

of the 1971 weekend at Kansas University was assistant coach Ceronsky's 27-mile marathon championship, which he won for the second year. "Chuck and Steve Young from New Mexico ran shoulder to shoulder for 25 miles," said Coach Smith, "but Chuck left him on a hill at the close."

St. John's two-mile team of Greg Cook, Mike Kremer, Bill Seidel and Chuck Way also did well, setting a school record of seven minutes and 54 seconds. The *Record* prognosticator predicted that Kluk would probably be the class winner of the conference in both the high and the intermediate hurdles. In 1970 he was champion in both and also champion for the third year in the high hurdles.

In spite of all the doubtings of Coach Smith and his precautions to avoid over-confidence in his track team, the 1971 squad turned out to be the strongest in St. John's history up to that time and won the championship handily. As expressed by the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, May 15, 1971, "A well-balanced St. John's University track team made a shambles of the 51st annual MIAC conference meet at Macalester's Shaw Stadium Saturday. The Jays, led by Chuck Way and scoring in 15 of the 17 events, finished with the greatest total in the conference history as they almost doubled the second-place team."

The conference teams' total points were as follows: St. John's 102, Hamline 58½, St. Thomas 48, Macalester 24, Concordia 14½, Duluth 12, Gustavus 24, Augsburg 9.

Chuck Way, St. John's star runner from LeSueur, a senior transfer from Northwestern, was the only triple winner of the meet, winning the half-mile, the mile and anchoring the second-place relay team. He was voted the outstanding athlete of the meet and winner of the Carl Larson Memorial Trophy.

The most thrilling of the races, at least in the last twenty yards, was the three-mile contest between John Cragg and Joe Skaja, both St. John's contestants. Cragg, a star runner in his high school days at Cretin in St. Paul and throughout his college career at St. John's, was a dedicated track man and a determined competitor. Even as a freshman cross-country runner he had set the conference record in the three-mile run at 14 minutes, 33 seconds. He was already a three-time champion in this event and in 1971 wanted to make it four in his last college race, despite having ruptured an Achilles tendon in January and not having run all spring in the preliminary meets.

In the race, Cragg stayed with the pack through the first mile, then moved up in front with his teammate Skaja for the second mile. With Cragg leading the way in the third mile, they pulled away from the

other competitors and kept increasing their lead. Then in the last twenty yards Skaja sprinted out of the last turn, and Cragg, his injured leg and knees torturing him, was unable to meet the challenge. Skaja's time of 14:29.5 broke the 14:33 record set by Cragg as a freshman. The irony of it all is that Cragg broke his own record at the same time in spite of his bad leg, finishing for his defeat by Skaja in 14:29.8. Cragg, game to the end, offered no excuses: "I couldn't sprint. I just wasn't ready to run."

After following the athletic careers of those extraordinary distance runners Cragg-Ceronsky, Brain-Skaja, who along with Dave Lamm in the sprints put St. John's on the map in track, we wonder what happened to their running in this era of jogging and running for physical fitness and longevity. First comes John Cragg, '71, styled by Joe Skaja as the greatest runner in St. John's history. The leg that tormented him in his last year of college competition finally incapacitated him for running. After an M.S. in oceanography and work in that field, he finally settled on medicine for a lifetime career. He graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Medicine in 1978 and is planning to specialize in orthopedic surgery. For recreation he has substituted tennis and sailing for track.

Chuck Ceronsky, '70, is still running eight or nine miles a day, depending on the time he has available. After his graduation in 1970 he stayed on at St. John's and earned the master of arts degree in sacred studies, in the meantime assisting Jim Smith coach the track team. He was the first layman in the United States to be certified as a chaplain by the National Association of Catholic Chaplains. He served as chaplain at St. Mary's Hospital, Minneapolis, for several years and at present is director of the Respect for Life Program in the archdiocese.

Jeff Brain, '71, now a unit manager with the American Linen Supply Company in Minneapolis, continued his running career after graduation. He ran in the Boston Marathon in 1972 and '73. Also in 1972 he ran in the National ASU Marathon, finishing in sixteenth place. He has been president of the Minnesota Distance Running Association and editor of the association's newsletter. An attack of sciatica in 1973 ended his competitive running. But in 1976 he discovered bicycling and in the spring of 1978 was still looking forward to a big year.

Roster: David Arnold, James Boehlke, Jeff Brain, Gregory Cook, Kevin Carlson, John Cragg, Michael Fahey, Kevin Gallagher, Charles Harvey, David Holzemer, Donald Kluk, Michael Kremer, David Lyndgaard, William McNamara, Kevin Moehn, Timothy Muller, Jerry Neubauer, Nicholas Overby, Andrew Riehl, Chris Rose, Stanley Ruether, Rudy Savage, Rudy Sawyer, Norbert Schneider, William Seidel, Joseph Skaja, Daniel Smith, Peter Stickler, Charles "Chuck" Way



## — 1972 —

The only *Record* report on track for the year 1972 was an announcement in the April 28 issue of the coming MIAC championship tournament to be held at Macalester, together with a preview of the team St. John's could muster in defense of its title. The conclusion of the sports-writer was that, in spite of the loss of graduated John Cragg and Don Kluk, the Jays were well able to make a good account of themselves.

