

No balloons, no posters, no mentions in the newspaper – either in the headline or the story on the game.



That's the way it was in 1957 when a high school basketball player scored 1,000 career points.

The first two Venango County players to reach the milestone were Bob Foggan of Cranberry and Chuck Snell – who will be inducted into the Franklin High School Hall of Fame later this year.

Both were seniors in 1957. The only question was who actually reached the milestone first.

After some figuring and finagling on my part, I believe I have the answer: Foggan. But that isn't the big deal anymore.

The big deal now is they did it against EACH OTHER in the SAME GAME! I mentioned this on Twitter and barely got a reaction. I don't think it was sinking in.

Me, I was gobsmacked – first two guys, same game!

The date was Jan. 15, 1957. Cranberry was playing at Franklin and came away with an 81-77 upset victory behind the 6-7 Foggan's 36 points. The 5-7 Snell countered with 31. Foggan's career total at the end of the game: 1,013. Snell had 1,001.

I knew how many points each had going into the season and how many they ended up with: Foggan 1,200 and Snell – whose career would end a few weeks later because his eligibility ran out – 1,053. I worked backward and forward with the numbers and came to the conclusion that this had to be it.

Neither The Derrick or The News-Herald mentioned it; in fact, The Derrick was preoccupied with Foggan scoring 500 points for the second straight season.

I asked Jim Borchert, who added 12 points for the Berries that night, if he remembers any big hoopla being made. “Oh, no, no, no...,” and then he added, “I don’t think they even had a PA system.”



So, Jan. 15, 1957 passed without a whimper. But it was a huge day in Venango County hoops history.

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Snell will be one of four men to be inducted into the Hall on Oct. 6. He’ll enter posthumously with Kevin Blackhurst, who excelled in both Division I basketball and baseball at the University of Delaware; Eric Smith, the Oil City graduate and current OCHS coach who guided Franklin to swimming greatness; and the venerable Lou Slatterback, the former Franklin wrestling coach and football assistant.

The Franklin Hall has been around now since 2011, and considering his glittering credentials, it may seem surprising that Snell hasn’t been enshrined sooner.

I did some research and learned that Snell had his detractors back in the day – just a few years after Ted Marchibroda became a Franklin legend.

By 1957, when Snell was a senior, Marchibroda was with the Chicago Cardinals, his final season in the NFL after a stellar college career and a three-year stint with the Steelers.

Snell was, well, just a high school kid – and bash and cocky to top it all off. Nothing like Marchibroda – your Jack Armstrong All-American boy type.

The News-Herald sports editor back then, Jake Highton, dared mention Snell in the same breath as Marchibroda in print. Highton, who admittedly had never seen Marchibroda play in high school, didn’t say Snell was as good, let alone better, just that he, too, deserved his place among the all-time greats at Franklin.

This did not go over well with some.

Three Franklin fans in how-dare-you mode cornered Highton, who stood up for what he wrote and went eyeball-to-eyeball with them.

Snell, if you don’t know, was not only Franklin’s all-time leading scorer when he graduated, but the first to net 500 points in a season. He broke the single-game school scoring record three times, the last at 42, issued a bundle of assists and was cat-quick on defense.

And, oh the 42-point game? In a non-PIAA post season tourney, he once outscored Walt Mangham, a first team all-stater from New Castle, 43-31. Snell finished his senior season playing against former college stars in a semi-pro league and pretty much matched them basket-for-basket. Rival coach John Joy of Meadville, which dominated the league at the time, called him one of the best players in western Pennsylvania.

Later, when he earned a scholarship to St. Francis of Loretto, then of Maurice Stokes fame, coach Skip Hughes already had Snell on the Frankies' all-time team before he even played a game there. Whoever heard of that?

Highton pointed out that Snell was an all-western Pennsylvania American Legion baseball player, and in his "spare time" as an athlete contributed as a runner/passers in football and a sprinter in track.

Nothing to sneeze at, but some Franklin fans only considered him as eh, "just another good high school athlete."

Snell continued to impress after graduating from high school. He was at St. Francis for a year before transferring to Clarion (and played under Joy) where he scored and scored and scored.

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Sad footnote to all of this, though: Both Foggan and Snell died young. Foggan was only 24 years old when he died of a heart attack in 1963. Snell was 36 when he died in 1974.

Footnote No. 2: While researching this article, I came across Tom "Dino" Carroll, who scored 1,323 points for Oil City St. Joe. Carroll, who graduated a year after Foggan and Snell, scored 706 for the Irish in 1958 – the third highest total in the state that season. Len Chappell of Portage, who later starred in the NBA, led with 977 and averaged 37.7 points per game. Jerry Foster of Chester was second with 730. Carroll averaged 28.2 ppg.

And a happier footnote: Chuck Snell was finally inducted into the FHS Hall of Fame on Oct. 6, 2022, much to delight of family members – siblings Nancy, Kim and Mike – (top photo) and his presenters, Jim Hedglin and Bob Lynch.