

January 19-24, 1970

By Tom Bodle

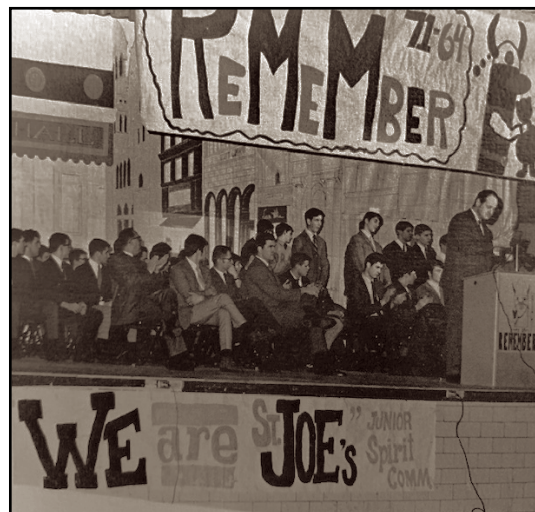
Remember!! 71-64!!

A poster with this writing hung prominently over the stage in the St. Joseph High School auditorium on Jan 23rd, as well as on signs and notes throughout the hallowed halls.

The clash of two Cleveland area basketball titans was the talk of northeast Ohio during this third week of January. The Padua Bruins were the number one team in all of the area's high school basketball polls, as well as being highly ranked in statewide surveys. In a December meeting at Padua, St. Joe established an early lead only to endure a Bruin comeback and a neck and neck battle into the fourth quarter. Plagued by turnovers and foul trouble in the second half, the Vikings succumbed to Padua 71-64. It was the first time in the three year history of the Crown Conference that the Vikings suffered a defeat. It was also the second loss of the 69-70 season. The team vowed to avenge this loss when the two would meet again in January.

Momentum was building over the weeks after that loss. St. Joe's hoopers had a mission to right the course of their season. By mid-January coach Bob Straub's team had run off seven victories. Padua had proven their season was not an aberration as they dominated their schedule, owning a 12-0 record. The encore was destined to be epic.

As students entered their classes on Monday of this week, chatter was all about the big game. Negotiations were being made to obtain tickets for friends and family. The gym capacity was 2000 and clearly a sellout was imminent. All northeast Ohio newspapers had major stories previewing the game during the week. The Student Council spirit committee plastered the hallways, the varsity locker room and the gym with signs containing the omnipresent "Remember! 71-64!" To signify the magnitude of the game to northern Ohio, WVIZ-TV 25 would broadcast the contest as it's game of the week.

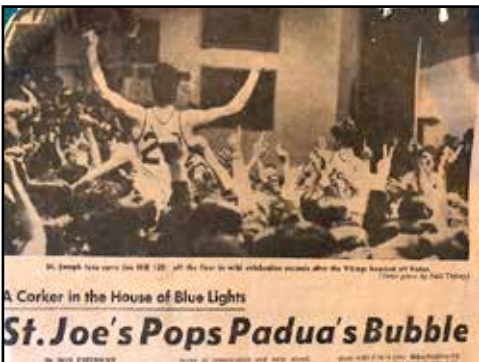
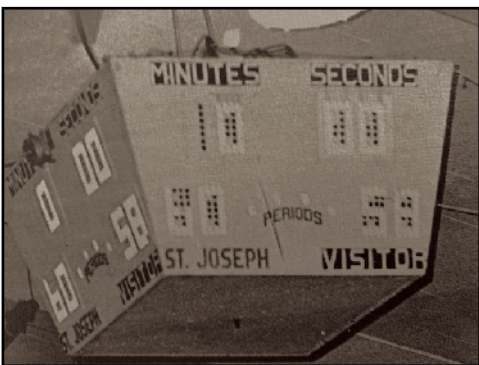




Game Day! Anticipation reached a crescendo in the Viking halls on Friday. A raucous rally concluded the school day as the cries of “Remember!”, “Beat Padua!”, “We’re Number 1!” reverberated throughout the gym. A few hours later, it was as if those cries still echoed in the “Purple Palace.” Crowds streamed in from the East 185th Street entrance at 6 p.m. The gym was nearly filled at the start of the Junior Varsity game. Channel 25’s broadcast platforms took away some choice seats at center court. Seating compensation was set up in the endzone by the stage and on the stage itself. The four corners of the gym near the exits were crammed with standing room only.

The anticipation was heightened even more by and intensely competitive JV game. The Vikings held on to a 52-51 victory. As pre-game warm-ups began over 2100 fans were shoe-horned into the gym, a crowd that still marks one of the all time largest.