The distance runners, he reported, were practically unbeatable: namely, Joe Skaja, Dave Lyndgaard and Norbert Schneider, with the fine freshmen distance runners Michael Fahey, Daniel Smith and Kevin Carlson. Mike Kremer, 1971 champion in the steeplechase, was reasonably certain to take first place in his bid for a repeat in 1972. The middle distance runners, the hurdlers and 880 relay men, however, presented the strongest sector of the team: Jerry Neubauer, Dan Smith and Bill Joyce, all holdovers from 1971. Freshmen Barney Smith, Mike Heimann and Matthew Williams were competing with them for places on the team.

From casual observations found in the *Sagatagan* and particularly in the official records of the MIAC, St. John's defended its championship successfully and was awarded the 1972 title.

## — 1973 —

Except for a blast leveled at the 1973 Jays for a miserable showing at an indoor track meet they had lost, the only track news for the year was a preview of the upcoming MIAC track tournament. It was a somewhat pessimistic review, predicting the loss of the MIAC championship if the Jays did not improve. The headline reads as follows: "Top Quality Missing. No Track Stars Among Tracksters." Pessimistic though it was, the evaluation on the whole was correct and opportune. It turned out that the 1973 Jays won the track championship again for the fourth time in as many years, but not because of "stars" on the team so much as the steady quality of several track members who were able to pick up second, third and fourth places, thereby amassing enough points to edge runnerup Hamline by three points, 77-74. While Hamline was relegated to second place, it won eight first places to only three by St. John's. The St. John's victory was essentially a team effort.

The MIAC track tournament was a thriller. The outcome was not settled until the last event of the two-day tournament had been run off. The three-mile race was won by a stratagem that paid off. It is an interesting story: going into the three-mile race, St. John's and Ham-

line were locked in a 64-64 tie, with the championship hanging on the result of the three-mile race. Hamline's Dave Teague, a truly great distance runner, had already won the one-mile and the six-mile races and was on the verge of making a full sweep of the distance events. Coach Jim Smith, however, fully aware of the potential of the talented Teague, withdrew Kevin Carlson, the top St. John's distance man, from the one-mile and the six-mile races in order to keep him fresh for the three-mile, hoping to salvage the three-mile points instead of turning them over to Hamline. The plan worked. The rested Carlson defeated Teague for the first time in the season and also set a new conference record in the process.

Hamline coach Dave Stahly after the meet acknowledged the effectiveness of the strategy: "All season long Teague has had the best times in the state for his events, but this time, when the three-mile came up, his energy was depleted" (St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, May 13, 1973).

As for the meet in general, both Smith and Stahly agreed that the meet was won by St. John's in the 440 hurdles: "The Johnnies picked up 13 points in that event while the Pipers were blanked" (*Pioneer Press*, May 13, 1973). Greg Traxler won the race in 56.6 seconds while teammates Matt Williams, Mike Heimann and Marty Smith finished second, fourth and fifth respectively.

This was Jim Smith's last year as track coach at St. John's. On the resignation of George Durenberger, Smith succeeded him as Director of Athletics. The 1973 championship came as a fitting swan song when his athletes carried him in a victory march that ended when they tossed him into the water hazard of the steeplechase—the traditional price a track coach pays for his championships.

Individual results: 3-mile, Kevin Carlson; 1st steeplechase, Timothy Heisel; 5th long jump, Dave Arnold; 4th 880 run, Jim Boehlke; 4th 440 hurdles, Michael Heimann; 3rd steeplechase, Dave Lyndgaard; 4th shotput, William McNamara; 5th 220 dash, Jerry Neubauer; 5th 880 run, Brian Racette; 2nd 1 mile, Sudy Seidl; 2nd javelin, Richard Schletty; 3rd long jump, Al Van Landschoot; 4th shotput, Kurt Wachtler; 2nd 440 hurdles, Matthew Williams

Conference standing: St. John's 77, Hamline 74, St. Thomas 46, Gustavus 30, Concordia 21, Duluth 13, Augsburg 5

## — 1974 —

On his appointment as Director of Athletics, Jim Smith relinquished his work as track coach and appointed David Arnold, a newly graduated trackman, to take his place. It was a happy choice. Arnold had a prestigious background in athletics, especially in football and track: the all-conference award at end in football for three consecutive years, the all-NAIA award twice, and was captain in his senior year. For a



"At the close of the meet Coach Arnold expressed his appreciation of the team's performance: 'Hamline is just an awesome team and is building towards an empire with their fourth straight championship. I was pleased to place second. Our team was a close-knit unit and many personal bests were turned in—which is important to me as a coach.'"

Conference standing: Hamline 187, St. John's 104, St. Thomas 95, Concordia 67, Gustavus 50, St. Olaf 50, Augsburg 21, Macalester 15.

