

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

PROJECT CASE STUDY



“We wanted a different look than traditional locker companies offered, but we also wanted functionality, our school colors and other features. GearBoss certainly gives us a collegiate, first-class look. Wenger delivered everything we asked for!”

***– Steve Fritz
Director of Athletics & Head Men’s Basketball Coach***

CUSTOMIZABLE WOOD LOCKERS

CHALLENGE

Provide lockers and equipment-storage solutions for new multi-purpose university athletic facility.

WENGER SOLUTION

Listening to customers’ needs and program goals. Engineering unique sizes, features and functionality into locker designs. Planning optimal configuration of storage carts and shelving. Coordinating multi-phase installation with overall construction schedule.

BENEFITS

- Customized locker designs fit needs, space and budget
- Built-in locker seat frees floor space and facilitates cleaning
- High-density storage system maximizes storage capacity
- Locker surfaces resist humidity and bacteria
- Open locker style fosters communication and team building
- Open cart design promotes airflow, aids visual inspection

HIGHLIGHTS

“Wenger delivered everything we asked for,” says Steve Fritz, Director of Athletics & Head Men’s Basketball Coach at the University of St. Thomas (UST) in St. Paul, Minn. “It was a great cooperative effort.”

The 180,000-square-foot Anderson Athletic & Recreation Complex, which opened in the fall of 2010, includes a basketball and volleyball arena, aquatic center, field house and fitness center, along with multiple locker rooms, training rooms and other support facilities.

“We were all very excited by this opportunity to meet the needs of our current teams and general students,” explains Fritz. With 22 teams and a number of day users, he says UST’s previous facility never had enough lockers.

SELECTING GEARBOSS

“The traditional locker companies offered the traditional look,” Fritz recalls. “We wanted something different.” He says GearBoss offered a collegiate, first-class look along with functionality, features and the ability to incorporate UST’s school colors.

“GearBoss gave us the best options for the quality,” declares Glenn Caruso, Head Football Coach, “along with the ability to customize the locker design to fit our needs and budget. Aesthetically the lockers also look very sharp.”

Functionally, Caruso believes the football lockers offer everything they need: lockbox on top, multi-purpose compartment underneath and top rack for shoulder pad and helmet storage, which frees up space inside the locker.

“The locker’s sealed, closed-cell composite surfaces also made me more comfortable in a high-humidity locker room with an adjoining shower room,” explains Caruso. He had seen other schools select lockers that later had problems – including warping – because they could not withstand the humidity level.

“The GearBoss lockers’ antibacterial, antimicrobial surfaces give me a lot of confidence in the product,” Caruso adds. “These lockers provide a very safe, very workable environment for our athletes.”



DAY LOCKERS

“Overall, Wenger met every engineering challenge we gave them, their installation team was great and their customer service throughout was superb. They supplied more than 1,000 lockers, including custom wood, AirPro and day-use lockers. For equipment storage we chose GearBoss carts and shelving.”

– Mark Vangsgard
Vice President of Business Affairs &
Chief Financial Officer

ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE

In this large-scale project, Wenger was challenged from an engineering standpoint to do some things differently, according to Mark Vangsgard, UST's Vice President of Business Affairs & Chief Financial Officer. This included modifying manufacturing techniques to ensure the backs and sides of the GearBoss wooden lockers fit against the long, curved wall of the football locker room.

"When Wenger came to install the football lockers, it was done perfectly – every seam matched up, every angle was absolutely correct," remembers Vangsgard. "You couldn't tell that they customized each locker, it was that flawless."

Another example involved the AirPro lockers. Wenger reduced their standard 18" width by three inches, to fit in the number of lockers UST requested. For day use, Wenger designed and built smaller "airport-style" lockers that have proven very popular with students for holding jackets and backpacks. Wenger also developed a built-in key lock system for these lockers.

"Throughout the project, Wenger's installation team was great and the customer service after the installation was superb," declares Vangsgard.

TEAM-BUILDING ENVIRONMENT

Every locker features a built-in seat that saves space by eliminating the need for benches or chairs. Fritz's basketball team, for example, enjoys ample space for team meetings or film sessions in their locker room.

The football locker room is the largest – more than 5,500 square feet – and features a center meeting area with 130 GearBoss lockers around the perimeter. This area is used for team and unit meetings; Caruso believes the open locker concept works really well.

"The locker's integrated seat is very important for team building," Caruso claims. "We often talk about accountability and I think it's important to see the people you work with on a daily basis." He says when players sit in their lockers, they are facing each other. The alternative is players sitting at benches facing their lockers, with their backs to their teammates.

To facilitate differently sized players at adjacent lockers, Caruso chose the cut back locker style. "You might have a 310-lb. tackle next to a 170-lb. wide receiver, and this style locker is more open and accommodating," he explains.

When it's time to clean the locker rooms, having integrated seats makes the process a lot faster and easier, according to Fritz. Floors can be vacuumed without moving benches or chairs. Along with wasting time, such movement could result in damaging wear and tear.



GEARBOSS® SHELVING

AID TO RECRUITING

Fritz believes this new athletic facility adds a lot to campus, which will help recruit student athletes to UST. “Obviously academic programs are important, along with financial aid and other factors,” he explains. “But among our direct competitors, no other school has anything near this. Visitors are very, very impressed.”

Because Division III schools like UST do not offer athletic scholarships or attract large crowds of spectators like major universities, Fritz believes it’s not easy for UST to differentiate itself from the competition. “One thing we can do is have better facilities,” he explains. “Facilities are very important in Division III athletics.”

He adds that many UST athletes and general students attended large area high schools with very nice facilities and were therefore accustomed to these kinds of amenities.

And while UST’s athletic teams and students are enjoying these new lockers, other GearBoss storage products – including high-density equipment carts and shelving – are providing important benefits behind the scenes.

IMPROVING ORGANIZATION

“I don’t know if any building ever has enough storage space,” comments Fritz. Their previous facility lacked any system, with equipment stored in numerous places, including bins and hanging racks.

When researching options, UST personnel looked around at storage solutions at other schools and liked the GearBoss high-density carts the best. “We made that decision first – before the lockers,” he recalls.

UST’s new equipment storage room is used for most sports, including football. “I think the GearBoss track system with rolling carts is brilliant,” says Caruso. “It eliminates wasted aisle space and really multiplies our storage capacity.” He also appreciates how the cart’s wire grille construction makes it easy to see what’s inside.

“Without dedicated, compartmentalized storage areas, you always wonder if your inventory is exact,” he comments. “But with the GearBoss system, I’m comfortable knowing our inventory at all times.”

Steve Fritz sums up UST’s satisfaction with the GearBoss solutions and entire project this way: “This new facility and everything inside it fits the excellence we’re looking for as an institution.”



“The GearBoss storage system is very easy to work with and I love knowing that everything is in its own proper place. The track system with rolling carts is brilliant – it eliminates wasted aisle space and multiplies our storage capacity.”

***– Glenn Caruso
Head Football Coach***

GEARBOSS® SHELIVING, SPORTCART™, TEAM CARTS™ AND X-CARTS™

PRODUCT LIST

GearBoss® Customizable Wood Lockers, AirPro Lockers and custom day-use lockers. GearBoss® High-Density Storage System comprised of Team Carts™, X-Carts™ and SportCarts™, with accessories including shoulder pad stackers, garment bars, helmet hangers, bypass doors and side closures. Also GearBoss® Shelving with work surfaces and garment bars.