



Dutch Burch is regarded as the Oil City High School GOAT in boys basketball. He was first team all-state in 1950, starred at Pitt and is the only Venango County player to be drafted by an NBA team (the Fort Wayne Pistons).

But before Burch there was Donald "Babe" Kennedy, who you've undoubtedly never heard of before reading this sentence.

**COLGATE BEATS CARNEGIE TECH.**  
 Pittsburgh, Pa., Jan .29.—Colgate's basketball team defeated Carnegie Tech 43 to 26 last night. In the first half Colgate scored 23 and Tech 6. Faster fielding by Tech made the last half more interesting. Kennedy did the best fielding for Colgate **and made the big score possible.**

Kennedy and another really good player, O.J. Graham, played in high school and college before World War I, Kennedy at Colgate and Graham at Allegheny.

According to his obituary that ran in The Derrick on Dec. 28, 1968, Kennedy was a standout for the Oilers for several

years, "but it was his performance at Colgate that stamped him as the greatest cager in the history of the sport in Oil City."

The article continued, “It was at Colgate that Mr. Kennedy blazed his name across the eastern sports horizon.”

Kennedy is listed in the Colgate archives as playing for the Red Raiders in 1911-13-14–15-16. As captain, he led Colgate not only to one of its best seasons ever (14-4), but scored 242 points, “an all-time record at this university for 30 years.”

Now we get to why this is being written.

I wondered who broke his record.

But let’s back-track first. While the Colgate archives do list Kennedy as a letterman during the aforementioned years and what the team’s W-L records were since it started playing basketball, there is no mention of his scoring.

That’s the problem for guys who played back then. Not only has their existence gone pfffft, but so have their stats. Year-by-year scoring doesn’t start until 1945.

So, still in the Colgate archives, I searched for the guy who was the leading scorer 30 years from 1916. And there he was! Ernie Vandeweghe! The excitement was too much to bear.



I’ve heard of the 6-3 Vandeweghe. Played for the Knicks. Still No. 11 on the all-time scoring list at Colgate with 1,404 points (19.2 ppg) from 1945-49, including 329 points in 1946-47, the year he would have broken Kennedy’s record.

Only trouble is, it wasn’t Kennedy’s record that he broke. I looked and looked for a story that reported not only that he set the record, but whose

record he broke – expecting to see Kennedy’s name.

But, as it turns out, he broke Carl Braun’s record of 294 points set in 1945. OK, that still works. Only trouble is, Ernie Vandeweghe is much more glamorous.

So, I hunted for an article about Braun breaking the record. Found it. But, alas, the story said Braun broke Merle *Livermore’s* record. *Who?* What’s more, Livermore set his record in 1923 and it was 241 points, one less than what Kennedy had. Neither the year nor the points match what the Babe’s obit said.

Again, I was on a mission, but I couldn't find anything about Livermore scoring 241 points in 1923. I did learn, however, that he finished the season converting 163 of 205 free throws (79.5 percent). The story didn't say if that was a record. He also was 20/23 in one game.

But, and get this: the official Colgate record book has one Rich Lebel holding the single-game free throws made/attempts record. And it was 20/23 on Jan. 29, 1972, against Bucknell – Same. As. Livermore. Shrug.

On Feb. 7, 1923, it was reported that Livermore was 99/127 from the line and had 143 total points through nine games. The Red Raiders finished 13-5 that year.

I don't get it. Did the family, and I'll say this diplomatically, not know the facts when they talked to the funeral home people about the obit? (Trust me, there are obits that are factually incorrect.) Or was there some other mix-up that somehow got lost in the translation?

Who knows, but whatever.

There's one more little thing about Vandeweghe and Braun that I thought: *Wow! I don't believe this*, but also went pfft after I found out about Livermore. They teamed for 40 points – Braun had 22, Vandeweghe 18 – in a 71-68 loss to Penn State in 1947, and guess who scored 10 points for the Nittany Lions? None other than Franklin's own Jack Biery whose free throw put Penn State ahead to stay after Colgate blew a 13-point lead with 10 minutes left.

Small world.

### **And So Were the Days of Their Lives**

Kennedy went on to fight in World War I. In 1924, he settled in Trinidad, Colo., where he worked for Sinclair Refining and was a rancher. He died at age 76.

Graham was only 61 when he died in 1955. According to his obit, he was captain for an Allegheny team that was "runner-up for the national collegiate championship."

He was a prominent Erie attorney, but before that Graham was wounded, gassed and a reported MIA in the battle of St. Mihiel from Sept. 3-18, 1918, during WWI. He also served in World War II in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

The above were all according to the obits.