### The NCAA Nationals

None of the seven qualified performers for the national championships fared well in the NCAA at Grand Rapids, Michigan, except Steve Gathje. Steve had qualified to run both the three-mile and the six-mile races—he chose the six-mile. In an outstanding field Steve came in around ninth place, but interestingly enough, his time as he passed the three-mile mark would have been good enough to gain for him All-American honors had he chosen the three-mile race.

Roster: Gary Albrecht, Dan Bane, Ben Belden, Fred Bock, Bernie Borschke, Pat Bussen, Jay Colleran, Andy Cragg, Pete DiIulio, Gary Donahue, Mike Doherty, Loren Ehrmantraut, Pete Gathje, Bill Greig, Norton Hatlie, Paul Hazuka, Steve Gathje, Tim Hendricks, Tom Herbst, Paul Johnston, Dave Kishel, Terry Kelly, Jeff Korsmo, Dale Kiedrowski, Ted Lexmond, Steve Marcella, Chris Lee, Rod LeVake, Gary Lust, Joe Metzger, Pat McCann, Dan McGuinn, Jim Moodie, Chris Napp, Mike O'Brien, Randy Odendahl, Mark Palmquist, Jeff Page, Dave Philp, Tom Scanlan, Kevin Riley, John Skrbec, Jim Sayler, John Smith, Tom Sexton, Joe Sokolowski, Bob Teigen, Tim Schmitz, Jim Simons, Mark Underberg, Paul Theobald, Dean Wood, Rick Zieske

— 1978 —

By Mike Bauer

The opening of the 1978 track season found Mike Bauer, All-American hurdler, at the head of the track forces. On losing the consistent scoring power of distance star Steve Gathje, javelin thrower Rod LeVake, and jumper Dave Philp, the track team had some vitally important spots to fill. A true blessing was bestowed on the team, however—the fact that this year's freshman class included ten Minnesota state meet participants, three of whom were state champions. The end of the season proved this year to be "The Year of the Freshmen."

Although we got off to a slow start indoors, with many of our frosh sustaining minor injuries on the hard-surfaced indoor track, we still came through with some excellent individual performances. Distance ace Joe Perske and Pete Gathje shattered the previous two-mile indoor mark when they ran it in 9:13 and 9:16 respectively. Freshmen Chris Longbella and Mike Kennedy registered new indoor marks in the pole vault with leaps of 13 feet, 4 inches. Star freshman Tom Frericks was only three-tenths off the Warner Palaestra record in the 300-yard dash

with a 32.9 finish. Junior Pete Gathje set an indoor record in the three-mile run (14:35), and Norton Hatlie bettered his own record in the 1,000-yard run in 2:16.8 time.

As the season progressed, we saw improvement being made meet after meet, and two weeks before the MIAC meet we won the Bethel Relays against most of the conference powers. As the MIAC tournament drew closer, the freshman dominance over the team began to show. Both relay teams (the 440 and the mile) had three freshmen each. The 440 relay team of Pat Stone (freshman), James Simons (senior), Mike Frericks (freshman) and Thomas Frericks (freshman) took first place in the MIAC tournament in the excellent time of 42.9.

At this point in the meet the Durenberger All-Sports Trophy came into the picture. It found St. John's and St. Thomas tied in team standings. Thus, with the mile relay being the only event left to add points for the trophy, the burden of winning their relay race against St. Thomas and breaking the tie lay on the shoulders of the freshmen and Gary Donahue, the only upperclassman on the relay team. Gary informed his relay teammates, freshman John Gagliardi, Jr., frosh Tom Frericks and anchorman Chuck Moorse that they had to better St. Thomas by two places in the mile relay to win the All-Sports Trophy contest.

Running against a thirty miles-an-hour wind, all four relay men ran superbly in competition against experienced teams. Donahue and Gagliardi ran the opening legs, while frosh Frericks ran a 49.6 third leg (an amazing time considering the wind velocity), and anchorman Chuck Moorse nosed out St. Olaf for fourth place in the event, just enough to out-score the Tommies and win the All-Sports Trophy by two points and also take third place in the MIAC.

Other outstanding performances at the conference meet were Norton Hatlie's first-place finish in the steeplechase and also the tie of Ted Lexmond and Paul Theobald for second place in the high jump.

### 1978 Nationals

St. John's had four qualifiers for the 1978 nationals: Joe Perske, Loren Ehrmantraut, Norton Hatlie and Gary Albrecht. Ehrmantraut did not compete in the nationals, however, because of an injury sustained in the MIAC meet.

Joe Perske qualified in three events in the NCAA, the six-mile, the three-mile and the steeplechase, whereas in the NAIA he had the choice of the marathon. Perske chose the NAIA marathon down in Abilene, Texas. He had been training for the twenty-six mile race all year, logging as many as 560 miles in one month and averaging 450



miles per month. Joe felt stronger in the longer runs and proved this by placing fourth in a field of top-flight marathoners. His time of 2:26, 11.0 was a whole minute faster than the previous marathon time of Chuck Ceronsky in 1970.

