

Out of Bounds

JASON SNYDER

"The Great One": no other way to put it

"The Great One." There's no other way to put it...nothing else you can call him. It's been that way since I can remember. You said "The Great One." I thought Wayne Gretzky.

I've never been the biggest hockey fan, and I can't say as though I've had the pleasure to actually watch Wayne Gretzky's greatness more than a handful of times. For me, I didn't need to. I've always seen him as this bigger than life name.

"Gretzky," the name, didn't hold a real concrete meaning for me. It was just the name tossed around when playing street hockey pick-up games. I can always remember choosing the name of our team and naming it after whatever uniform Gretzky was wearing at the time. The best player from that team, then got the pleasure to represent "Gretzky." We would yell, "Gretzky Scores!" and "what a pass by Gretzky!" We all understood it was in our own little imaginary worlds, but we also understood that Gretzky was as big as you got.

In a sport that measures you by goals and assists, saves and save %, Gretzky proved himself with numbers never before seen, and likely never to be seen again. "The Great One" holds a record 61 National Hockey League records (62 if you include the record for most NHL records). Sounds ridiculous? It is!

Just about every single major record that hockey's stars try to shoot for, are held by Gretzky. There could be little stories told about every record and the significance in which it holds.

Among these records are goals (career - 894, season - 92, period - 4), assists (career - 1,963, season - 163, game - 7), points (career - 2,856, season - 215), hat tricks (50), game-winning playoff goals (24), consecutive 100-or-more point seasons (13), and many more.

But just two of Gretzky's records, alone, could put the world in awe. 1,962 career assists and 215 points in a season. The true meaning of these records can't be felt unless they are compared to what other hockey players have done.

So compare this: Gretzky - 1,963 career assists (20 seasons) vs. Gordie

Howe - 1,850 career points (26 seasons). Yes, Gretzky has more career assists than any NHL hockey player has career points. Meaning, if you were to subtract every one of Gretzky's record 894 goals from his total career points, he would still be the all-time points leader. Amazing!

But that stat isn't even the one that hockey fans shout about. Back in the days of Gordie Howe, 100 points in a season was the mark to reach. It wasn't until 1970-71 that Phil Esposito put the standard at 152. And it was Gretzky that made a mockery at all that, scoring 212 in 1981-82, one year after breaking Esposito's record with 164. Breaking 200 seemed like a once in a lifetime experience. But Gretzky continued the onslaught. 205 the next season and 208 following that. In 1985-86, Gretzky broke 200 for the fourth time with an NHL record 215 season points.

Mario Lemieux is the only player to come close to the 200-point mark with 199 in 1988-89. Excluding Lemieux, the closest anyone has come, is Steve Yzerman with 155.

Wayne Gretzky more than doubled the mark that "Mr. Hockey," Gordie

Howe himself struggled to reach. 215 points is a record that could be compared to unbreakables such as Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak, Richard "The King" Petty's 200 career racing wins, and Wilt Chamberlain's 100 point game.

Gretzky won nine Hart Memorial Trophies (MVP), ten Art Ross Trophies (points leader), three Lady Byng Memorial Trophies (sportsmanship), two Conn Smythe Trophies (Stanley Cup MVPs) and four Stanley Cups.

But more important than that, it was Gretzky's emergence on the hockey scene that put the sport in the spotlight in the 1980s. It's as if he came for 20 years, rewrote the NHL record book, set a standard of excellence for hockey greatness, made such a number as 99 famous, gave Canada a national hero, then left. Every game, he performed in skates that fit him perfectly, but yet, nobody else seems to be able to fill. He is "The Great One." What else is there to say?

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

BEHREND BRIEFS

Bovaird named Honorable Mention All-American

Behrend senior basketball standout Brock Bovaird has just been named an honorable mention All-American by the Division III Basketball News. Bovaird has just come off a very successful season where he pointed the Behrend men to and Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference regular season championship and the Lion's first-ever ECAC Championship. His Lions won a school record 21 wins.

Bovaird was also named AMCC Player of the Year in 1998-99 in a very productive season. He averaged 12.9 points, 4.8 assists, 3.5 rebounds and virtually no turnovers. He shoot 41% from behind the arc.

