

Commers, John "Jake" Rydell and goalie Chuck Cullen were to star in the following years.

Members of the 1954 squad: Playing-coach Ted Meysembourg, Captain Charles Cammack, Dennis Stedman, Paul Kunert, Clem Commers, Edward Regan, John "Jake" Rydel, Dick Marchek, Wayne Kotaska, Patrick Mingo, Kenneth Christian, Robert Larson, Michael Ruddy, Frank Albers, Paul Sokup, Charles Cullen.

— 1955 —

The athletic director was aware that the solution to the hockey problem was the appointment of a member of the coaching staff who could give continuity. It was in his second year at St. John's that the brilliant football coach John Gagliardi was appointed coach of the hockey team. By his own admission he was aware that his qualifications for the post were limited. When asked why he had been chosen to coach hockey, he replied, "I had an uncle in Chicago who once went to a Black Hawks' game."

Yet what "Gag" lacked in knowledge of hockey fundamentals he more than made up for in a determination "to put the darn thing together." He was a good observer and quickly noted the need of a leader. "The team had the horses but not the leader," so he promptly nominated himself for that role. One other blessing he had, namely, the presence on the squad of only one senior. "The majority of the squad being sophomores and freshmen, they did not notice my ignorance of the game when by a slip of the tongue I called the rink a 'court' and a penalty a 'foul,'" he explained.

The 1955 Jays were able to win fourth place in the conference, and also a victory over the powerful Duluth Branch Bulldogs. The story is worth the telling, as recorded in the *Record* February 4, 1955, p. 3:

"Up until the end of the first semester the Jay pucksters had been able to win but one game, and that one over Carleton, 8-1. The other games are but bitter memories: losses to UMD 2-9 and St. Thomas 1-6. That made the record 0-3 on the league and 1-5 for the season.

"But then, John Gagliardi's fighting sextet moved into the Duluth Curling Club with only the idea of keeping the score respectable. When the score read 2-0 in the Johnnies' favor at the end of the first period, the Duluth fans chuckled mildly to themselves. In the second session the Jays kept dogging the Bulldogs' forwards, back checking relentlessly and moved to an unbelievable lead of 5-1.

"We escaped with a 5-4 win, but that one win gave the Jays a real morale boost. The players became more confident in themselves, but

still lost none of their fighting play and went on to beat Macalester 2-1 and Hamline 4-3."

— 1956 —

The 1956 season started where the 1955 ended. The Jays had one of their finest finishes with an overall record of twelve wins, four losses and one tie. The conference record was eight wins versus four losses, second only to Duluth, the conference champion. John Gagliardi continued to give evidence of his ability to master the fundamentals of a sport hitherto unknown to him, and then spark his team to the peak of their abilities. Undoubted star of the year was Byron Johnson from St. Cloud Cathedral who had 14 goals and 11 assists. He was closely followed by Leonard Kohler with 12 goals, 11 assists and a total of 23 points. To single out these two stars is to do an injustice to a team made up of a supporting cast of Jack Quesnell, John Rydel, Chuck Cullen and Mark Lohmann. Chuck Froehle, football star, won first place in penalties with eight and sixteen minutes in the penalty box.

Team roster: Byron Johnson, Charles Cullen, Leonard Kohler, John Rydel, Jack Quesnell, Edward Regan, Charles Froehle, Clem Commers, Cornelius Loiselle, Charles Dubore, Patrick Mingo, Patrick Moran, James Higgins, Paul Kinnert, Mark Lohmann.

— 1957 —

In 1957 the hockey rink was moved to a spot parallel to the north side of the gymnasium in order to have the shadow of the gymnasium shield the ice from the rays of the sun. The team had better luck with ice, therefore, in 1957, and used the hard surface in negotiating several good games that would have been failures in times past. It was an "unusual year," however, as the *Sagatagan* expressed it, a so-so year, and somewhat of a let-down from the high spirited 1956. Duluth, with its Canadian recruits, could not be denied for two games. The Tommies also dropped the Jays by two games, 6-2 and 3-2. The season record was eight wins versus seven losses, and a conference record of six games won and six lost. The team finished in fourth place.

The find of 1957 was Al Goulet, a freshman star from St. Thomas Military Academy in St. Paul, who overshadowed the 1956 high-point man Byron Johnson with a total number of points (34): fourteen goals and twenty assists. Goulet broke the total number of points rolled up by Bob Boeser in 1952, though Boeser's record of twenty goals remained intact. Other top-flight performers were John "Jack" Quesnell with 27 points, Chick Cullen, the goalie, Phabe (Philibert) Wartman, Leonard Kohler, Clem Commers, Chuck Froehle, and Captain "Jake" Rydel.



