

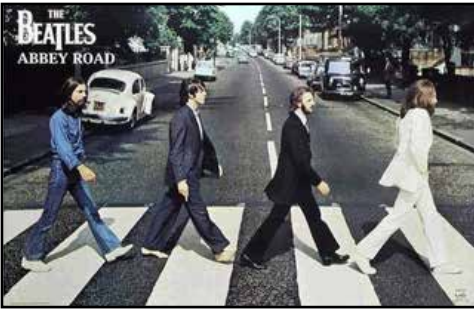
## September 21-27, 1969

By Tom Bodle

1968 was one of the most turbulent years in our lifetime. Anti-Vietnam war demonstrations were hitting a crescendo. Riots involving social injustice, financial inequality and race dotted the globe. One such riot in Mexico City threatened the staging of the 1968 Summer Olympics. The Olympics itself was laced with expressions of political activism. Czechoslovakia's attempt at democracy was militarily thwarted by tanks from the Soviet Union. Cleveland was not immune to the violence as the Glenville neighborhood was marred by several days of rioting. With all of this, the most alarming acts of violence came with the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Overwhelmed by all of these events, President Lyndon Johnson decided not to seek re-election. A contentious Democratic National Convention was held in Chicago. Radical groups from a variety of organizations such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Black Panthers and the Communist Party staged demonstrations, some violent and disturbances that clashed with a massive police presence. As a result many arrests were made, including nationally recognized activists Thomas Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin and Bobby Seal.

Forward to the last week of September, 1969. The wounds of 1968 were torn open with the trial of those arrested during the Chicago convention. The core group of defendants, known as the "Chicago 8" came before a Chicago court under Judge Julius Hoffman. The proceedings quickly turned into a circus as each of the defendants used their testimony to attack President Nixon or to spew their political beliefs involving, race, oppression or the Vietnam War. Judge Hoffman struggled to keep control over the case, which extended into late February, 1970. In what became a daily story, the defendants logged 175 contempt of court charges over the course of the trial. At one point, Bobby Seal was gagged and tied in his chair. After one of the most infamous trials in U.S. history, the defendants were exonerated from conspiracy charges. The contempt charges were upheld for seven of the eight, yet an appeals court dismissed all of the sentencing in 1972. The trial of the decade concluded with the defendants free.





Pop culture was very active on several entertainment fronts at the end of September. Television premiered "Marcus Welby M.D." "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" premiered on movie screens. The Beatles released "Abbey Road", which was noted for its cover of the four musicians walking across the road. Paul McCartney's stance, being opposite of the others quickly spawned rumors that "Paul is dead" (this puzzled fans but has proven untrue...just ask Paul!)



Major league baseball was winding down its season. The New York Mets clinched their first National League Division title. They would match with the Atlanta Braves for the league championship. Minnesota secured the A.L. West to contend with Baltimore in the East. The "Say Hey Kid", Willie Mays hit his 600th homerun to write his name in the record book as the second to do so in baseball history.

Cleveland was the center of the tennis world, as it hosted the Davis Cup tournament. The USA defeated Romania to take the crown.

The National Football League began its final year before the formation of the new NFL. Cleveland was the franchise to watch. With its storied past, could it win the final National Football League championship prior to moving to the American Conference of the new NFL? Coached by Blanton Collier and led on offense by quarterback Bill Nelson, running back Leroy Kelly and receivers Paul Warfield and Gary Collins the Browns defeated the Eagles 27-20 in Philadelphia to take the opening step in hopes of a "super" year.



In northeast Cleveland, St. Joseph High School continued to chase greatness of its own in sports. The last week of September saw the Vikings host two premiere events, the St. Joseph Cross Country Invitational and a cross-state football contest versus Toledo power house Central Catholic.

The St. Joseph Invitational was a massive event. Fifty high schools and over 500 runners participated in freshman, junior varsity and two levels of varsity competition at Cleveland Heights' Forest Hills Park. Jim Stanley's fifth place and John Schmidt's ninth place finishes propelled the Viking harriers to the championship in the "elite" varsity division. This was the fourth win in a row as St. Joe's domination in the state continued.

The big weekend for football began with an all school rally. Cheering was so spirited, guest speaker Dan Coughlin from the *Plain Dealer's* sports department was often interrupted in his talk. The spirit carried over to Euclid stadium on game night. The cheer leading corps of six female and six male members whipped the student section into a frenzy with each possession. The Irish proved a worthy foe. They out gained the gridders 244 yards to 176. St. Joe's had zero yards passing. The defense proved its worth, bending not breaking at key times against Central Catholic. Don Daily was cited for his excellent play with seventeen tackles and a key interception on defense. Bob Bobroski reached the end zone twice and Bill Centa once to hold off the visitors 24-14.

As September was nearing its end, Viking spirit promoted winning and winning elevated Viking spirit with a Cross Country squad and football team both undefeated. #