

# WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

## PROJECT CASE STUDY



GEARBOSS® WOOD LOCKERS

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***– Shannon Sauer-Becker,  
Construction Administrator***



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## CHALLENGE

Design wood lockers for renovated football locker room.

## WENGER SOLUTION

Supporting architect and project team with timely information and responsive communication. Providing 3-D locker images to aid decision-making process. Customizing locker to accommodate preferences and support overall vision. Coordinating installation on tight deadline.

## BENEFITS

- Refined design achieves desired aesthetics
- Hidden eyelet folds down to help display jerseys
- Functionality supports improved organization, cleanliness
- Custom features address specific needs
- Compact design maximizes available square footage
- Modular design facilitates expansion and repairs

## HIGHLIGHTS

“Western Michigan University and Head Football Coach P.J. Fleck came to the project with a great vision – both graphically and functionally – of what they were trying to achieve,” says Fred Grunert, AIA, NCRB, Architectural Department Manager with Byce & Associates, of Kalamazoo, Michigan. “They had really done their homework and we worked to make this vision a reality.”

Early in the design process, Byce & Associates brought a few different locker manufacturer options to the table, including GearBoss. Because Grunert always had good experiences with Wenger music casework in school projects, GearBoss was an easy recommendation. “I had no reservations about putting them at the top of the pile,” he recalls.

In their site visits, WMU staff had already seen GearBoss lockers in another facility, which helped with their comfort level. Grunert says other lockers they considered didn’t look and feel as high-end as GearBoss but had more of an industrial, high-school feel.

The construction schedule was tight, so communication and decision-making needed to be optimized. Wenger provided Revit files of the different lockers being considered to Byce & Associates, enabling WMU personnel to review precise, 3-D models of the space. To help with the final resolution, GearBoss provided a 3-D locker image featuring the correct laminate selections and all the right components.

“GearBoss customized our lockers to fit our needs, including specific features we asked for – like cubby size and hanging hook location,” notes Taylor Jorgensen, Football Equipment Coordinator. In each locker, he also asked for a folding eyelet that remains hidden except for displaying jerseys for game days and recruiting tours.

Jorgensen gave input on the optimal locker configuration for game days and for daily traffic flow, to help make the space more functional and to facilitate team meetings. He says their previous lockers were oversized and occupied a lot of square footage. The GearBoss lockers offer similar storage space and functionality, but the smaller footprint provides more open space to move around.

“Even just the helmet/shoulder pad toppers make the locker room neater and more organized,” declares Jorgensen. “Players have a designated, easy place to put their equipment, so it’s not thrown everywhere.”

The previous millwork lockers were custom-made, so replacement parts were not readily available; repairs were difficult because the millwork lockers were installed in groups. Each GearBoss locker is separate, which will make any repairs easier. Additional lockers can also be added easily.

“The GearBoss lockers totally change the feeling within the space, giving a ‘man cave’ feel, with the dark wood laminate and graphic treatment,” remarks Grunert. As part of the renovation process, striking graphics showing famous WMU football alumni who played in the NFL were added on the walls and endcaps of locker rows.

Current WMU players and recruits are enthusiastic about the new lockers, including cushioned seat, USB chargers and electrical outlet, according to Jorgensen. “The drying racks and fans really help improve the locker room’s cleanliness and odor – it doesn’t smell like a typical locker room.” Without separate benches, it’s easier to clean and sanitize the floor.

“The GearBoss lockers are well-made, they fit together well and they look beautiful – the upgrade to our locker room is huge,” explains Shannon Sauer-Becker, Construction Administrator at WMU.

“These lockers offer a high-quality look and a very good product for the price,” notes Sauer-Becker. Along with Grunert, she had a long history of working with Wenger previously. “I know Wenger makes quality products that hold up well.”



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## PRODUCT LIST

GearBoss Customizable Wood Lockers.