

CHC- The Magic of Memorial Gym (Part 2)

by Bill Traugher

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This is part two of this story. To read part one you can click on Commodore History Corner at VUcommodores.com.

Feb. 2, 1976 vs. Mississippi: A winter snow and ice storm kept the Vanderbilt faithful to just 1,800. Ole Miss was winless in the SEC, but led the Commodores with six seconds on the clock, 60-59. Dickey Keffer dribbled pass the half court line and passed off to Jeff Fosnes. Fosnes jumped for a shot, but two Rebel defenders challenged him. While still airborne, Fosnes decided to give up the shot to Keffer. Keffer launched a 35-footer that was good for the 61-60 Commodore win.



Phil Cox

Feb. 24, 1983 vs. Tennessee: Vanderbilt was trailing archrival Tennessee with time running out, 68-67. Phil Cox drove into the lane and collided with Vols defender Tyrone Beaman. The referee called a block on Beaman sending Cox to the line. Cox, one of the SEC's best free throw shooters, connected on both freebies for the 69-68 victory.



Barry Goheen

You cannot think about Memorial Miracles without Barry Goheen (1986-89) coming to mind. Goheen can be considered one of college basketball's best clutch performers of all-time. Vanderbilt fans were amazed by his basketball wizardry and not only in the home gymnasium.

"It is hard to account for something like that," Barry Goheen said about his last second feats. "It's a combination of several factors. Growing up in Kentucky, a basketball crazy state, I learned how great a game basketball is and you tend to get focused at an earlier age. I had a couple of games like that in high school and it was first called to attention there before I came to Vanderbilt.

"The players and coaches we had at Vanderbilt played a critical role in that [clutch shots] because we would work on late game situations everyday in practice. While I probably had more of those moments, just about every body had at least one moment. It was not

like I was the only one who did it. I believe it goes back to the mentality of the players instilled by the coaches."

These are some of Goheen's game-winners in Memorial Gymnasium:

Jan. 15, 1986 vs. Tennessee: With the Commodores trailing 59-51 with less than a minute remaining, Goheen led his team to nine unanswered points. Goheen scored the last five points to pull out the improbable win. The guard hit a 10-footer from the left baseline with four seconds left to tie the game. On the play Goheen was fouled and his free throw was the game-winner, 60-59.

Nov. 30 1988 vs. Louisville: The nationally ranked Cardinals were looking to overtime with the score knotted at 62. Less than five seconds remained as the Commodores were needing to run the entire court for a miracle finish. Goheen received the pass in the backcourt and launched a shot behind the half-court stripe. The stunned Vanderbilt fans leaped to their feet at the sudden win as the ball swished through the goal. Commodores won, 65-62.

Jan. 14, 1989 vs. Georgia: Goheen hits a 53-foot shot (by measurement) to put Vanderbilt ahead of the Bulldogs by one point at halftime. Georgia was winning by two points when the Commodores had 10 seconds to bring the ball full court for the tie or win. Barry Booker collided with a Bulldog player (no call), but was able to pass the ball to Goheen. Goheen took the pass, glanced at the clock, opted to dribble behind the 3-point line and drilled the game winning trey for the 76-75 victory.

Feb. 11, 1989 vs. Mississippi: With the game tied at 69, Goheen broke free for a lay-up and was fouled with two seconds left. To the dismay of the home fans the apparent basket was waved off. However, Goheen confidently made both ends of the one-and-one for the 71-69 win.

On the road in 1986, Goheen beat Princeton 71-70 with a turn-around 18-footer at the buzzer. Trailing 67-63 against Pittsburgh in the second-round of the 1988 NCAA Tournament, Goheen hit a 3-pointer to cut the Panther lead to one. Pittsburgh made two free throws with five seconds left when Goheen hit another 3-pointer to send the game into overtime. Vanderbilt went on to the victory and the Sweet 16, 80-74.

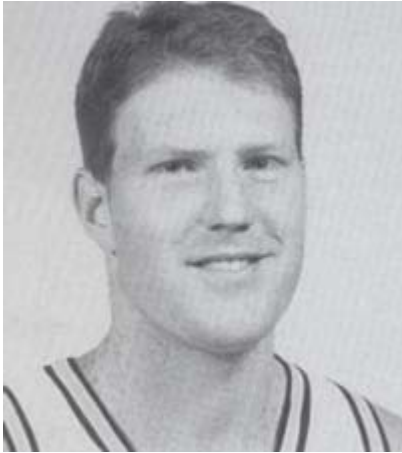
"The game that gets talked about more than anyone is the Georgia game; that's because I live in Atlanta," said Goheen who is an attorney in Atlanta. "Before the half, I hit a shot from half court at the half time buzzer. And at the end of the game, Georgia missed a wide-open lay-up that should have won the game. Barry Booker got the ball and passed it to me. I had enough time to take a dribble or two back behind the 3-point line. Really it was a wide-open shot that should have been made.

"Memorial Gym is a special place. It's beyond my ability to answer without any scientific certainty why Vanderbilt has so much success there. If it's your home court you have more confidence. You practice there everyday, and play half or more of your games there. You walk to the gym from your dorm. It's a comfort zone. It's a gym that's used for basketball. It's not an arena for multiple uses."



Steve Grant

Jan. 26, 1991 vs. Georgia: Trailing to the Bulldogs 74-72, the Commodores came down the court for a last second game tying or winning points. With the Vanderbilt shooters unable to get open for a pass, forward Steve Grant took the ball across the half court line. Grant dribbled a few steps and launched desperation 3-pointer. The ball went through the hoop and a 75-74 victory. It was Grant's only career 3-pointer.



Chris Lawson

Dec. 9, 1992 vs. Louisville: With the game tied at 88, Vanderbilt All-American guard Billy McCaffrey drove down the lane as only seconds remained. McCaffrey's running jumper bounced off the right side of the rim, but center Chris Lawson was in position for the tip in. Vanderbilt won the game 90-88, went on to win the SEC title and eventually advancing to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

Vanderbilt entered the 2006-07 season with an all-time record of 636-181 (.778) in Memorial Gymnasium. The Commodores have recorded five undefeated seasons (1955-56, 1960-61, 1964-65, 1966-67, 1992-93) in the cozy home gym.

"Memorial Gym was special," added Schurig. "In those first several years they had seats for about 6,500 fans [this was before the balconies were added]. You had the students on one side going nuts and the people from Nashville in the nice chair back seats on the other side.

"It's a wonderful old gym. I did not consider it a shooter's gym. I had pretty decent games there, but I didn't think I shot that well there. I loved it then, and I still do now. I love the way everybody moans and groans when they have to come in there and play Vanderbilt.

The Magic continues!

Next week read about Miss Stella Vaughn, a pioneer in Vanderbilt women's athletics.

Traughber's Tidbit: During the World War II years of 1943-45, Vanderbilt played an informal schedule. The Commodores played such teams as Thayer Hospital, 20th Ferrying Company, 508th Air Base, Convair, Navy A.C.C. and the Smyrna Bombers. All these games do count on the Commodores official all-time record.

If you have any comments or suggestions you can contact Bill Traughber via e-mail WLTraughber@aol.com.