Bovaird only played two seasons for the Lions after transferring from Clarion University. In those two seasons, he ranks first all-time in three-point field goal accuracy, making 116-254. He ranks ninth in Behrend history with 228 assists.

Lisa Fox earns Lions' third consecutive AMCC Athlete of the Week

Behrend softball continued their streak of consecutive Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference Athletes of the Week as Lisa Fox added to Mandy Bodnor's two-week reign.

Fox is a senior outfielder from Pittsburgh, PA where she attended Carrick High School. She led the Lions to a 2-0 week, with a sweep of Pitt-Bradford in a double-header. She went 3-6 with five RBIs, three runs and two total home runs.

Down to the Wire...

Draft Confidential: Williams falls to 5th, but is not upset

by Gary Myers
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

The fall was impossible to forecast when Ricky Williams finished his career as college football's all-time leading rusher. He was the best player in the NFL draft.

As the off-season progressed, it became apparent he would not go in the top three: The Browns, Eagles and Bengals were locked in on quarterbacks.

And it wasn't so much he went fifth Saturday to the Saints - thrilled to hand the Redskins eight draft picks in a near Herschel Walker-type deal - because that was only one spot lower than predicted. The shocker was the Colts passed on him to take another running back, Edgerrin James.

How can Williams, with 6,279 career yards, not even be the first back taken and have four other players go ahead of him? "At the very beginning I couldn't imagine it," Williams said. "It's not going to matter in a couple of months."

The Colts had James rated higher - they liked his outside speed and receiving skills - and they were not the only team that did. Also, the word was in the last few days, after trading Marshall Faulk, the Colts spoke with Williams' agent and determined he would be tough to sign.

Williams is represented by No

Limit Sports, which was rapper Master P's company. Leland Hardy, who will negotiate Williams' contract, said Master P divested himself of his interest because he's trying to make it in the NBA - he tried out for the Hornets in training camp - and is himself now a client of No Limit Sports.

Still, Hardy said he expected Williams to be paid "commensurate" with what he called his status as the "greatest college player in the history of the sport."

That could mean a tough negotiation, which does not concern New Orleans. Williams said he didn't think his choice of agents was the reason he fell. "They saw something in Edgerrin James they didn't see in me," he said.

But Williams didn't impress one personnel director with the way he handled himself since the end of the season. "He turned me off when he showed up 20 pounds overweight at the combine," he said. "It's like showing up for a job interview without a coat and tie. It's a little bit immature. And by picking James, it's not like you are going from a Cadillac to a Ford."

Although everybody says Williams is a good guy, you wonder how the conservative NFL took to his dreadlocks and pierced tongue. When Williams had his long-awaited work-out in San Diego, the personnel director called it "non-descript."

But shouldn't Williams be judged by what he did on the field in college, which was better than Tony Dorsett, Walter Payton, Eric Dickerson, etc.? "That's 70 percent of it," the personnel director said. "The last three

months are important when we are scrutinizing the guy. Then he hires Master P for his agent. There is the whole image: Is this guy showing any maturity, is he taking this seriously?"

Williams said it would be "unfair to call it a nightmare." He displayed no sign of bitterness and said it was a dream come true to play in the NFL. "Why do players drop?" Saints GM Bill Kuharich said. "Why did Dan Marino go 27th?"

If the Colts were turned off by the money, it's the second time in three days they let it be a factor. That was a reason for trading Faulk. Was Williams' signability a factor?

"It might have had something to do with it," Colts coach Jim Mora said. "Because of who Ricky is and the stature he has, he might have been a little tougher guy to get done."

If Mike Ditka turns him into the next Payton, then he will be worth it.

Hail to the Redskins: The Redskins pulled off one of the slickest draft day maneuvers. In the end, they moved down two spots to get Georgia CB Champ Bailey, the player they wanted all along, and picked up the Saints' No.1 pick next year and used a fifth-rounder from New Orleans to move up in the second round to get OT Jon Jansen.

