

## That's the Latest - August 2022     On the Field

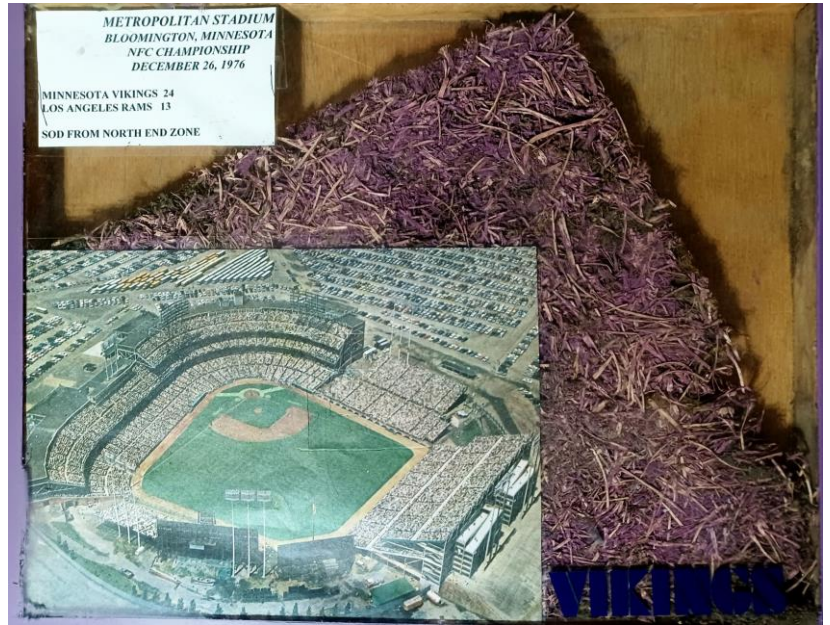
Being a Wisconsinite now or Sconnie as some of the locals call themselves, its closer for me to see a Twins game when they play the Brewers. My good friend Rob 'the Beav' Henry came down to visit and take in a game July 27, 2022 with me. After the game, the Brewers had a promotion called Senior Stroll where anyone over 60 or anyone who looks 60 can stroll along the warning track from the first base dugout around the outfield all the way to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout. I got thinking after I got home that was only the 4<sup>th</sup> time I've been on a professional playing field.



The very first time was December 26, 1976 at Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington. The Vikings had just defeated the Los Angeles Rams to earn their 4<sup>th</sup> trip to the Super Bowl. Fans poured onto the field to celebrate. It was something that was going to be done one year earlier in a playoff game against Dallas in the original 'Hail Mary' game. I remember all too well as Roger Staubach threw up a prayer and a pass as I'm making my way down the aisle to jump onto the field along with hundreds of other people. When that pass was completed, we all stood there in stunned silence. As far as Vikings fans are concerned, Roosevelt could have told us this too was a day that will live in infamy. At least football infamy.