Pre-game clock at 0:00, the alma mater was sung, the national anthem was played and the players were introduced. “Jump ball...Get it..Get it!” The game was on. What a game it was. St. Joe took an early lead and by the half was up by seven points. Padua battled back in the second half. The teams “traded punches” but with six seconds remaining in the game, the Vikings had a two point lead and the ball. A whistle blew. A travel call against St. Joe gave the Bruins one last shot. The clock ticked down, Padua’s Chuck Novak put up a shot which missed its mark. Pandemonium filled the gym as Viking students ran to embrace their team. But in the mayhem prior to the final buzzer, the referee’s whistle was not heard. Novak had been fouled while dribbling and was awarded a one and bonus. In a tribute to the fans of both sides, the mayhem of the celebration quieted and the court was quickly cleared. Novak proved clutch, netting both free throws to tie the game 54-54. A chess match ensued in the dramatic overtime. With seconds left on the clock, the score was tied at 58, but the Vikings had the ball. With team scoring leaders Jim Hill (19 points) and Pat Lyons (15 points) being heavily guarded, it was a shot put up by senior sub Don Blakely that passed through the nets. The buzzer sounded. The scoreboard read 60-58. For the second time mayhem ensued, this time no whistle stopped the celebration. Mission accomplished! A loss avenged. Viking faithful flooded the court and lifted Blakely on their shoulders. As a Saturday headline read, “St. Joe pops Padua’s Bubble.” Another headline proclaimed it was “The Game They Won’t Forget.” And that it was!

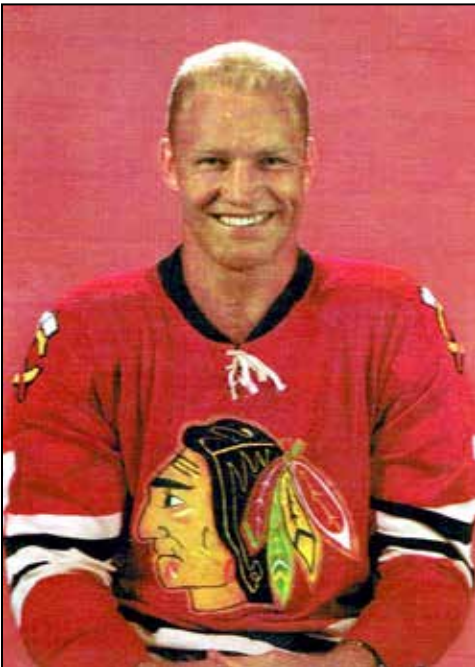


While the Padua basketball game had the spotlight this week, pro basketball celebrated their mid-season all-star games. New York’s Willis Reed had an MVP performance as he led the NBA East to a 142-135 win over the West. The ABA’s East did not fair as well. The West squad ran away with a 128-98 victory. The National Hockey League also honored their stars. Chicago’s Bobby Hull captured MVP honors by leading the East to a 4-1 decision over the West. Most impactful in world achievements this week was the maiden flight of Boeing’s 747



jumbo jet. The double decker airplane could fly faster and carry more than double the number of passengers as existing planes. Pan American Airlines' New York to London route on January 22nd provided the dawning of a new way to fly long distances. Over 400 passengers were on board the flight which took only 6 ½ hours.

The Padua game was not the only high profile topic of interest in the Viking halls as the week concluded. The January edition of the school's newspaper, The Norseman, featured a discussion of a hot topic in schools, the permission to smoke for students. Many teenagers age 16 and over were legally permitted to smoke, but schools mostly did not grant smoking privileges. Seniors Bill Weiss and Tim Hannan, in their opinion column, argued that smoking should be considered a senior privilege. The creation of the Senior Lounge made an available designated, space for smoking. Permission would allow smokers to relax, avoid the tension of receiving detentions and perhaps help with attendance issues such as tardiness and cutting class. Teachers were allowed to smoke in the designated faculty areas, why couldn't students? Senior class president Bob Biscup wrote a column noting legal issues of smoking in buildings. He also cited a recent poll of seniors on the issue. About 45% of the 350 polled wished to be able to smoke on campus. There was a significant percentage, about 30%, who were in favor of no smoking at all. Senior Jerry Cirino was neutral on the topic. He however advocated that the Senior Lounge not be a smoking area. It was too small of a space for smokers and non-smokers to enjoy some relaxation. Another space should be found. The purpose of the editorial page was informational to the whole school community as the administration looked into the issue of smoking at St. Joseph High School in hopes of a new policy statement.



Concluding this big week, the St. Joseph wrestlers had a monumental task as they encountered neighborhood rival Euclid. The Panthers were a wrestling power in the '60's. Our grapplers were having perhaps their best season and the confrontation was looked forward to by all. Euclid proved their prowess, however, in dominating the Vikings 27-14. Seniors Jeff Myers and Bill Montana won two of only four Viking wins. It was, however, their final loss in dual competition for the year.

