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## Eagles Fans Make Do Here

### So Few To Be Found In Packer Country

#### The Capital Times :: METRO :: 1C

Friday, January 9, 2004

By Eric F. Lipton Correspondent for The Capital Times\ The writer retains the copyright for this article

It's the little stabs that hurt the most.

The governors of Wisconsin and Pennsylvania have a food wager over the outcome of Sunday's football game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Green Bay Packers. A local TV station said Pennsylvania is offering as some cheesesteaks and deli sandwiches.

Deli sandwiches?

They're hoagies.



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It'd be like calling a brat a hot dog.

I admit, I'm not much of a Philadelphian anymore. I've not had an address in the area for over 12 years. Last time I was there, I needed a GPS navigation system to find my way around the cobblestoned city.

Conversely, I now know Madison like the back of my Thinsulate glove; I know my Mononas from my Mendotas and I'll never ever confuse frozen custard with ice cream again. And still ...

I am an "Iggles" fan. Died in the wool. And the color died into that wool? "Midnight green," that shiny dark turquoise color that my love of the Eagles forbids me to acknowledge as tacky.

You Green Bay fans know the feeling. Green and yellow? If your lawn was that color, you'd spray it with chemicals. Your cheese? You'd throw it away.

Having no cable, I'm at the mercy of sports bars to watch the Eagles play, since only local games make it on network television. But I'm not alone. I found a lone Eagles fan at Madison's Wilson's Bar and Grill, which prides itself on showing every NFL game each week on the dozen TV screens.

Sure, the local game gets the audio, but every week, front and center, sits Scott Walls, a diehard Eagles fan who has lived his whole life in Madison. "You're safe in here," he told me, clad in a team jersey and Eagles leather jacket.

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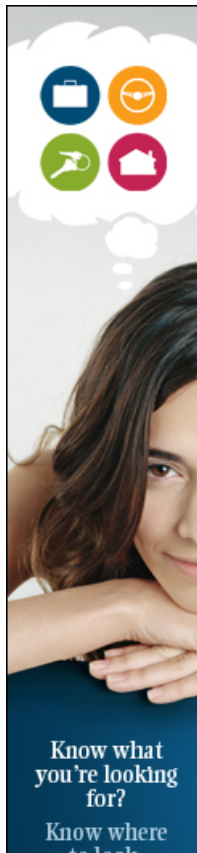
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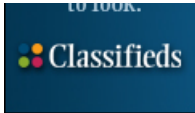
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Other patrons surround us in trademark green and yellow. I'm not so sure.

"I've been a Philly fan for 25 years," Walls explained. As a kid, one day he watched a rare Eagles win over the Dallas Cowboys. "I had just begun to understand football. I'd never seen a team play so well." He's been a fan ever since.

Kim Chamberlain, sitting one barstool over, herself bedecked in a rhinestone-studded Green Bay sweatshirt, has no problem with Walls' dedication. "We don't mind," she said. "Nobody's perfect."

"Except Brett Favre," her husband Ron chimed in.

Walls tries to go to all the games the Eagles play at Lambeau Field, often with his Packer-fan father. "He doesn't understand it, but he supports me," Walls said.

Walls has only been thrown out of one game. "A security guard saw me in my Eagles jersey and hat and told me I couldn't go back to my seat because I was a nuisance."

At the Sports Authority in Madison, a lonely Eagles jersey for quarterback Donovan McNabb hangs amidst a few for other teams, and a few dozen for Green Bay.

"We sell a fair amount but nothing compared to the Packers" said a store manager.

The findings were similar at Hat World in the East Towne Mall, where store manager Ryan Burbach said Eagles cap sales are average. "But they aren't close to the top 10," he said.

Sales Manager Michelle Maier at Finish Line, also at the East Towne Mall, contended, however, that team gear sales are less a gauge of fandom and more of what styles or players are popular.

"The 'throwback' stuff is extremely hot," she said, pointing to some Houston Oilers hats. "We can't keep jerseys for Barry Sanders in the store."

But still, the store has no retro jerseys for former Eagle greats Randall Cunningham or Ron Jaworski.

Being an Eagles fan can sometimes evolve from being a Badger fan.

That was the case with Jane Piliavin, a professor of sociology and women's studies at UW-Madison.

In 1988, the university started a mentoring program for minority students, and that year she was paired with an incoming freshman named Troy Vincent. Vincent became a football star with the Badgers, and good friends with Piliavin.

Since Vincent left Madison, Piliavin has followed his career closely. For the last eight years, that has been the Philadelphia Eagles.

"I'm a huge fan, if only a temporary fan," said Piliavin.

She's often the only Eagles fan at Babe's Grill and Bar in Madison.

Piliavin isn't alone in admiring the five-time Pro Bowl cornerback.

"Troy's a good guy. He's a Badger," said Green Bay fan Al Riley at Wilson's. "I hope he has a good game."