Other team members not mentioned above were Bernie McInerny, John Fournelle, Fran Rapley, Gary Pendy, Frank Moran, John Kelly, Leonard Kohler, Tom Campbell.

— 1958 —

In a December 1957-58 preview of the coming hockey season, Coach Gagliardi admitted in his kidding manner that he would have a good team: "I've got a group of fellows back this season. Boom Kohler promised me no more fights. Quesnell hasn't got Froehle around to help him when he gets into trouble, so he'll calm down. And By Johnson says he's coming to practice this year. What more could a coach ask?" (*Record*, December 6, 1957).

Actually, John had the one-two scoring combination of Al Goulet and Jack Quesnell of 1957. All in all, he had a strong, hustling gang that could body check with anything in the conference. The Catholic high schools in the state in recent years had been sending star hockey players to St. John's—Bob Boeser of De La Salle, Al Goulet of St. Thomas Academy, Mike Murphy, Patrick Moran and others from Cretin.

Yet there were problems: George Durenberger, athletic director, protested against schedules that were too long, both from the financial angle and the academic. Duluth had built up a juggernaut that dominated the conference and was injuring it by the importation of hockey players from Canada who filled in weak spots in their line-ups. John Gagliardi was happy, nevertheless, with his third place in the conference with six wins and four losses, and an overall record of nine wins and four losses.

1958 roster: Leonard Kohler, John Kelly, Patrick Moran, Jack Quesnell, Mike Murphy, Francis Rapley, Bernie McInerny, Gary Pendy, Al Goulet, Don Charpentier, Thomas Campbell, Joseph Reid, William Cassette, Charles Schwartz, John Fournelle, Phil "Phabe" Wartman.

— 1959 —

The 1959 hockey season opened with Jack Quesnell the only senior holdover from the 1958 team. But Jack was a great competitor. Though he weighed only 140 pounds, he played with an abandon and know-how that netted him 21 goals for the season, the record at that time. It was Jack's last year and he left with the respect of the entire student body as one of the outstanding personalities in St. John's athletic history.

It was also John Gagliardi's last year as coach of hockey. They had been five good years. When he first took over coaching the game, it

was mainly as a stay-busy chore over the winter. But it had become a major occupation. Collegiate football had become more and more complex, however. The city schools were extending their counseling programs, which meant that for the coaching tribe the work of counseling prospective students, talking to parents, and conducting athletes over the campus had been building up until he could no longer carry the two jobs without neglecting one or the other. Fr. Fintan Bromenshenkel, O.S.B., now entered to take over the hockey coaching position.

Team roster: Jack Quesnell, John Fournelle, Peter Gareri, Joseph Reid, Anthony Nagurski, Thomas Campbell, Stephen Tell, Michael Murphy, Gary Pendy, Charles Schwartz, Robert Pilney, Bernard McInerny, Frank Rapley, Robert Christensen.

— 1960 —

Fr. Fintan Bromenshenkel made an auspicious start in his coaching career by winning the first six games on the schedule. The team looked very promising with fourteen lettermen and several promising freshmen to support the veterans. Especially well qualified were freshmen from the northern part of the state, the good hockey country: James Humeniuk and Terry Noble from Baudette, Harold Froehle from Thief River Falls. Leading scorers for the season were Peter Gareri from the Iron Range with 20 points, Thomas Campbell and Gary Pendy with 19. Star at the net was goalie John Brandt.

The overall record for the season was eleven victories and five losses. In the conference the Jays won five games with three losses, all three to the top conference teams.

The team roster: Peter Gareri, Thomas Campbell, John Fournelle, Francis Rapley, Gary Pendy, Richard Hanson, Michael Murphy, Charles Schwartz, James Humeniuk, Harold Froehle, Robert Christensen, Terry Noble, Anthony Nagurski, Gary Noble, James McCoy, and John Brandt.

— 1961 —

Although Fr. Fintan Bromenshenkel lost five veteran mainstays from the 1960 team, the Jays posted a season record of nine victories and six losses. In the conference they took fourth place with five wins and three losses, the three losses being to league-leading Duluth, Macalester and St. Thomas. The team was tied with St. Thomas for third place prior to the final game of the season. They lost to St. Thomas, however, 2-11, and ended in fourth place behind Duluth, Macalester and St. Thomas, in that order.



