

## GOLF

# Beatlemania runs rampant at Montgomery Golf Club

By PAT BECK  
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A yellow submarine, a 17-foot tall guitar, a 35-yard guitar-shaped fairway sand trap and street signs showing distances to “Beateley” places.

These are among the many props at the Beatles-themed Montgomery National Golf Club. As you drive in, you can’t miss the vibrant yellow submarine, and as you approach the clubhouse, you’ll find the giant guitar statue standing proudly. You’ll encounter the massive guitar sand trap six holes in. The clubhouse walls, meanwhile, are covered with Beatles and family memorabilia, including photos and maps. Golf caps come with a Beatles logo. Flags are embroidered with musical notes. Even the scorecard is themed after The Beatles’ “White Album” with each hole named after a different song.

The man behind the menagerie

is owner Greg McKush. A Beatles fan since he was a grade-schooler, McKush, 56, designed the course with his favorite rock and roll band in mind.

“Since I was 9 years old, I started buying Beatles albums,” McKush said. “I had every one. I’m a huge [Paul] McCartney fan. I’m a singer-songwriter, so I’ve been playing Beatles’ music since I was young.”

The golf course gives McKush a chance to show off his creativity and his passion.

“That’s what I love about this big 160-acre canvass,” he said. “And I can’t wait to keep adding to it. We’re definitely one of a kind.”

Also an actor and model in television shows and commercials, McKush played at farmers markets and private parties for years.

“My kids and I had a little band called Sunny-side Up,” McKush said. “I play a little bit here when we have tournaments. I pipe out Beatles’ music to the golf course

with a big speaker.”

The yellow submarine came last spring from Hot Sam’s Antiques Store, Foto Park, Junkyard Theme Park along Interstate 35 near Lakeville.

“When I went by it was green, and right there I thought, I need to get that and paint it yellow,” McKush said. “And also he had this great big guitar, which I refaced and made it into an Olson guitar, which is the kind of guitars I play. That was the first step of all this craziness.”

The submarine was a fiberglass prop in the 1970 movie, “Tora, Tora, Tora,” on the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. They made two of them, but they didn’t need a second take when they blew it up. Guitar maker Jim Olson in Circle Pines, Minnesota created the 17-foot Lucian guitar.

“We refaced it, and at the top on my actual one that looks just like it is ‘The Giving Tree’ that I read for my kids for years,” McKush explained,



Greg McKush, owner of Montgomery National Golf Club, brings a Beatles theme to the course, including a yellow submarine and his yellow submarine face guitar. (Pat Beck/St. Peter Herald)

“We emulated that as best we could.”

Then he decided to make an Olson guitar bunker on the sixth fairway last September. The sand trap is bigger than the green and provides a unique showpiece for the course.

The street signs, posted on a tree, are chock-full of Beatles references, including Abbey Road, Strawberry Fields and Penny Lane. McKush’s plan is to build a log cabin clubhouse at the course, like at a course his family bought in 1979 called Lone Pine.

“It had a log cabin, so I’m kind of reliving my childhood,” McKush said. “We ended up selling that to Mystic Lake in 2002, and then I was director of golf at the Meadows at Mystic Lake and built that golf course. Then I retired at 47 in 2013, and I got bored in 2018 and bought this place.”

The log cabin has been put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but McKush said construction could start next year.

“Then we’re going to continue with doing things like an Abby Road entrance,” McKush said.

Other, more technical, course upgrades to come include ponding projects on holes No. 2 and No. 8 to alleviate some of the drainage problems in low areas, plus the construction of cart paths all around the course, so when it rains, golfers can stay on the paths and not beat up the turf.

While the hole names are Beatles-related, some have double meanings. The first hole, for instance, is named in honor of long-time member John Segna, who had a heart attack there a couple years ago.

“Just by chance a helicopter was coming from Waseca and they ended up picking him up,” McKush said of the incident. “There were paramedics on the course, and everybody ran for his safety. When I said I’d like to call (the first hole) ‘The Day in the Life,’ Jon, who survived, said he would rather call it ‘A Little Help From My Friends.’”

He held a contest for naming the holes, and he gave prizes to the contestants who offered names he used. The Beatles wrote about

1,000 songs as a group from 1964 to 1970, and after they split up, they continued as solo artists or in new groups, so there is probably content to work off.

The 18th hole is named “The End,” hole No. 9 is “Number 9,” hole No. 15 is “Strawberry Fields,” where McKush is growing strawberries on the righthand side, and hole No. 5 is “Yellow Submarine.”

“We considered putting (the yellow submarine) there, but I’m scared that kids will hit balls off of it and it will crumble,” McKush said. So it’s displayed in the front of the pro shop, next to the parking lot, instead.

Thanks to the commitment to theme, it’s not only golfers are interested in the course. Recently, McKush had a wedding party of big Beatles fans come out and take photos. He also hosted a Beatle-loving couple’s 30th anniversary.

“I get a lot of new people and a lot of repeat customers, because they get to see this golf course,” McKush said. “And if the Beatles brought them here, it’s awesome.”



The sixth fairway at Montgomery National Golf Club features a guitar fairway bunker. (Aerial photo courtesy of TwinCitiesGolf.com)

## AMATEUR BASEBALL

# BASEBALL

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Since Class C teams start their postseasons in late July, the likelihood of including them in a fair and balanced regular season seemed infeasible.