Norton Hatlie qualified for the steeplechase, held at the NCAA meet in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He ran well in the qualifying rounds and made the finals. He missed the finisher's place (the top six), but came in at eleventh in the nation. He felt he could have done better, but he had a hard time in the 92-degree heat and the 85 percent humidity.

Gary Albrecht threw the javelin well and ended in twelfth place. What he appreciated especially was that he beat all the other "spear chuckers" from the MIAC conference.

Roster: Gary Albrecht, Mark Bechtold, Pat Bussen, Michael Doherty, Gary Donahue, Mark Doyle, Loren Ehrmantraut, Tom Eickhoff, David Evans, Michael Frericks, Tom Frericks, John Gagliardi, Tom Gasperlin, Peter Gathje, Norton Hatlie, Paul Hazuka, Tim Hendricks, Tom Herbst, Terry Kelly, Michael Kennedy, Steve Kennedy, Dale Kiedrowski, Ted Lexmond, Chris Longbella, Dennis Lothenbach, Gary Lust, Pat McCann, Dan McGuinn, Tim McKenna, Joe Metzger, James Moodie, Charles Moorse, Tom Novak, Mike O'Brien, Jeff Page (captain), Joe Perske, Jeff Pribyl, Tom Scanlan, Tom Sexton, Mark Shimota, James Simons, Joe Sokolowski, Steve Sornsin, Pat Stone, Paul Theobald (captain), Tim Thornton, Mark Undeberg, Reggie Wilson, Joseph Zabinski



## CHAPTER VI

# Cross-country

— 1947-48 —

Cross-country, like soccer, is one of the sports that made a late appearance on the St. John's campus. The fact is, however, that St. John's was no slower than the other colleges in the conference, for the first cross-country championship ever awarded in the MIAC was in 1949, two years after the first public announcement appeared in the school paper, the *Record*.

Interest in cross-country as a fall intercollegiate sport involving distance running up and down hills and crossing meadows and streams of water, had been building up for some time on the campus. Basketball coaches favored it as a means of conditioning players for the winter season. Track coaches also encouraged it for the development of their distance runners, in preparation for spring training. A certain amount of propaganda had also taken place among distance runners in all the MIAC colleges, who were looking forward to the time when the conference would field competing teams in cross-country for its own sake. The student enthusiasts finally attained their objective officially in 1949 with the awarding of the first MIAC championship to the College of St. Thomas.

The first published announcement of St. John's entry into cross-country competition in the MIAC appeared in the October 23, 1947, issue of the *Record* with an article under the heading "Harriers prepare for Fall Meet at St. Paul." The article goes on to say that Coach Donald Sheehan, "looking towards the State Cross Country meet at the State Fair Grounds in St. Paul, is running his cross-country squad



through its daily paces. . . . The meet is a revived feature in the conference this year, having been voted in at the fall meeting of the conference coaches." The fact that the sport received a somewhat cool welcome onto the campus was later evidenced by the first granting of monogram letters to the cross-country men (the harriers) in 1969, over twelve years later. There were doubtless well-founded reasons for the delay, for cross-country was not as yet a popular spectator sport and only the strongly dedicated were willing to undertake the grueling training regimen required for serious distance running. The first two coaches, Don Sheehan and Larry Schwietz, were volunteers who were motivated entirely by a whole-hearted enjoyment of running.

Because of the scanty information furnished by the *Record* concerning cross-country in its early years, there is little more to report for 1947, 1948 and 1949 than the name of the coach and his five or six team members. For example, Coach Donald Sheehan led a team of six members: Henry Ayd, Clement Beaulieu, Matthias Green, Arthur Hessburg, Werner Oehrlein, and Robert Seifert. In 1948, Coach Larry Schwietz of the track team fielded a team made up of Ray Muskat, Eugene Rausch, Robert Simons, Donald Wild and James Zylla. For this year the college MIAC standings in cross-country competition were published for the first time. The order is as follows: St. Thomas, Augsburg, St. Olaf, Hamline, St. John's, and Gustavus. St. John's finished the season in fifth place.

The 1949 team, coached by John Spalding, an energetic, active athlete, was stronger in that it had on its roster a genuine long distance runner of talent, Emmett "Tex" Mulcare, followed by Peter Rother, Robert Simons, and James Zylla. No report of the conference doings was made in the *Record*.

— 1950 —

With the fall issues of the *Record*, October 26, 1950, cross-country now began to come into its own under the coaching and direction of John Spalding, who extended the cross-country program by scheduling two meets to precede the MIAC tournament. In a dual meet with Macalester the Johnnies defeated the Macs by a score of 19-36—19 for St. John's, 36 for Macalester. (It must be understood that in cross-country, as in golf, the lowest number of points scored indicates the winner.)

In a second meet held at St. John's during the halves of a homecoming game with Duluth, the Jays defeated the visiting Bulldogs by a score of 17-38. Actually, it was a publicity stunt thought up as a means of introducing cross-country to a school that knew little about

the sport and was apathetic enough not to care. But John Spalding had no intention of allowing the St. John's faculty and student body to undervalue cross-country. His 1950 season was successful.

