just did it for Scouts, kids in middle school and high school. We ran an exclusive program for them teaching them everything from A to Z on how to make maple syrup. That wasn't good enough for everyone. All these wonderful young kids kept beating at our door and said, 'We want to come, too.' We created an event that is age-appropriate for everyone. We've been doing the open house for 12 years."

Representatives from the Wisconsin Maple Producers Association attended the first open house for the group's first tap.

"We've hosted that twice, last year and 12 years ago," Brefczynski said. "We usually do that the third weekend in March, but this is the first time we're running the event in April. We're going to decide whether we keep it in April or if we're going to move it to March. We haven't made a decision yet."

Besides getting to see and understand the process of making maple syrup, visitors to the open house also had the opportunity to participate in other activities.

Some of them decided to make their own pudgy pie, a popular campfire treat, while others chose to visit the camp's rock climbing wall; collect maple sap from buckets; take a nature hike or wagon ride; learn first aid skills; or make a bird feeder out of a pinecone and peanut butter.

On the other hand, the day is set aside for maple syrup. Bear Paw Scout Camp taps about 1,100 sugar and black maple trees. About 800 are tapped with gravity feed tubing and 300 are tapped with drop lines, with the sap dripping into buckets.



Tucker Stubbs, 11, of Peshtigo covers his pinecone bird feeder with peanut butter.
Greg Seubert photo



Eli Kittel, 7, of Kaukauna enjoys a pudgy pie made with apple pie filling and maple syrup during the Bear Paw Maple Syrup Days Open House.
Greg Seubert photo

"We get people to understand that it's not something that you just go up to a tree, you tap it and you drink it," Brefczynski said. "All of the extra work that goes on is unbelievable. We have maple syrup stations. We have our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) building, which hosts what we call a sugar shack. Maple syrup is very science-related, so that's why we have it in the STEM building."

"Kids can learn how to tap a tree, they can help collect our sap," he said. "We also have gravity tubes running from tree to tree, so they can also learn about that. You can listen to people talk about stuff, but until you do it, that's where you really learn. You have to get your hands dirty to understand how things work and happen. Some people can do it from a book, but most people enjoy doing it hands-on."

It takes about 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.

"Wisconsin is the fifth-largest producer of maple syrup," Brefczynski said. "Obviously Canada is No. 1 and Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire make a ton of it. It's a huge agricultural crop for Wisconsin and it's unbelievable how much we make here."

"You can buy real maple syrup at a grocery store," Brefczynski said. "Real maple syrup is a completely organic sugar that comes from the tree. Most of the pancake syrups you buy are corn syrup and that makes a huge difference in texture and taste."

Up to 600 people have visited past open houses and Brefczynski said he is hoping for at least 300 this year.



Mary Brefczynski serves fresh maple syrup April 11 at the Bear Paw Maple Syrup Days Open House near Mountain. Several hundred people showed up for this year's annual event, held at Bear Paw Scout Camp.
Greg Seubert photo

Sunshine and temperatures hovering in the low 50s greeted several camp visitors shortly after the event kicked off at 9 a.m.

"The day we had 600 people here, it was a high (temperature) of 26 and it started off at 5 degrees," Brefczynski said. "Getting the word out and peoples' schedules. That's the big thing that matters."

Visitors had a chance to sample some of the camp's syrup at a brunch that also included pancakes, eggs, and sausage.

"First of all, you can't have pancakes without maple syrup," Brefczynski said. "If we don't continue to teach people how to make maple syrup, that art will get lost. There's a lot of science, history, effort, and time that goes into making that bottle of syrup. We want to give kids and families an opportunity to see how that's done and how much work it takes to make it." ■



Greg Seubert is a freelance reporter, photographer and editor based out of his rural Weyauwega home. He spent 28 years covering high school sports for the Waupaca County Post, a Waupaca-based weekly newspaper, before stepping down in April 2024.

Before that, he spent 10 years as a reporter and editor at four other newspaper in Wisconsin. He joined the Waupaca County Post prior to the start of the 1996-97 school year and eventually covered sports teams from Waupaca, Iola-Scandinavia, Weyauwega-Fremont, Little Wolf (Manawa), Amherst, Wild Rose, Almond-Bancroft, Stevens Point, New London, Clintonville and Hortonville high schools.

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Playing Guts Frisbee at Wittmann Park
in the Village of Fox Crossing.



"When a ball dreams,
it dreams it's a frisbee." ■

~ Stancil Johnson
(1933-2021) Psychiatrist and
frisbee enthusiast

PARTING SHOTS

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