As a result, the CCVL Class C teams would play a regular-season schedule filled with their region opponents, while the CCVL Class B teams will play their CCVL counterparts in Section 1B, along with the Elko Express and New Market Muskies, who are Section 1B teams that compete in the Dakota-Rice-Scott League.

“The thought was if we could get going on July 1, there’s seven Class B teams in our section, so that’s 12 games,” Swanson said. “You play everybody twice and I could easily throw together a 12-game schedule, which would still be in my opinion a meaningful schedule. You could even throw in a couple extra non-league games or play the Class C teams.”

As the MBA continues to lobby with the State of Minnesota to allow the start of amateur baseball, though, Swanson said the league might start shifting to talking with local governments about use of city fields and ball parks.

Swanson said he suggested CCVL teams reach out to city officials about whether they might allow baseball, even if the state still recommends against it. The City of Rochester said it’s following the lead of state officials, meaning the Rochester Royals will not be able to use Mayo Field until Walz gives the go-ahead.

The Miesville Mudhens, meanwhile, own and operate Jack Ruhr Field, meaning they might not need city or state approval to host a game.

“It’s a real mixed bag, is the summary here,” Swanson said. “I’m not sure how it’s going to work out and if some teams can use their field and if some teams can’t use their field. In my opinion, it’s going to be a bit of a mess.”

# DRS, Region 3C hoping for late June or early July start for amateur baseball

By MICHAEL HUGHES  
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Mike Sticha started making contingency plans early on.

In the nascent days of COVID-19 affecting life across the world, country and state, sports leagues quickly put their seasons on the shelf.

For the Minnesota Baseball Association, which generally starts in late April and early May, that need wasn’t as pressing. So as Sticha, the league president for the Dakota, Rice, Scott (DRS) League, mapped out how a truncated schedule might look, even his projections weren’t severe enough.

“We all thought that July 1 was the latest we could start,” Sticha said. “We thought, ‘There’s no way this can go this late, into July, without playing.’ Now it’s becoming real, where maybe we don’t get to start July 1 and maybe it’s not until mid-July.”

After the latest announcements from Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz last Friday, many in the Minnesota amateur baseball community were left with questions about when a 2020 season might start if it’s able to start at all. The State of Minnesota deemed baseball a “medium-risk” sport, meaning any potential games are still tabled for an undisclosed amount of time, although practices in small groups have been permitted for the past couple weeks.

The state board for the MBA is continuing to lobby state representatives to urge Walz to make an exception for baseball to resume as early as in the next week or two.

That brings Sticha’s second and third projections into play.

“This puts us now at the June 15 date and July 1 date as possibilities,” Sticha said. “In both of those models and templates, we would shift from playing every team twice in the season like we typically do to just once. As we get deeper into the summer and we don’t start until July 1, we may forego playing our Class B teams.”

The DRS is made up of 13 teams, 11 of which compete in Class C at the state level and two — the Elko Express and New Market Muskies — are set to compete in Class B this summer.

The 11 Class C teams are the Faribault Lakers, Lonsdale Aces, Montgomery Malards, New Prague Orioles, Prior Lake Mudcats, Shakopee Indians, St. Benedict



The Faribault Lakers’ Jake Stocker, left, talked with New Market Muskie Nate Rost during a game in 2018. With an abbreviated season, the typical DRS rivals might not play in 2020. (Daily News File Photo)



Faribault’s Austin Rendler was called safe while stealing second base against the Lonsdale Aces in 2018. The Lakers and Aces are waiting to find out if they can compete against each other in the DRS and Region 3C, although steals and tag plays might not be allowed due to social distancing guidelines. (Daily News File Photo)

Saints, St. Patrick Irish, Union Hill Bulldogs, Veseli Warriors and Webster Sox.

If the start to the season is pushed back July 1 — a possibility Sticha said at first didn’t cross his mind, and later believed was a death sentence for the 2020 season — any of his contingency plans

are unusable since the Region 3C playoffs typically start in late July.

“If we’re not playing by July 1, then the state governing board is going to need to figure out what sort of timing do they want,” Sticha said. “I would expect them to be more directive if we’re not playing

## REMAINING TIMELINES

### Season started by June 15:

The DRS is still able to hold a league schedule that includes the league’s two Class B teams, the Elko Express and New Market Muskies, although each team will likely play their league mates only once instead of twice.

### Season started by July 1:

The DRS is able to hold a partial league schedule, but will likely need to eschew the Class B teams in order to stage enough games between region opponents, and to allow Elko and New Market to do the same with their section opponents. The Class C teams will likely play each other once in this timeline as well.

### Season started in mid-July:

If a version of the 2020 regular season that starts this late is possible, it will likely need an abundance of creativity. There will not be enough time for each of the Class C DRS team to play each other once, making the seeding of the Region 3C playoffs difficult.

by then.”

As of now, Sticha said he’s been in contact with someone from the MBA state board every few days to receive updates and exchange ideas for how to best maintain some normalcy for how the 2020 season plays out.

If the MBA remains committed to sponsoring a season, and most importantly a state tournament, Sticha said he will do everything he can to have the traditional four teams emerge from Region 3C to the state tournament.

Ideally, he said, there’s a balanced regular season to seed the region playoffs as fairly as possible, but Sticha said he and the DRS will do what they need to in order to stage those region playoffs.

“We would still have all our playoff and region games to see who would go to state,” Sticha said. “State is still kind of the intended goal.”