

# “The Time Machine” Bad News, Good News

Article 29

People generally give you a choice. “Which do you want to hear first, the bad news or the good news?” In the print media that is not an option, so here we go with the bad news first. I am writing this article on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. The summer solstice. The sun rose at 5:27 this morning and shall set at 9:06 this evening. Fifteen hours and thirty-nine minutes of daylight. By the time you read this we are well on our way to constantly losing daylight. Some people find that depressing. Sorry. However, you have not heard the good news. Football. It’s right around the corner. Bad news, good news should have had another “bad news” at the end. When you are reading this, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July will probably be just one week ahead of us or one week behind us. I don’t know about you but for me the rest of the summer disappears faster than a bookie’s illegal betting record on flash paper, when his door is being kicked in.

Must I remind you that high school football starts in mid-August? College and professional teams start even sooner. Don’t fight it, embrace it. So, think of this edition of the Time Machine as a kick-off (yes, pun intended) to our next beloved football season. I hope you enjoy the rest of this article.

## **WHS Football Field and Fairgrounds**

Wadena football started in the fall of 1903. The first reference I could find, as to where they played their games, came in a 1908 edition of the WPJ. The old fairgrounds it stated. I wondered where that was. The first “action” picture (to the right), from 1927, is not helpful. By the time I got to the 1938 team picture it dawned on me. It was a “eureka!” moment.



I now knew the old fairgrounds were the low-lying flat land south of MN Hwy 29, east to west from the old Tech school to the old municipal pool. Going by the pool strait south, past the cemetery until you hit a neighborhood. Then turn east and go to the tennis courts, take a left and head north back to MN Hwy 29 by the Tech school. That acreage also included multiple baseball/softball fields, a skating rink, and a hockey rink.

**Grid Bleachers  
Will Seat 1,000  
WPA Project to Be  
Completed In Few  
Weeks**

From the ages of 5-10, I lived one-half of a block from the field. For the big games, early Friday my mom would park our car behind the bleachers, at street level, to secure a good viewing spot to watch the game. By gametime all the parking spots would be filled.



**Fall of 1938 WHS football team.**

(Note new bleachers)

1<sup>st</sup> Row: K. Anderson, J. Dorry, P. Schiller, S. Dower, W. Anderson, R. Parker, E. Shea, G. Nehl, J. Schunert. 2<sup>nd</sup> Row: A. Ames, D. Frost, D. Tabery, H. Walker. 3<sup>rd</sup> Row: G. Lewis, L. Thomson, J. Tabery, J. Roes, G. Askew, R. Ireland, W. Jung, T. Davis, W. Kopp, E. Felland, D. Browne.

In addition to watching WHS football games I spent a lot of time there in my youth, attending track meets, and playing touch football with friends. We even played at night. The lever we needed to pull, to turn on the lights, was out of reach. However, if two of the bigger guys hoisted the smallest guy we were in business. As long as Harold and Joyce are gone I will share a very dark secret that has burdened me for sixty years. At the intersection of Franklin Ave. and 4<sup>th</sup> St., near the pole vault pit, there was a corner retaining wall with rocks set in concrete. There were a few bushes near that corner which created a good hiding space where an eight-year-old could enjoy one of his mom's Tareyton cigarettes, in private. I soon decided that one time was all the enjoyment I cared for. Great memories.

My production of "The Time Machine" articles will continue to be on the light side throughout the summer. I believe my next article will be about one of the players in this picture.

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