Here's what happened: When the rumors started flying Saturday morning that the Colts were not going to take Williams at No.4, the Saints called and re-opened talks with the Skins for the fifth pick. They agreed on a deal,

sending the Saints' entire draft of six picks and Nos.1 and 3 picks next year - a near Herschel Walker deal - to Washington. If the Skins stayed at the Saints' No. 12 spot, they were going to take Florida DE-LB Jevon Kearse.

But they cut a deal with the Bears at No.7: Figuring Bailey might go to the Colts, they made a contingency deal with

Chicago to move back up if Arizona CB Chris McAlister was still available. It all fell into place when Indy took James. When the Skins were on the clock, they had the Saints on hold on one phone while finalizing the deal with Chicago. They pulled the trigger on both.

And when the Rams took WR Torry Holt at No.6, the Skins got Bailey. "We feel Champ Bailey is going to be a great player," Skins coach Norv Turner said.

Washington GM Charley Casserly said when the Colts traded Faulk on Thursday, he just about gave up on trading with New Orleans. "We thought the Colts would take a running back at four," he said. "We all assumed it was going to be Ricky Williams."

The Saints, of course, were thrilled to get Williams. "We thought he was the best player in the draft and we'll find out," Kuharich said.

Giant decision: How would Marshall Faulk and his 2,227 yards total offense have looked in a Giants uniform? Imagine if they had a player defenses actually had to make a game plan against. They never had an interest. Best guess is the Giants were scared

off by dealing for a RB with five years in the league and prospect of Faulk's contract demands. But after giving \$5 million bonus to Kerry Collins, should money be a factor?

FIRST, MICHAEL JORDAN retired. Then, Wayne Gretzky. Is John Elway next? Even though some may think the longer Elway takes to make his decision, the better chance he's coming back, I still think he's done and will make it three sports icons to say goodbye in '99.

"His state of mind is he knows it's time to make a decision shortly," said Marvin Demoff, his attorney for his entire 16-year career. "I spoke with John in the middle of the week and for the first time he realizes it's time to make a decision."

Demoff has been telling Elway that if he wants to play in '99, he should do it because he loves to play, not just to go for a third straight championship. "He sets the bar so high," Demoff said.

Revolving door: The Eagles have had 10 starting quarterbacks in the '90s. Doug Pederson will make it No.11 when he starts Philly's season opener and it won't be long - probably by October - that rookie Donovan McNabb will be No.12...The NFL moved up the date rookies are allowed to begin working out with their teams from June 1 to May 16 as long as they are finished with exams. It was a big issue a year ago when Peyton Manning, who had already graduated, was not allowed to report to the Colts un-

til June 1. Most schools are out by the middle of May.

THE BROWNS GOT the seven-year \$48 million deal done with Tim Couch at 3:30 a.m. Saturday, 8 hours before the draft. He gets a \$12.25 million signing bonus upfront. The deal voids after three years with easily reachable incentives. Then the Browns can buy back the final four years with a second signing bonus of \$8.75 million, making the total bonus \$21 million - an NFL record. It is similar in structure to the six-year, \$37.8 million deal Peyton Manning signed last year with Indy that had an initial bonus of \$11.6 million and another \$8.4 million after the third year. Manning has already voided out his final three years. Both deals were negotiated by Tom Condon...Leigh Steinberg, the agent for Akili Smith, was not happy with him Friday night, ostensibly as leverage and as a backup in case they could not reach a deal with Couch.

"I was emphatic with them that if they really wanted Tim Couch, that was their choice, but please don't engage us in discussions on a contract," Steinberg said. "Please remember this is a human being we are talking about and we are not trading furniture here..." Late Friday night, when Browns negotiator Lal Heneghan was talking on phone with one of Steinberg's aides in his hotel room, Condon was in Heneghan's room working in Couch's deal.

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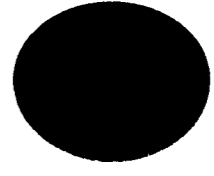
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The Athletic "Ball"

An All Student Semi-Formal



\$9
Couples

Place: Holiday Inn, Downtown

Date: April 30, 1999

Time: 9:00-1:00

\$5
Single



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