



Dutch Burch goes in for a layup in a 1950 game.

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As far as I know, and email or tweet me if I'm wrong, but nobody from Venango County has ever made the NBA. However, Dutch Burch was drafted by the Ft. Wayne (new Detroit) Pistons after his senior season at Pitt in 1954. This was after he averaged 15.4 points per game and named MVP for the Panthers.

Now this is the thing. Oil City has had only two 1,000 point scorers, and neither of them is Burch, still considered by many the Oilers' GOAT (Greatest Of All Time.) Of the two who reached 1,000, only one, Ben Schill, played his entire high school career at OCHS. He had

1,130 points from 1993-96. The other, brother Jay Schill, totaled 1,573 through 1990, but only 255 came in an Oilers uniform. He scored 1,318 for Venango Catholic his first three years before transferring to Oil City.

Burch, a first team all-stater, graduated from Oil City in 1950 as the school's all-time leading scorer – 682 points after setting single-season records of 361 points and 137 assists in 20 games his senior year.

So, let's review: 682 career points for a first team all-stater who would go on to star for a major college team and be drafted by an NBA team. (His NBA draft status at the time of his death at age 80 in 2012 was "unrestricted free agent.")

First 1,000-point scorers

The very next year, in 1951, District 10 would produce its first 1,000 points scorer in one Dick Fox, who totaled 1,020 points for Linesville. Then in 1952, District 9 had its first – Ted Wichart who bucketed 1,281 for Coudersport.

I'm going to add here that D-10's next 1,000-point scorer also came in 1952, the famed Julius McCoy, who would eventually star at Michigan State and was coach Eddie McCluskey's first great star. (Farrell was in the WPIAL at the time, but all of the Steelers' players are on the D-10 list now.) McCoy, who had transferred from South Carolina in his younger days, scored 1,471 points, including a jaw-dropping 766 in 1952 for the first of seven big school state championship teams under McCluskey.

(McCoy probably knew Burch because the two were in Williamsport in the 1960s. Burch went to grad school at Pitt before eventually choosing the quiet life of Williamsport coaching (including 25 1,000 points scorers) at Lycoming College. McCoy spent 12 seasons in the Williamsport/Sunbury area playing in the Eastern Basketball League and serving as commissioner. He later taught and coached at John Harris High School and died in Harrisburg in 2008.)

Getting back to business, the first 1,000 point scorers In the tri-county (Venango, Clarion, Forest) area:

Forest – Bud Seifert, East Forest, 1,053, in 1953

Clarion – Brady Weaver, North Clarion, 1,018 in 1954

Venango – Bob Foggan, Cranberry, 1,280, and Chuck Snell, Franklin, 1,053, both in 1957 (don't know who was first)

Venango County didn't have another 1,000 points scorer until Rocky Grove's Tony Nolf joined the club in 1968. Venango Catholic's Dave Lynch would follow in a big way in 1969, amassing 1,749 points. So that gave Venango four over 1,000 going into the 1970s.

Clarion and Forest counties would add 10 more to their lists through 1969, led by Clarion's Don Hager, a 1956 grad who filled the nets with 1,774 points in his career. Others: Keystone's Merle Hook and Gary Weaver (1960), Union's George Shafer (1963), Clarion's Frank Brooks and East Forest's Bill McClain (1966), East Forest's Pat McClellan (1967), A-C Valley's Rick Foust (1968), and Keystone's Jack Siverling and West Forest's Mike Vermillion (1969).

Post three-dribble-and-a-cloud-of-dust girls basketball didn't come of age until the early 1970s. The first 1,000 points scorer in the tri-county area was Oil City's Jodi Gault with 1,145 points in 1975. The only others from the '70s came in 1977: Franklin's Terri Brinker (1,021) and Oil City's Trish Erickson (1,010).

Until lately, I had been pretty oblivious to the explosion of 1,000-point producers; me, I always had this thing for the low scores from the days of the peach basket through the 1940s. I don't have stats for Clarion and Forest counties, but it has become commonplace lately to see a story in the paper about somebody scoring their 1,000th point and the subsequent fanfare. Especially in Clarion/Forest. And I've got to say, yeah, the three-point shot has got a lot to do with it since being implemented for the 1987-88 season.

Three-pointer or bust

Sixty-one of the 80 1,000-point scorers from Venango County have come since the advent of the three-point line. (For three!!!) That's 30 of 41 boys and 31 of 39 girls.

As for the days when Burch played, the game was just way different, and not just because of the long ball counting for an extra point.

Over the years, the ball has changed; the key and the area under the basket is different; the clock now stops when back in the day it didn't, making for longer games; and then there's this from Steve Silverman, who is writing for sportsrec.com.

"As the game became more physical, referees would call fouls when a player was hit while shooting... Teams would work the ball around the court to find a good shot. Possessions with five or more passes were common. Low-scoring games were common, since there was no limit how long a team could hold the ball before shooting. Teams that could build an eight- or 10-point lead often held the ball for minutes at a time to prevent an opponent from mounting a comeback. This strategy of freezing the ball and going into a stall was effective but boring for spectators."

So, I guess that's the explanation of the game from the days of when hardly anybody scored 1,000 points.

I will leave you with this before I go: Even when Burch was netting 361 for the Oilers in 1950, he was outscoring McCoy, who tallied 208 as a soph for Farrell that same year. Just so you know.