The principal factor that contributed most to the success of the 1950 season was the presence on the team of Emmett "Tex" Mulcare, an all-time holder of St. John's Prep School records in track, and the fastest, most durable cross-country runner in the college up to this time. He easily measures up to the exploits of other St. John's greats in their freshman years. Unfortunately, he did not return to complete his college work at St. John's.

The MIAC 1950 tournament provided the St. John's harriers the opportunity to demonstrate their rapid development under the driving of student-coach John Spalding. According to a November 9, 1950 resume of the tournament in the *Record*, the St. John's distance runners finished in second place behind the crack St. Thomas team that had dominated the conference since 1949. St. Thomas took five of the first places. St. John's ace, Tex Mulcare, took fifth place, followed by Jim Zylla, Ralph Brown, Kenneth Wald and Donald Rubertus. The vast superiority of St. Thomas over all the other MIAC colleges is seen in the scores: St. Thomas 16, St. John's 65, St. Olaf 71, Hamline 102, Macalester 102, Duluth 109.

— 1951-53 —

There is no record of the 1951 cross-country team in the *Record*. Some meager information is supplied in the 1952 *Record*, however, that merely names the coach and a few of the 1951 team members. In a preview of the 1952 season, the *Record* commentator, in a flashback, cites the qualifications of the 1951 veteran runners:

"This year's squad will be bolstered by two outstanding veterans from Chuck Randall's 1951 team, 'Boots' Wald and Peter Rother. Wald (now Fr. Kenneth Wald in the diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota), one of the best distance runners St. John's has had for some time, proved his ability in the Marathon race last fall when he copped first place at Macalester, the Johnnies' only meet of the season. Wald was also a consistent point winner in track last spring in the distances. The other veteran, Peter Rother, will add considerable power to this team, as he has in the past three years of competition" (*Record*, October 3, 1952).

No record was kept of the 1952 cross-country season. The 1953 report was very meager, but it was enough to indicate that the club was still alive and active. In a tiny, twelve-line news item on the sports page (*Record*, October 23, 1953), the opening of the cross-country sea-



son was announced: "The Jay thinclads continue daily workouts in preparation for the annual cross-country meet at Minneapolis, Oct. 29. With a decisive victory over State Track Champions Macalester (*sic*), the cross-country cindermen show the spirit and potential for a successful season." No report was made of the 1953 conference tournament, but in a preview of the 1954 season it is stated that the 1953 Jays were runnersup to St. Thomas, the conference champions.

— 1954 —

In 1954 hopes ran high for a conference championship following a victory over St. Thomas in a dual meet by a score of 24-31. In this dual meet St. Thomas took first and third places. John Schlumpberger, the St. John's ace, finished in second place behind the Tommie star Jim Deane. Don Mahowald, Mike O'Fallon, Bob Hunt and George Geray (in that order) took fourth, fifth and seventh places.

In a second dual meet with St. Olaf the Johnnies defeated the Oles 22-33. Schlumpberger missed taking first place by a tenth of a second. Bob Hunt, Don Mahowald and George Geray won places four, five and six. Freshman Joseph Lechowicz took number nine.

### The MIAC Tournament

Typical of the scant interest, or failure to understand the scoring system of cross-country at this time, the *Record* sportswriter gave only a short, unappreciative account of the meet and St. John's victory over perennial champion St. Thomas, thereby annexing to SJU the title for 1954. Jim Deane of St. Thomas took first and Toby Mattern of Macalester second, but the combined efforts of the Johnnies' John Schlumpberger, third, Don Mahowald, fifth, Bob Hunt, sixth, Mike O'Fallon, ninth and George Geray, twelfth, gave the Jays their winning margin and the championship.

— 1955 —

When the 1955 season rolled around, the situation called for a rapid reorganization of the team to defend the 1954 cross-country championship. Prospects were particularly good, for of the four returning lettermen from 1954 three were seniors and one a junior. The strategy was to use the three seniors—John Schlumpberger, Mike O'Fallon and Vincent Hunt—while they were still with the team. The difficulty was to choose the fifth team member from among five highly competent candidates—Joseph Lechowicz, Cyril Paul, Gary Sauer and Jerry Wolf. They settled by using the candidate who on different occasions proved suitable for the situation.

But bad luck hit the team early in the season before the Johnnies met St. Thomas and Macalester in a triangular meet, September 31, at Nokomis Park. Schlumpberger, the ace and highest point winner of the group, suffered a foot injury and was unable to run. The result was that St. John's, with 40 points, took second place behind St. Thomas with its 37 points. Macalester was third with 43.

The results of the MIAC tournament held later were never published. The official MIAC list of championships credits Duluth with the title.

— 1956 —

As was anticipated in 1955, graduation left the cross-country team with only one experienced runner in Captain Donald Mahowald, who also served as the coach. Coach Mahowald worked hard with the squad, but the lack of experience took its toll in the season outcome. The season record was the loss of two dual meets and third place in the conference standings.

