

(This story was first published in The Derrick and The News-Herald on April 4, 2020.)

I have a new favorite 38-point game: Chuck Snell, Franklin, 9-20-20-38 vs. Meadville on Feb. 25, 1956.

This actually ties a 38-point game I saw in person in 1964 when Joe Harper of Nether Providence, a school I attended in Delaware County, went 18-2-2-38. Anybody who walked through the gym at lunchtime could watch Harper practicing his over-the-head jumper around gym divider. Seventeen of his 18 field goals came from NBA range, and I'm not exaggerating, so you do the math if he would have had the benefit of the three-point line.

But this is about Snell, his Section 2 peers and Cranberry's Bob Foggan, a local point machine rival.

You might know I have a web site, venangofootball.com, which focuses on Oil City and Franklin football. But a couple of months ago, and I can't remember now which came first, but I was looking at a list of 1,000 point scorers on D9sports.com – D9 meaning District 9 – and another list of District 10 1,000 point players on the Erie newspaper site.

Long story short, I decided to include a basketball link on my football web site featuring these local 1,000 point scorers and trying to figure out a list for Oil City – which kind of didn't have one, but mission pretty much accomplished now. And then I decided to include other things – 500-point seasons, 40-point games, top coaches and other little hoops tidbits.

The 500-point and 40-point seasons are still a work in progress, and I've been getting a lot of help from many people, including Franklin coach Jason Fulmer, who offered Shaun Grill's 44-point game and 596-point season in 2002 for the lists. He also mentioned Snell is rumored to have a 52-point game, but I was skeptical because there is a web site with a list of 50-point games in Pennsylvania history and Snell is not on it, plus I've never heard anything about it in all my years.

But I told him I'd look on the Newspaper Archives link on the Oil City Library web site and immediately dove into that.

Well, I didn't find a 52-point game for Snell; in fact, after his junior season, The Derrick carried an article on its "Franklin page" that reported Snell set school records in 1955-56 (his junior year) with the aforementioned 38 points in a game and 502 points in a season. I also found a 42-point game for Snell against Rocky Grove his senior season.

And this means, by the way, that Grill probably broke that record when he scored 44 vs. Titusville in 2002, and Dillon King shattered that standard when he netted 48 in a game in 2012. (The paper had reported in the Grill account that Snell was believed to hold the school record with 49 points.)

Now, as I told you earlier, Snell and Foggan are the first players to score 1,000 points in Venango County history. The two split two games during that 1956-57 campaign, and interestingly, when Franklin beat the Berries on Dec. 4, 1956, The Derrick called it "an upset" in the headline.

Cranberry would even the score – by an identical 81-77 – on Jan. 15, 1957, when the 6-7 Foggan outscored Snell, a guard type, 36-31.

But Foggan wasn't the only area player with whom Snell waged scoring duels. Oil City's Bob Hartz and Howdy Rose, Warren's Jeff Homan (he of the Oil City name), Titusville's George

Dewey (38 against Corry) and especially Meadville's Wilbur Jenkins were all big-time scorers with at least 300-point seasons.

In the game that Snell bucketed 38, it was in a losing cause. Jenkins countered with 43 for a Section 2 record 292 on the season as the Bulldogs won 85-77 for their third straight undefeated league campaign.

When Snell scored 502 as a junior, he broke Bob Andres' school record 320 set in 1954.

Teammate Ken Henson matched Andres' mark. And while this was going on, Tom McCarthy finished with 441 points to break Jack Robinson's Rocky Grove school record of 375 set in 1955.

Both Snell (age 36) and Foggan (age 24) died way too young.

Snell died Sept. 30, 1974, of an apparent heart attack in Franklin. He played a year at St. Francis before graduating from Clarion. His college coach already had Snell on the all-time St. Francis team as a freshman. Snell was an All-American YMCA basketball player in 1960, and starred in football and baseball in his earlier years.

Foggan died Dec. 7, 1963, in Cincinnati. He attended Gannon and Akron before graduating from Indiana Institute of Technology in Ft. Wayne and was a design engineer for General Electric at the time of his death.

Foggan scored 530 points for the Berries as a junior and 528 his senior. He was Cranberry's all-time leading scorer until Roy Sanner came along in 1974.

His high game was 38 points, but Foggan owns what is now probably my favorite 28-point game with this line (and you're never going to believe this): 4-20-21-28 on Dec. 6, 1955, in a 73-59 defeat to Franklin.

And how many times, after a loss, do you hear fans grumble as they file out of the gym: "If we could only make free throws..." (Clang).

Not with these guys, though.