One of the highlights of the season was Terry Noble's record winning score of 24 goals, Peter Gareri with fifteen. 1961 was the last year of Mike Murphy, a star athlete who had played on the Cretin High School team that defeated state champion International Falls, Mike Childs, and Steve Tell, a hardy body checker who had played in high school under Kenneth Yackel, coach of the Edina hockey team.

Team roster: John Gramer, Jim Kearney, George Floria, Thomas Flaig, James Fellman, Steve Tell, Mike Childs, Peter Gareri, Bob Christensen, Michael Murphy, Tony Nagurski, Harold Froehle, Terry Noble, Bob Hollenhorst, Larry Blaylock, Timothy Sullivan, John Boyd.

— 1962 —

The hockey season of 1962 might be called "Fr. Fintan's Disaster Year." The 1962 team was plagued throughout the season with injuries that left the team never at full strength in any game. Peter Gareri, team captain and high scorer, was out of play for eight games, and Bob Christensen broke an ankle early in the fall and was never able to play up to his full capacity. The season started with only seven lettermen—a situation that demanded the use of freshmen in order to keep the team on the ice. Inexperience and injuries were the main reason why the Jays posted a year's overall record of three wins and fifteen losses in an 18-game schedule. The conference record was two wins and four losses.

Team members: Thomas Flaig, Anthony Nagurski, Peter Gareri, John Kearney, Daniel Haider, James Kileen, Patrick Roche, Jerry Welter, Robert Hollenhorst, James Glowack, Robert Christensen, John Goulet, Richard Stuart, Dan Commers, Harry Froehle, John Moore, Timothy Sullivan, Larry Blaylock.

— 1963 —

In 1962 the hockey rink was moved to a site north of St. Thomas Hall and south of the old barn. There was little protection from the north wind there, and the athletic department found itself in an embarrassing situation as the December north winds blew over the chill surface of the frozen Watab. It was a time when, following Fr. Fintan's resignation, there was no goalie, no coach, and only seven returning lettermen. It was at this point that Captain Snead of the military science department took over the hockey coaching position.

Captain Snead had all the requirements for the position—four years of hockey at Delafield Military Academy, Wisconsin, one year of intramural hockey at the University of Wisconsin, and four years of hockey at West Point, from which he graduated in 1953.

The pre-hockey training was basic military stuff, two miles of running without a stop, isometric exercises, etc. They also played a little field hockey before the lake and the ponds froze over.

The squad was still young, with only one senior, three juniors, and the remainder mainly freshmen. Captain Snead worried lest the freshmen be declared ineligible for varsity sports, but they were declared ineligible only for the major sports, football, basketball and baseball; so, with the freshmen to depend upon, the coach estimated that they would win half their games. Actually they won six games and lost ten for their overall performance. In the conference they won four games and lost ten. They found an excellent goalie toward the end of the season in James Belisle, a freshman. Rich Froehle won the all-conference award and Marty Igo honorable mention.

Squad members were: Rich Froehle, Wally Blaylock, John Kearney, James Belisle, Patrick Roche, Mike Hollenhorst, Marty Igo, Patrick Cruikshank, James Kileen, Thomas Diffley, John Sipe, William Sullivan, Arthur Grady, Thomas Hayes, Robert Hollenhorst, James Kearney, John Moore, Joseph Palen.

— 1964 —

The 1964 hockey season was one of those abbreviated periods when unseasonably warm weather makes an outdoor hockey rink unplayable. Under these adverse conditions St. John's played only ten games, with a season record of three wins and six losses, one tie. In conference play they posted a record of one tied game and four losses. It was a dismal year for the ambitious, enterprising Captain Snead, only lately promoted to major.

Lettermen for the season were Thomas Bauer, James Belisle, Walter Blaylock, Patrick Cruikshank, Richard Froehle, John Goulet, Arthur Grady, Patrick Hare, Thomas Hayes, Michael Hollenhorst, Martin Igo, Patrick Jacobs, James Kearney, John Moore, Joseph Palen, Patrick Roche, Thomas Youngmans.

— 1965 —

The year 1965 was one of those numbered as memorable when the Jays made themselves famous—or was it notorious?—not by winning the championship, but by their heroics, according to the viewpoint of the spectator. The league leading Winona Canadiens (alias of St. Mary's) had already cinched the championship.

The Jays were struggling along as usual but full of life and vigor when the rumor began floating around that this was St. John's last year in hockey—for two reasons: first because college hockey was im-



possible without an indoor rink, second because the game was too expensive.