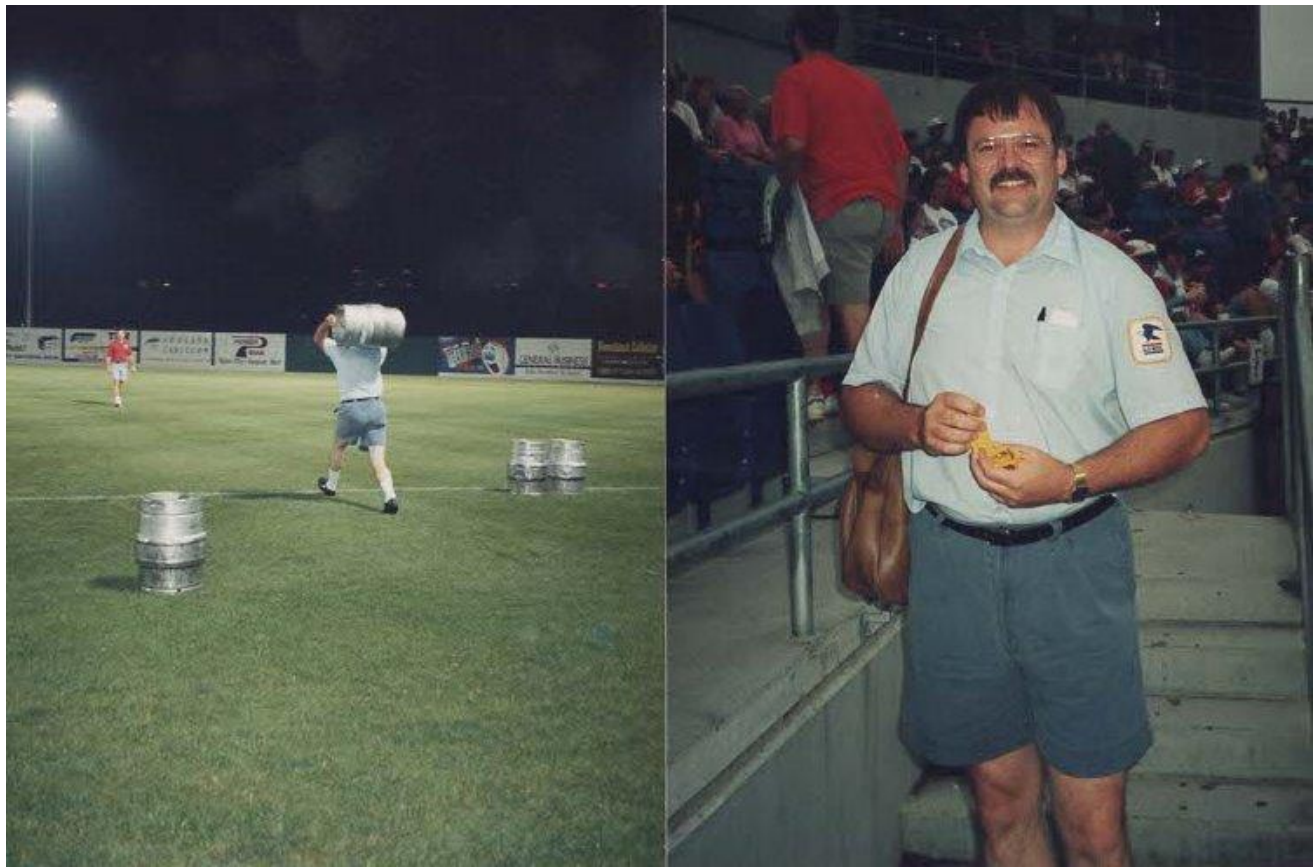


Fast forward one year, the Vikes had a big enough lead that there was going to be no repeat of the Dallas debacle and all of us fans who thought we'd get on the field a year earlier finally got to jump down and celebrate on the Minnesota version of the frozen tundra. Not only was I on the field but I took part of it home with me. You might recall that after the Twins baseball season was over, they would cover the infield dirt with sod. It was about an inch thick and pulled up like an unglued carpet. I must have had about a square yard of purple turf. I ended up with about a third of that as I shared some with others. I still have that turf today framed and hanging in my 'mancave'. I vividly remember one of the security team telling his coworker that and I quote "These people are nuts!" Perhaps we were but I like to think of it as being delirious.



The second time I was on a professional playing field was in Sioux City, Iowa. The Sioux City Explorers were part of an independent league that included the St Paul Saints. In 1995, the radio station I worked for, KMNS, was part of the 'Cheers' night at the park. We encouraged people to dress as their favorite character from the TV show Cheers. Of course I had to go as the postal worker Cliff Clavin. I've always had issues on how to pronounce and spell my last name so it was not a stretch to be called Emery Clavin. Dressed as Cliff, I got to throw out the first pitch. Heath DeStigter was the catcher for the Explorers. A local player from northwest Iowa, he only said one thing before I threw the first pitch. He said 'don't dirt me'. And I didn't as my pitch was a nice breaking ball that actually was a strike at least as far as I could tell. I have that autographed ball still today displayed on a shelf in the mancave.

KEEP SCROLLING DOWN



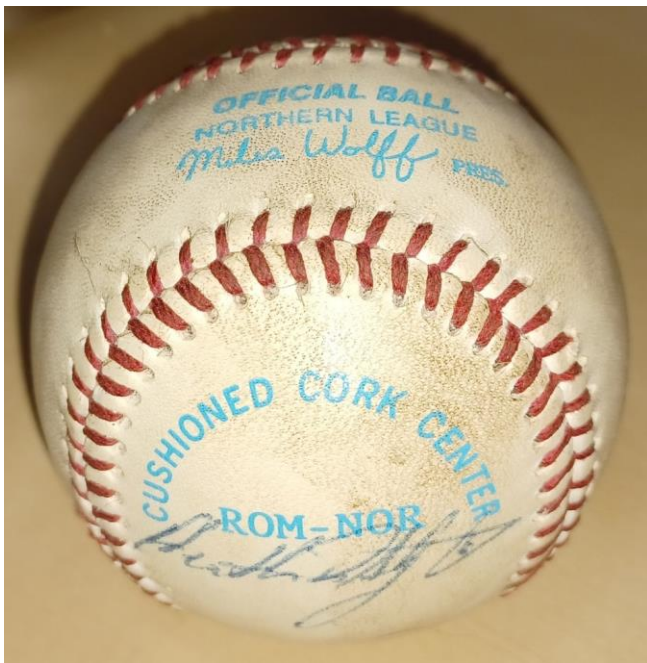
That same night as part of the festivities, there was a beer keg throwing contest sponsored by a local distributor. Beer of course was a big part of the Cheers TV show. The defending champion keg thrower was an employee of the beer distributor and I watched how he threw it and I emulated his technique. Hold it over my head and get it to roll as far as you can. These were empty kegs of course. And that technique worked as I got it past 2<sup>nd</sup> base from the foul line behind first base. I didn't think of it at the time but I should have had the employee autograph an empty keg for me.