In the first loss—to St. Olaf—Don Mahowald, Russ Banner and James Eddy finished in third, fourth and fifth places respectively. In the second, against Macalester, the Jays ran into a Tartar, definitely a contender for the championship, who defeated them by the score of 17-38. James Eddy, a returnee to St. John's after completing his military obligation, was greatly improved over his dual meet performances and took fourth place. Donald Mahowald, John Mullally and James Donohue took the seventh, eighth and ninth places respectively.

Macalester demonstrated its full power in the MIAC tournament by easily winning the championship with five of the first six places for 19 points. Duluth finished in second with 49 points, St. John's (third place) with 55 and St. Thomas 83.

Individual Johnnie performers in the MIAC tournament were James Eddy, fourth place, Russ Banner, eleventh, Donald Mahowald, twelfth; James Donohue, John Mullally and Jack McHale also were point winners, though their records were not posted.

— 1957 —

In the September 27, 1957 issue of the *Record* there appears a heavy black headline: "CROSS COUNTRY GO-GO BOYS SEE GOOD YEAR!" The article goes on to say that cross-country is the newest and least known sport on campus and that "there has been no interest in the sport because none of the meets has been held at Collegeville."

It was a situation that Coach Jim Smith in the late 1960's and early 1970's tried to remedy by exposing the St. John's public to dem-



onstrations of a cross-country race during the halves of football games. The writer of the article attempted something of this kind by acquainting *Record* readers with the scoring system of cross-country: "In cross-country the course is usually laid out over open ground in the shape of a figure eight. The members of the five-man teams run the 2.1-3 miles and are awarded according to the place in which they finish (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.). The points of the five runners of each team are then added up and the team with the lowest number of points is the winner."

The writer spent no more time on cross-country after writing the first announcement of the season opening. We learn through the MIAC championship records that Macalester won the 1957 cross-country title.

Members of the St. John's team were James Eddy, Russ Banner, James Donohue, Jerome "Jerry" Schoenecker (one of St. John's most famous trackmen in his freshman year), John Mullally and freshmen Michael Cain and William Berg.

1957 marks the end of the first period in the history of cross-country at St. John's. The college ceased to put out a team for the next nine seasons, only to have the sport revived under Coach James Smith in 1966.

— 1965-66 —

After an interval of nine years, 1957-66, cross-country again came into its own. When Jim Smith, the new basketball coach, was assigned track as his springtime duty, he immediately decided to revive cross-country for the development of endurance in his basketball players, and also as an early training period for distance runners on his track team.

Success did not come immediately to Jim Smith and the six distance runners who survived the early autumn training exercises. Jim handled the men with a sort of low-gear drive, however, that was productive of progress and enthusiasm in athletes who were not yet accustomed to the demands of a sport that in many aspects was a grueling test of courage and perseverance. To add to the problem of establishing a new sport was the domination of Macalester and St. Thomas over MIAC track meets that gave each of them a mathematical monopoly over championships. On the other hand, seven teams would be represented in the MIAC championship meet, and the six St. John's runners were eager to match their endurance in competition with the lower category teams, if not with the two front runners.

The first competition of the 1965 season was a dual meet with the strong St. Cloud State team on the Albany golf course (three miles) from which the Jays emerged defeated by a score of 17-43 points. Team

members were Donald Garceau, Gregory Motl, David Thein, Hubert Dufner and James Flick.

The second meet was a quadrangular affair on the Como Park grounds (3.8 miles). St. John's took third place behind Winona State and Bethel, 63-13. St. John's garnered 64 points. Augsburg did not finish the race and was disqualified.

In the MIAC championship meet held at the University of Minnesota golf course (three miles) St. John's took third place with 53 points, behind Macalester with its score of 27 points and Augsburg with 47. St. Thomas was fourth with an unusual 89 points.

Roster: Hubert Dufner, Leo Fourre, Donald Garceau, Douglas Johnson, David Thein, William Thibedeau  
Conference standing: (1) Macalester, 27; (2) Augsburg, 47; (3) St. John's, 53; (4) St. Thomas, 89

— 1966-67 —

In the second year of its revival, cross-country was still far from being one of the strong sports of the St. John's athletic department. An encouraging addition to the squad was freshman Paul Muckerheide from Seattle, Washington, who demonstrated his interest and staying qualities by traveling the entire distance from Seattle to St. John's by bicycle. The team finished the season in fourth place behind front running Macalester, Concordia, and St. Thomas in that order.

Interest in the sport had begun to pick up, however, partly through the novel experiment of holding a dual meet between the halves of football games. During half-time of the 1966 homecoming game with St. Thomas, St. John's lost to the Tommies by one point, 28-29. A week later the Jays defeated Hamline in the half-time of a football game by a score of 20-40 on the Hamline campus. The season results are as follows: at Concordia, 2.2 miles, lost 39-19; St. Thomas at St. John's, 2.9 miles, lost 28-29; at Augsburg, second place—Augsburg 35, SJU 37, Hamline 56.

