

Trail Blazers

By Reg P. Wydeven
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Like most Wisconsinites, I vividly remember my first Green Bay Packers game. I was in high school, and it was the game right before Christmas. It was unseasonably cold, and I froze despite having on tons and tons of layers.

I'll never forget walking out of the concourse to find our seats. Entering the bowl of Lambeau Field was moving; if I weren't so numb from the cold, I bet I could have literally felt the history of the stadium.

Because we were running late, the stadium was packed by the time we sat down. I recall there was just a sea of people in green and gold. And orange. Blaze orange. Being a state full of hunters, a lot of fans wore their warm, blaze orange hunting gear to the game. My buddy, Lee, informed me that after mid-November, the Packers' official colors change to green, gold and blaze orange.

Next season the team might be adding blaze pink.

Earlier this year, Governor Scott Walker signed Act 131 into law, making Wisconsin the first state in the country to allow hunters to wear blaze pink while in the field in addition to the traditional blaze orange. Under prior Wisconsin law, hunters were prohibited from hunting any game during any gun or muzzleloader deer season unless at least 50% of their outer clothing above the waist was colored blaze orange. If a hunter wore a hat, it must be at least 50% blaze orange. A blaze orange camouflage pattern was allowed so long as 50% of the material is orange. The new measure allows hunters to wear blaze pink as a legal alternative to orange.

The bill's authors claim the rule will increase hunter safety, pointing to studies that have shown that blaze pink is actually easier to see than orange. In addition, pink is harder for wildlife to recognize. The legislators also assert the law is designed to provide more options for hunters and attract more women into hunting.

I certainly don't anticipate droves of women hunters heading into the woods because they can finally wear pink. But I could imagine that hunters, and not just women but men, too, will be excited that they will have more hunting wardrobe choices under the new law.

Retailers agree. After the bill was introduced last year, In October, WKOW out of Madison reported that stores were planning to stock up on pink gear. Sammi Linder, marketing manager for Cabela's, told the station, "People are always interested in the new features and products, and we're happy to support those and give our customers the option if they're interested."

Not everyone is excited, however. Some critics feel the law is outright chauvinistic. Sarah Ingle, President of the Women's Hunting and Sporting Association, told Milwaukee's WTMJ Channel 4 that she thinks, "that it was an ill-advised idea to get women involved in hunting. ...Saying a woman would choose a lifestyle of hunting, fishing, gathering her own game just because she can wear a color is sexist." She elaborated, saying, "it's kind of insulting to a woman's intelligence to say we would pick something such as hunting based on a color."

I guess we won't know how people will feel until we watch the first cold Packer game next year.

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