

IN THIS CORNER

George Beahon

It was semipro basketball in a dingy, low-ceilinged hall in Buffalo. The Rochester Seagrams, forerunners of the NBA Royals, were clutching and grabbing with the Buffalo Bisons.

Late in the action the referee called a jump ball, a solidly-built Les Harrison to jump against a teen-aged kid.

The rookie gave up a couple of inches, about 40 pounds, and maybe a dozen years and lots of smarts to the player-coach, Harrison.

But the rookie tapped the ball once, failed to gain control, tapped again, and now having outmaneuvered Harrison, drove in for the lay-up bucket.

Harrison called time out. He went to the kid and pinched his cheeks — two-handed style.

"Hey kid," announced Harrison, "you're playing on my team from now on."

This is how Al Cervi came off the Buffalo sandlots to play for Rochester in the old NBL and later the NBA for Syracuse.

Eventually he would win honors as All League, leading scorer, MVP, coach of the year (Syracuse). Now, finally, Al Cervi is being pushed for the Hall of Fame.

People who are urging Cervi's inclusion in the Hall are pros like Red Holzman, coach of the New York Knicks: "He was one of the greatest guards in the history of basketball."

Dan Biasone (Syracuse owner): "He was the fiercest individual competitor the game has ever known and I would consider him the greatest defensive player of all time."

Honey Russell: "His defensive ability, one-on-one, was rare to watch, and I know of no player young or old who could outplay him."

Other testimonials have been recorded by Bob Cousy, Les Harrison, and many of the pro game's coaches.

To one who lugged a typewriter onto too many Pullman cars and prop-type airplanes in those days when pro basketball was Oshkosh, Sheboygan, Syracuse and Rochester, Al Cervi was something special to remember.

Those were days when your club had to be 15 points better to overcome the "home cooking" of most crowd-intimidated referees.

There was North Side Gym in Fort Wayne, where Otto Graham, then with the Royals, decided pro basketball was "bush" because the management wouldn't help him summon a taxi while the fans were berating him in the cold outside the overheated arena.

Cervi and Fuzzy Levane, now a Knicks' super scout, were reminiscing one recent night when they got together to help support the Maurice Stokes Memorial Foundation.

Levane, who could remember every turn of the dice in the old Waterloo, Indiana railroad station

PANEL ON RACE, RELIGION

The Panel of American Women will present an evening of discussion and dialogue on "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Other Races and Religions, but Were Afraid to Ask," on Tuesday, Sept. 25, 8 p.m. at Dailey Hall, St. Ambrose Church, 31 Empire Blvd. It will be the first offering in the St. Ambrose Adult Education Committee's fall lecture series.

that serviced Fort Wayne, recalled this game.

"Cervi said it was marvelous in North Side Gym," said Fuzzy. "That is, if you happened to be a bull looking for a bullfighter."

"This is a playoff game, which makes it a war. Lester has already had a fight with three fans and they nearly killed-us all."

"Cervi gets into a thing with Fort Wayne's Jack Smiley. They are leaning hard on each other, and when the whistle blows Cervi does not give the ball to the referee but instead he slams it into Smiley's face.

"Then Cervi is moving in and punching and he gets the referee Phil Fox who gets in the way and if he got Smiley we might still be in Fort Wayne because the riot would have lasted that long. That's how you can remember what pro basketball was about in those days. Cervi would start World War 3 in the other guy's back yard."

One of the greatest shooters of all time — that's ALL TIME — was a Fort Wayner named Bobby McDermott. What happened to Bobby McDermott, who also is eligible for this Hall of Fame, is that a kid named Al Cervi came off the Buffalo sandlots and packed McDermott into sudden retirement.

It would be nice to see Cervi and McDermott walk together into that building in Springfield, Mass.

SCHOLASTIC NOTEBOOK

John Doser

An estimated 6,500 persons, a disappointing crowd, came and went during the four hours constituting the recent rededication ceremonies of Holleder Stadium, formerly Aquinas Stadium.