Conference standing: (1) Macalester, 17; (2) Concordia, 92; (3) St. Thomas, 92; (4) St. John's 102; (5) Augsburg, 109; (6) Hamline, 140; (7) Gustavus, 170  
Roster: Patrick Billion, William Byrne, Donald Garceau, David Glesener, John Garceau, Daniel Klenow, Paul Muckerheide, David Thein, James Urick, Warren Vollmar

— 1967-68 —

1967 can rightfully be called Coach Jim Smith's first bonanza year. His squads heretofore had among their members several dedicated runners whom he welcomed and considered the finest and most deserving athletes on campus. But never before had any new additions caused the same instant uplift of spirits and hopes as the enrollment of freshmen John Cragg and Jeffrey Brain, two top stars from the Catholic



prep school ranks. Pat Sweeney's article in the September 29, 1967 issue of the *Record* gives some idea of the elation that swept over the cross-country runners when they saw the newcomers in action:

"Cross-country at SJU has passed its infancy and is ready to take its place as a major sport. Previously, cross-country runners were not awarded letters and the main purpose of their travels was to get in shape for track. But now, with such outstanding runners as John Cragg and Jeff Brain, the Johnny runners are ready to go all out in MIAC competition . . . Looking into the future is pleasant for Coach Smith. His squad, top heavy with sophomores and freshmen, provides a strong nucleus to build around" (*Record*, September 29, 1967).

The regular season was star-studded with four victories and one loss. Victories were over Bethel (18-42), St. Thomas (18-45), Augsburg (17-44) and Hamline (19-41). A dual meet was lost to Macalester, 35-20, on "a dark, wet day and a confusing course." The greatness of John Cragg even as a freshman was made manifest this year by his first-place victories in each of these five meets. Jeff Brain was not far behind, with three second places, one tie with Cragg for first place, and an eighth against Macalester, his one bad day of the season.

On being invited to the St. Cloud Invitational at the country club, in which the Jays met the top cross-country teams in the state, SJU finished in third place. Again Cragg took first place honors.

Already warned by their dual meet loss to Macalester, the Jays nevertheless made a gallant try to win the MIAC title. Once more the Macs out-ran St. John's despite the first and second place finishes of Cragg and Brain. Both broke the Lake Nokomis record by times of 20:40 and 21:30, a record set by Macalester only the year before. Three other Jays who finished high were George Diehl, Thomas Goebel and Roy Glover. The Jays finished in second place.

The outcome of the NAIA District 13 meet, for which the Jays were eligible, was a satisfying surprise for Coach Smith, who saw his harriers finish ahead of the highly touted St. Cloud State team and take second place behind the winner, Macalester. Besides Cragg, who again took first place, were runners Brain (eighth), Timothy Kehoe (15th), Dan Klenow (20th) and Jon Kallman (25th).

Said Jim Smith with a broad smile, "Yes, we might just be tougher next year. Tough enough to take over the top spot among the harriers."

Roster: Patrick Billion, Jeffrey Brain, Gregory Cook, John Cragg, George Diehl, Roy Glover, Thomas Goebel, Jon Kallman, Timothy Kehoe, David Lukenow, Brian Martin, Patrick McKee, Paul Muckerheide, John Rieder  
Conference standing: (1) Macalester, 29; (2) St. John's, 56; (3) Augsburg, 83; (4) Hamline, 88; (5) Gustavus, 142; (6) St. Thomas, 145; (7) Concordia, 199

— 1968-69 —

When school opened in the fall of 1968, Coach Jim Smith was confident that St. John's finally had the power in cross-country to dethrone Macalester from its lofty position as champions of the MIAC. The year before, freshmen John Cragg and Jeff Brain were able to lift St. John's to second place behind the Scots, but the team as yet was unable to match Macalester's power and experience.

The 1968 season opened with the Cragg-Brain duo intact, together with the improving Daniel Klenow, Jon Kallman and others. The great difference on which Jim Smith relied was the presence of two new cross-country stars, Chuck Ceronsky, a 1967 sophomore transfer from Nazareth Hall minor seminary in St. Paul, and Joseph Skaja (pronounced Sky-ya), an intense, dedicated freshman cross-country star from Technical High School in St. Cloud—"Tiger" Skaja, as he was soon nicknamed. The foursome—Cragg-Brain-Ceronsky-Skaja—could match Macalester's best.

In the first cross-country encounter of the season, a triangular meet with Gustavus and St. Cloud State, St. John's almost literally ran away with the field, winning the match with a score of 22, Mankato 44 and Gustavus 66. Ceronsky and Cragg tied for first place in the three-mile race, "holding hands as they broke the finishing tape together." Jeff Brain was third, Skaja seventh and Jon Kallman ninth.

Shortly thereafter the Jays entered the Bemidji Invitational, in which the Jays were pitted against the top teams of the state. St. John's finished in second place behind St. Cloud State with a score of 62 points versus the 32 of St. Cloud (this was one of the best years of the great St. Cloud distance runners). In the three-mile race the Jays had three runners who finished among the first ten: Cragg, Ceronsky and Brain.

