

Out of Bounds

JASON SNYDER

March Sadness Joe DiMaggio 1914-1999

There are sometimes when simply putting ink to paper just doesn't do justice. There are some people in time that mean too much to too many for any sports enthusiast to attempt to describe.

This idea was proven with the death of New York Yankee great Joe DiMaggio. For months the nation heard of the increasing then decreasing health of their weakened hero. And with his expected death on March 8, 1999, the entire nation mourned.

It was this universal sadness that opened the eyes of this generation and teared up the eyes of the generation honored to witness his presence. Past generations lost a man that stood for more than just greatness, and this generation learned a lot more about the meaning of greatness. DiMaggio showed the nation then, and set an example for the nation now, that greatness goes beyond numbers. It was through his heroism and grace that those numbers were reached. And it was through his appeal that he reached the hearts of the American people.

It wouldn't seem fair for me to sit here and act like I understand what Joe DiMaggio did for not only baseball, but for this entire nation. In my eyes, it would be like my great-grandchildren reminiscing about the greatness of Michael Jordan. But maybe even that comparison isn't fair. Maybe DiMaggio meant more to his generation than Jordan did to this generation. For me, it would be hard to imagine that DiMaggio matched the same talent that Jordan did in their respective sports. But it would also surprise me, after all the attention that DiMaggio is receiving now, that Jordan could match the spectacle that DiMaggio brought to this country.

DiMaggio entered the national spotlight only one year after Babe Ruth decided to leave it, leaving no gap in baseball's historical timeline. But for DiMaggio, what

an unfortunate circumstance it must have been to try to follow the act of Babe Ruth.

But DiMaggio didn't disappoint any baseball fans. In fact, it could be said



that he took the definition of a hero to a higher level. In only his rookie season, he was placed in Ruth's spot as third in the batting order and ended up filling Ruth's spot in right field temporarily.

In 1937, DiMaggio earned the nickname "Yankee Clipper" by Arch McDonald, a radio broadcaster. McDonald gave DiMaggio the name for the way he "appeared to glide across the outfield in pursuit of fly balls." It was then that DiMaggio's grace on the diamond began to be recognized. It was this gracefulness and ability to make the game look easy that put DiMaggio in the spotlight.

1939 and 1940 marked DiMaggio's first batting titles, batting a career high .381 in '39 and .352 in '40.

1941 marked arguably his greatest season on the diamond. Perhaps his greatest feat as a baseball player came in the summer of '41 as he crushed the consecutive games hitting streak previously set at 44 by Wee Willie Keeler. DiMaggio hit safely in 56 consecutive games (57 including the All-Star Game) to set a new standard in baseball. He hit safely from May 15, 1941 to July 16, 1941. He hit .357

on the season and was named MVP.

From 1942-1945, DiMaggio was enlisted in the Army Air Forces. During that time, DiMaggio was divorced by his first wife, which would ultimately

set up one of the most famous marriages in history. DiMaggio would eventually marry actress Marilyn Monroe in 1954. Although the marriage lasted less than one year, DiMaggio's heart was proven as he took care of Monroe's funeral arrangements following her death in 1962.

DiMaggio's career included many highs and many lows. Playing through injuries with grace and style, he continued to earn the respect of the nation that grew to love him. The country hurt when he hurt and cheered when he pulled himself out of all adversity. Deaths to his parents, injuries, unsuccessful marriages and so much talent kept DiMaggio in the headlines and kept the nation in attention.

On December 11, 1951, DiMaggio retired from the game that he changed saying, "when baseball is no longer fun, it's no longer a game. And so, I've played my last game."

With that announcement, his career numbers were complete. In only 13 seasons, the Yankee Clipper earned 2,214 hits, a .325 batting average, 361 home runs, 1,537 RBI's, 10 pennants, nine World Series Championships, 13

All-Star Game appearances, an eventual retired jersey number (#5) and induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame, and the undying respect, love and admiration of the American people.

Despite more glory years of baseball following his retirement, Joe DiMaggio was the man that ultimately changed baseball. The media attention, the standard of excellence and the game itself would never be the same.

Running through my head over and over again since DiMaggio's death are the song lyrics in Simon and Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson." "Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio. A nation turns its lonely eyes to you." These words were sung in a time when baseball was still at the top. There were still big headlines and there were still great athletes. So why did this nation need Joe DiMaggio?

This nation needed their hero. The man that was America in his time. Those words just added to the legend of the Yankee Clipper. DiMaggio's story just held too much importance to his generation for any other man or any other story to match it. It should have us singing, "You are a legend Joe DiMaggio. This generation needs a hero just like you."

When Joe DiMaggio was asked how he wanted to be remembered, he said, "that I played the game as hard as I could. I looked for nothing. I just went out and did my job. I did it the way I knew how to do it. I didn't make any noise about it." But it is that fact that still amazes me. How could a man that was so quiet reach so many people?