Within a few hours after hearing about the rumor, Eddie Maus, '37, an all-time hockey star of the past, stirred into existence a Twin Cities Hockey Alumni Club whose only end and purpose for existence was to stage a whopping demonstration of Johnny loyalty in the Augsburg game to be played February 19 in the Aldrich Arena, Minneapolis. Two thousand tickets were sold at fifty cents a ticket, and two thousand fans were at the arena to cheer on the Fighting Jays.

The Johnnies won the game 6-5 in an overtime, but not before the fans witnessed an amazing plethora of penalties—two holding penalties, three elbowings, three interferences, one high sticking, one pushing, two miscellaneous, and one cross check. The whole thing was capped by a full arched blood-letting stick swipe by goalie Tom Bauer. But more important than beating Augsburg and surviving the all-out-bruhaha-winner-take-all brawl, was the fact that the Jays continued the season by clobbering Concordia 7-1, Gustavus 11-1, and Hamline 4-0. They won seven of the last nine games on the schedule for second place in the conference. In the meantime, the St. John's *Record* received for printing four letters from Eddie Maus, George Toman, Chuck Hinz, and Lorry May lauding the merits of hockey and the virtues of its participants. 1965 was Coach Snead's last year at the helm of hockey at St. John's—his last and most dramatic exposure to St. John's loyalty.

Team members were Wally Blaylock, Rich Froehle, Tommy Bauer, Tom Younghans, Mike Musty, James Trachsel, Terry Hartman, Thomas Hayes, Mike Pomroy, Paul Jung, Steve Hartman, James Borgestad, Gerald Grochowski.

#### — 1966 —

The 1966 hockey situation called for a new coach to succeed Major Snead who was transferred to another post. By chance, a big, easy-going French Canadian from near Quebec was on hand who was more than willing to take over the hockey program. Weighing slightly less than a football tackle and a bit more than a fullback, he was a goalie and just the thing that the athletic director was looking for. But not necessarily the registrar and Fr. Donald LeMay, O.S.B., the director of admissions! Fr. Donald asked himself, "Can I admit him? Can I make an exception in his case?"

Fr. Donald became a pawn in the admissions game, and a deluge of letters flowed in from the four corners of hockeydom to help him make up his mind. One was from Fred Shero, later coach of the Phila-

delphia Flyers, another from Walter Busch, president of the Minnesota North Stars. So Gaston Rheaume was accepted and signed up for hockey, French Grammar and Physical Education.

Gaston made himself the goalie of the team. When he stood in front of the net he looked like an armored medieval knight guarding the castle gate. He said of himself, "Wherever hockey is, I am. My ambition is to get an excellent hockey program going at St. John's." And, in truth, he did.

The team had a slow start, but once on the winning trail St. John's managed to work out an overall record of nine victories and eight losses, a conference record of six wins and seven losses. The Jays dropped two games to St. Thomas and St. Mary's, alias the Winona Canucks. Highlight of the season was the splitting of a double-header with the University of Wisconsin whose coach hoped to brighten his season record by two slop victories over a small college or university. He was stunned to speechlessness when he dropped a game to St. John's.

Perhaps the best group of senior hockey players left St. John's following their graduation in June, 1966: Jim Trachsel (all-conference and most valuable player), Wally Blaylock (captain), Tom Younghans, Thomas Hayes, Terry Hartman, Joe Palen, Martin Igo, James Belisle, Mike Pomroy. Other members of the team were Jim Borgestad, Steve Hartman, Paul Jung, John McCarthy, Mike Musty, Bob Froehle, Matt Lynch, Gerry Grochowski, James Michaud.

#### — 1967 —

The 1967 hockey season commenced with grave misgivings that the team would not do better than seventh place in the conference. The loss of the nine seniors from the previous year left only juniors as ranking leaders of the squad. Besides, with Gaston Rheaume running out of French classes and physical education courses, the prospects for his academic future looked dim. But by January 23, 1967, eight games later, St. John's was leading the league. Six of the first seven games were won by scores of 3-2.

In the first game of the season St. John's won over the Tommies in their own back yard, the Aldrich Arena, and repeated the victory the next night at St. John's, also under the lights. The remainder of the season was a replica of the first game—St. John's completed the season with a record of twelve wins, five losses and one tie for second place in the conference.

Highlight of the 1967 season was the much appreciated invitation to take part in the First Minnesota Small College Hockey Tournament, together with Gustavus, Bemidji and St. Mary's. To their own aston-



ishment the Jays won all their games except the last one, namely, the finals against Bemidji. The Jays held Bemidji scoreless until the third period when the smooth skating Canadian-loaded Bemidji team pushed over the winning scores. Mike Musty, "the Human Bowling Ball on Skates," won the all-tournament award for his aggressive game, and Gaston Rheume the Most Valuable Player of the tournament award, as well as the all-conference honors.