My third time on a professional field was in 2014 at the venerable HHH Metrodome. I was not there for a game that day. The Midwest Dairy Association was sponsoring a program for kids to exercise more and drink more milk. The Vikings quarterback that year, Matt Cassel was on hand to help kick off the program. I remember standing on the field looking up at some of the seats I sat in for games there and thinking they are really a long ways away from the field. It's pretty impressive to get that perspective of a stadium.

And that is the exact thing I thought as I got to stroll around the outfield warning track at AmFam Field in Milwaukee. From the field the stadium looks twice as big as it does when you're sitting in the stands. And to see what home plate looks from 400 feet away is awesome. I don't know how any outfielder can see a ball let alone run after it and catch it when it's coming at you at 100 mph. And up close I did not see one dandelion in the grass.

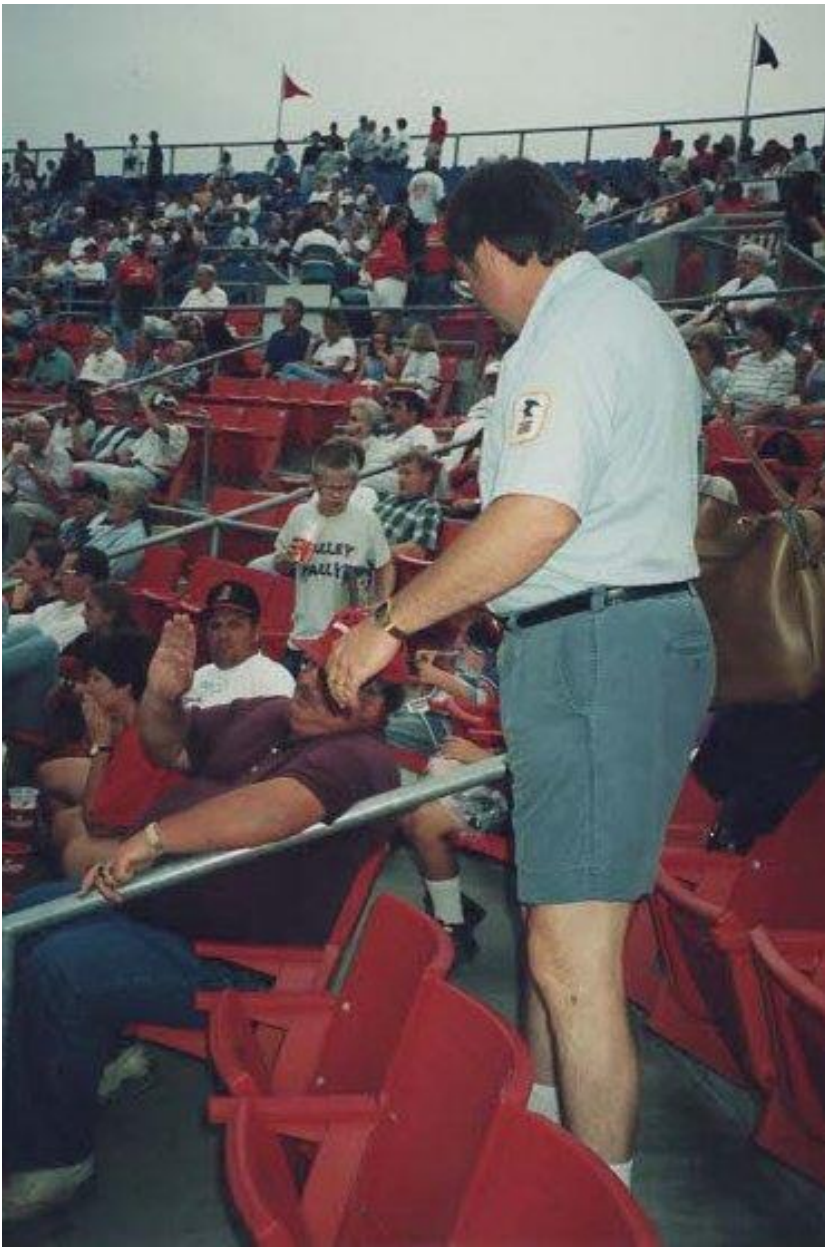


The first two pictures below are from the Sioux City Explorers Cheers night where Emery got to throw out the first pitch to catcher Heath DeStigter.



To the left is the Heath DeStigter autographed baseball that was used for the first pitch

KEEP SCROLLING DOWN



After my first pitch I asked San Diego Padres scout Hank Krause how fast my pitch was on his radar gun. He said he would have needed a calendar to time my pitch. Well hey, it was a strike anyway!