The crowd, generally an attentive one, dwindled to under a thousand to hear Secretary of the Army Howard Calloway deliver the key talk.

"What does it take to get people to come out to something good like this?" Councilman Charles Schiano, chairman of the dedication committee, asked.

Some suggested that many people didn't know Don Holleder personally and others said it was just too cold.

But you'd think the attractions of 30 cent hot dogs and nickel Jenny's, and concerts by the Monroe County Parks' and the West Point Bands would have generated more fan response than they did.

There was humor and sadness — an announcer prefaced one remark with "The following announcement is not for the band. The nickel beer concessions are now open."

But the chuckles turned to tears in many stadium locations when Calloway described Don Holleder's life as a selfless giving to others. He observed that Holleder gave his life trying to help men, his wounded men.

"We need more of what Don Holleder stood for, the valued things which come from giving of ourselves," Calloway said.

Rochesterians familiar with the Holleder story know about his three-sport days at Aquinas; how he won All-America honors at end for Army in his junior year;

Expanding CYO Hires Four Men

Four new staff members have joined the Catholic Youth Organization of Rochester. They are: Thomas Cotterill, 30, Jack Quiggle, 36, and Kenneth Jones, 27, all in administrative posts, and Michael Nally, 23, physical education instructor.

Cotterill, a native Rochesterian, will supervise six regional youth workers, develop a monthly newsletter and handle press releases. He formerly worked at Charles Settlement House as a community organizer.

Quiggle, from South Bend, Ind., was previously at Community College of the Finger Lakes, Canandaigua, as head basketball coach and director of athletics. He will direct the CYO basketball, softball and day camp programs.

Jones was born in Chicago but raised in Rochester. While studying for a B.D. degree in theology at St. Bernard's Seminary, he organized and directed a Christian leadership program for high school youth. At the CYO he'll develop leadership training programs.

CYO Booklet Now Available

The National CYO Federation's publication, CYO Parent-Teen Workshops, is now available to the public, according to John F. Klein, acting diocesan CYO director.

Workshop models outlined in the booklet are designed to improve communication between teenagers and parents and to make both aware of what each can contribute to the total parish life.

and how he threw a repeat All-America honor away switching from end to quarterback because his coach asked him to do it.

There are different versions of how he died, but it's generally agreed that he died shortly after replacing the regular commander who had been killed earlier in the same battle in Vietnam.

Holleder's mother, Mrs. Irving Cowles of Webster, and his widow, Mrs. Ernest L. Ruffner of Arlington, Va., and his four daughters, attended the dedication ceremonies.

CARDINAL MOONEY, 18th best among the state's high school football teams last year according to the final N.Y. State Sportswriter Association poll, could go unbeaten this year in City-Catholic action, the Sept. 1 Football Newsletter and Forecast of the NYSSWA reported.

Picked to give battle to coach Tony Merola's C-C champion gridders by the NYSSWA are Madison, Fairport, Rush-Henrietta and Greece Athena.

Mooney's Tony Shaw and Jeff Weston are included among the NYSSWA's Nifty Fifty, athletes who received much all-star praise last year as underclassmen.

Shaw is a fleet-footed, high scoring halfback who was 6th All-State last year and Weston was a 5th All-State tackle.

WHILE SPACE in this column is limited, coaches of girls' athletic teams are invited to submit sports news to me in care of the Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Include coaches' phone numbers for verification of items submitted.



Jack Quiggle, Ken Jones, Mike Nally and Tom Cotterill with CYO director, John Klein.

Another native Rochesterian, Nally attended Aquinas Institute. He received his B.S. degree in physical education from Jacksonville University, Florida. He will conduct physical education programs at five grade schools — St. Michael's, St. Augustine's, St. Lawrence, St. Philip Neri and St. John's, Greece.

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