Credit for the good season was unanimously given to Gaston, both for his sterling play as goalie and his coaching. "Confidence," said Co-captain Gerald Grochowski, "is the only word to describe him. Confidence in us and our confidence in his coaching are what kept us going through the whole season."

#### — 1968 —

Gaston Rheume's 1968 team entered the conference race bolstered by the prediction of the sportswriters that they would win the MIAC championship. The Jays started out well with a 4-1 win over Wisconsin State, then lost seven of the next eight games with a regularity that was morale breaking. At this point the steady encouragement of Co-captain Gerry Grochowski and the confidence of the older members of the team began to pay off. The Jays won six of the following eleven games, plus one tie, to end the season with a conference record of three wins, nine losses, and two ties. The overall record was seven wins, eleven losses, and two ties.

The reason why the team fell so completely apart was partly an unusual number of injuries that kept the trainer Phil Kostelnik busy taping Gaston's ankle, Mike Musty's knee, massaging Tom Haeg's back, and bandaging Jim Borgestad's lacerations. But relief and happiness came with two wins in the last games of the season over Ohio State 6-4 and Ohio University 6-3. They were prestige victories, for both of the Ohio universities were on their way upward in "big-time" hockey. SJU lost to Notre Dame 3-6 in a game played at Duluth.

The 1968 team was one of the most traveled during Rheume's career at St. John's—more or less Gaston's bench mark of what was about right in the scheduling of a St. John's hockey team.

Members of the squad were the following: Freshmen: Lyman Brink, Tom Carlsen, Tom Colaizy, Dennis Maruska, Nicholas Miller, Patrick Reak. Sophomores: Thomas Haeg, Myron Henrickson, Bill Laliberte, James McDonnell, Bill Trachsel. Juniors: Gerald Grochowski, Mike Laliberte, James Michaud, Gaston Rheume. Seniors: James Borgestad, Steve Hartman, Paul Jung, Jack McCarthy, Mike Musty, Dave Thein.

#### — 1969 —

Coach Gaston Rheume started the 1969 hockey season with Gerald Grochowski as his assistant coach, and three players—Grochowski, Bill Laliberte, and Myron Henrickson—as co-captains. Prospects for a good season looked fair with eight lettermen back. But the fortunes of battle turned against the Jays with postponements due to bad weather, streaks of bad luck in the games and injuries. The season ended with a record of six wins and ten losses in a sixteen-game schedule.

The 1969 team was not a high scoring aggregation. Scoring leader was Tom Colaizy with 24 points, Myron Henrickson with 22, Ronald Nagurski 18, Thomas Carlsen 18, Bill Laliberte 16, Mike Rizzi 12, John Baratto and Tom Haeg 10, Gerry Grochowski 7, James McDonnell 7, Patrick Mahoney 6, Tom Cook 4, Ken Charpentier 4, Phil Wetzel 2, Patrick Reak 1. The remaining members of the team were the star goalies Patrick Kernan and James Michaud.

Highlights of the season were two out-of-state trips: to Indiana to play Notre Dame at South Bend, and to sunny Colorado Springs to play the Air Force team. St. John's lost to Notre Dame 4-5 and 1-6. The two games with the Air Force were also losses, 1-6 and 6-8.

#### — 1970 —

An air of enthusiasm marked the beginning of the 1970 hockey season. The three co-captains, William Laliberte, Tom Colaizy, and Myron Henrickson, in a condition training program, led the young aspirants up-hill-down-dale and through weight-lifting exercises, getting the team ready for the freeze-up. They even prayed for cold weather, but in vain. The weather insisted on being good.

Coach Rheume was left practically entirely with underclassmen for scoring since graduation had cleared out the four scoring seniors of 1969. But, as it turned out, what the team needed most was a solid defense. The overall record was six wins and thirteen losses; the conference record was two wins and thirteen losses.

Team roster: David Blaylock, Timothy Broback, Ronald Brown, Don Carlini, Tom Colaizy, Tom Cook, Paul Fontaine, John Gilmore, David and Tom Haeg, Myron Henrickson, Charles Hippe, Bill Laliberte, James McDonnell, Jeffrey Milbert, Michael Rizzi, Phil Wetzel, William Russ.

#### — 1971 —

The 1971 Johnnies improved slightly over their poor showing in 1970 by winning nine games versus thirteen losses overall, and four conference victories versus eight losses. But again, as in 1970, the late