EXCERPTS

from the ARCHIVES

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Something magical happened on a chilly damp Sunday in November 1957. It was the final football game of the season, and the underdog Bombers were scheduled to take on the Cavaliers of Purcell in front of 6,500 rambunctious fans at Xavier University's Corcoran Field. Led by Roger Staubach, Purcell was undefeated and seemingly invincible. In fact, the last time the boys from Sycamore Street had managed to beat the "Hackberry Assassins" on the gridiron was during the fall of 1948.

On top of that, St. Xavier was without its star senior quarterback and co-captain, Tom Jorling '58. Tom was a three-year varsity starter who had come down with a case of rheumatic fever early in the school year. At the time, rheumatic fever could be deadly, and treatment often involved months of absolute bed rest. Consequently, Tom had been out for the entirety of the season. Things did not bode well for the Bombers.

But fate had other ideas. Early in the game, St. X senior Steve Apking '58 caught a Purcell punt and sprinted 60 yards for the touchdown. The extra point attempt by Jack Green '59 was blocked, and St. X took a precarious 6-0 lead. The Cavaliers responded with their own touchdown, secured the extra point, and seized a slim 7-6 lead in the second quarter.

St. X fought back to within 15 yards of the Purcell endzone, but the drive stalled. Jack Green, having had his extra point blocked earlier, pressed Coach Tom Ballaban to let him attempt the field goal. Green lined up, kicked the pigskin through the air, and split the uprights. The Bombers took a 9-7 lead going into halftime and never looked back. No points were added in a hard-fought second half, and a stunned crowd saw X High emerge victorious. With the win, St. Xavier claimed its first outright GCL Championship since 1943 during the legendary days of George Ratterman '44 and Charley Wolf '44.

And yet, the real magic actually happened *after* the game. Immediately following their triumphant conquest, Jack Green, henceforth known as "The Toe," was given the game ball by Coach Ballaban. But Green felt that someone else was more deserving of the keepsake: his bedridden quarterback, Tom Jorling. And if Jorling could not be on the field with his team to celebrate their first GCL Championship in 14 years, then they would bring the celebration to Jorling. At that moment, the entire St. Xavier football squad, still wearing their uniforms and pads, took off running for Tom's house on Ledgewood Drive, just a few minutes from Xavier University.

At some point amidst the revelry, the photograph below was snapped, and a fleeting yet beautiful moment in time was captured: the 1957 St. X football team, including Coaches Ballaban and Berning, celebrating a GCL Championship in Tom Jorling's bedroom. Jorling, wearing a t-shirt, holds the game ball while Jack Green flashes a "Victory" sign at bottom left. It is a poignant reminder that the brotherhood of St. Xavier goes beyond the classrooms and hallways and beyond the stadiums and fields. It goes even beyond high school itself, for we truly are Xavier Men Forever.

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