DiMaggio's legend was built through the words of others. He didn't need to say he was great to be remembered as great. He may not have wanted to make noise about it, but his grace and greatness echoes loudly through the people he touched and lives through all Americans that truly understand what he meant to American life.

Snyder is the sports editor for the Beacon. Out of Bounds appears weekly on this page.

BEHREND BRIEFS

Behrend's Brian Streeter very active in basketball community

Behrend Athletics Director Brian Streeter is coming off a very active week in college basketball. Streeter served as the NCAA's East Region site coordinator for the NCAA Regionals in Rochester, New York. In addition, he served as the chair for the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Southern men's basketball championships.

In only his second season as athletics director, Streeter has been key in leading the athletics' program to one of its best seasons in the school's history.

Streeter has been recognized numerous times for his involvement in the athletics' community. He received the Schoenfeld Regional Sportsmanship Award five times, including top honors nationally for the same award in 1995. In 1993, he was named the Volunteer of the Year by the American Red Cross of Geneva, NY.

In whatever spare time he has left, Streeter coaches his 13-year old son's basketball team at Family First Sports' Park.

Behrend's Jake Boyle and Mandy Bodnor earn AMCC Athletes of the Week

As the 1999 baseball and softball seasons opened over spring break, the Lions combined for an 11-2 record in their trips to Fort Pierce, Florida. Jake Boyle and Mandy Bodnor led the Lions throughout the week, earning themselves AMCC recognition.

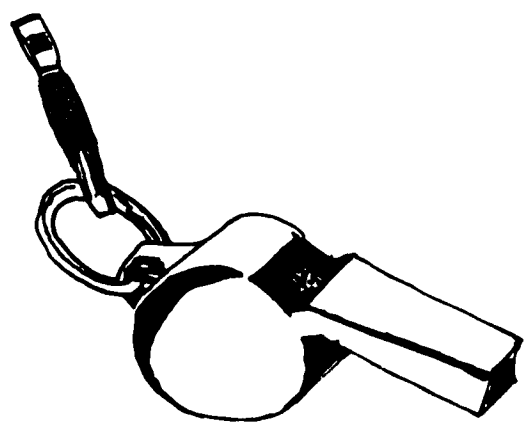
Jake Boyle led the baseball team to a 6-1 start to the season with impressive numbers in the spring training trip. Boyle, a freshman from Cambridge Springs, hit .500 (12-24) to lead the Lions in hits and RBI's with 10. Two RBI's resulted in game-winners. Boyle added three doubles, one triple and a home run for the Behrend men.

Mandy Bodnor sparked the Lady Lions on the mound, earning herself a 4-1 record for the week. She pitched in every game, and posted one shutout and twelve strikeouts in 32 1/3 innings pitched. She also provided a spark on offense, batting 5-14 (.357). She finished the week with a home run and nine RBI's.

You Make The Call!

IN MEMORY OF JOE DIMAGGIO

Famous words spoken about and by Yankee great Joe DiMaggio.



"Getting him was the greatest thing I ever did for the Yankees."

Former Yankee owner, George Weiss

"Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio. A nation turns its lonely eyes to you..."

Simon and Garfunkel's song, "Mrs. Robinson"

"Thank the good Lord for making me a Yankee."

Joe DiMaggio

"He made everything look so easy. He was elegance in Yankee pinstripes."

N.Y. radio sportscaster, Art Rust Jr.

"There is always some kid who may be seeing me for the first or last time. I owe him my best."

DiMaggio after being asked why he worked so hard in the majors.

"Never did anything wrong on the field. Never did."

Former teammate Yogi Berra

INTRAMURAL ROUNDUP

Intramurals

SPRING 1999

Swimming

Individual (M, W)

Team (M, W, Coed)

Registration Deadline: March 26



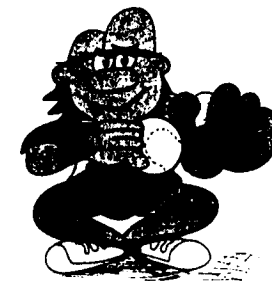
Modified Softball

M, W, Coed

Registration Deadline: April 2

Play starts on April 5

Season will last four weeks



Badminton

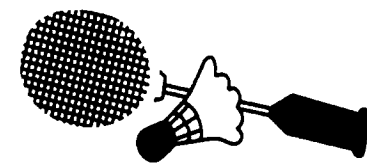
Singles (M, W)

Doubles (M, W, Coed)

Registration Deadline: April 9

Play starts on April 12

Season will last two weeks



Spring semester Intramural schedules are available in the IM office and on the Reed and Erie Hall IM boards.