In the St. Cloud Invitational, in which eight teams competed, St. John's again took second place behind NIT champion St. Cloud State. Following this, St. John's took fifth place in the Notre Dame Invitational.

The high point of the entire season was, for St. John's, the MIAC championship meet held on the St. John's campus. It was a big day for the St. John's harriers. Chuck Ceronsky took first place in the five-mile run in a time of 25 minutes, 42.4 seconds (25:42.4). Jeff Brain was third, Cragg fourth, Skaja tenth and Michael Feneis thirteenth. It was a happy day for relieved Jim Smith. He was worried throughout the race about the condition of the team, for there had been many injuries shortly before the meet, especially a knee injury to John Cragg. It was the only MIAC race in his four years of competition that Cragg



came in other than in first place. As Jim Smith said, "He was happy even to finish."

The 1968-69 conference tournament was a happy and memorable occasion for Coach Smith. It was not merely that his team won the championship title, though that was the crowning point of the day, but also that it was the first time the faculty and student body were able to witness a full-fledged cross-country meet, and they were won over. He was especially well pleased with the support of the students and faculty: "Having so many supporters out there really encourages the runners, especially during the last mile" (*Record*, November 8, 1968). The coaches of the other MIAC teams agreed that the field at St. John's was much more diversified than that of Lake Nokomis, the traditional site of the cross-country meets.

Winners of all-conference honors were Chuck Ceronsky, John Cragg and Jeff Brain. Smith took his top seven runners to the NAIA national meet held in Oklahoma City, where the Johnnies placed eighth.

Roster: Jeff Brain, Chuck Ceronsky, John Cragg, George Diehl, Michael Feneis, Jon Kallman, Joseph Skaja  
Conference standing: (1) St. John's, 31; (2) Macalester, 43; (3) Augsburg, 83; (4) Gustavus, 103; (5) Duluth, 112; (6) St. Thomas, 151; (7) Hamline, 155

— 1969-70 —

The 1969 cross-country team was basically the same as that of 1968, a well-balanced group that won the MIAC championship for the following two years. There was a solid reason for their success, namely, the running of the most powerful foursome the MIAC had ever seen before: John Cragg, Chuck Ceronsky, Jeff Brain and Joe Skaja. The group was so closely knit together that their only danger in the MIAC was the possibility of injuries that could disrupt their racing strategy. Coach Smith said that Cragg in particular was a very smart runner, though Cragg himself insisted that his only strategy was to get ahead and stay there.

The 1969 Jays won the MIAC championship easily by taking the first four places. Cragg was the individual champion of the meet, coming in ahead of Ceronsky who had taken first place the year before. The team, in fact, so dominated the meet that it placed four runners on the all-conference team—Cragg, Ceronsky, Brain and Skaja.

Following the MIAC meet, Coach Smith took the team to Wheaton, Illinois, to compete in the NCAA Division III national championships. The team did not fare well, however, though Cragg continued to run well and placed second in the 350-man field. The rest of the team failed to run according to their potential, and St. John's as a team took ninth place.

Cragg was awarded the title All-American and eligibility to participate in the next meet in a higher division. His private triumph was coming in ahead of Dirkes, his special nemesis from St. Cloud State, who finished the race in fourth place.

Roster: Jeff Brain, Chuck Ceronsky (co-captain), John Cragg, Jon Kallman, Edward Kosiba, Michael Kremer, Paul Muckerheide (co-captain), Norbert Schneider, Joseph Skaja  
Conference standing: (1) St. John's, 31; (2) Macalester, 47; (3) Augsburg, 64; (4) St. Thomas, 132; (5) Hamline, 132; (6) Duluth, 147; (7) Gustavus, 170

— 1970-71 —

Chuck Ceronsky graduated in the spring of 1970 but remained at St. John's to work for the master's degree in theology. As an additional activity to keep in shape and help St. John's retain the conference title he assisted Jim Smith in both cross-country and track.

Ceronsky was the only member of the famous St. John's foursome in cross-country who was missing for the 1970 campaign, but the vacated place was quickly filled by a new cross-country star in the person of Dave Lyndgaard, and prospects immediately brightened. To the top performers of the last few years were also added Norbert Schneider and Mike Kremer, both promising competitors for entrance into the charmed circle. In the offing were James Boehlke, Kurt Wegleitner and David Arch, also good prospects.

Coach Smith scheduled three of the big invitationals that had become popular in the hope that the team might jell early for the MIAC conference meet to be held at the St. Cloud Country Club, with St. John's as the host school. An effort was made to schedule some dual meets also. Information about the outcome of the meets is scanty, however. About all the information available is that St. John's took first place in the St. Cloud Invitational, with John Cragg winning first place, followed by Joe Skaja (third), Jeff Brain (fourth), Dave Lyndgaard (twelfth) and Jon Kallman (nineteenth).

In 1970, for the second year in a row, St. John's won the MIAC championship, with Macalester taking second place. John Cragg and Jeff Brain finished their races in first and second places, respectively. Winners of all-conference honors were five of the St. John's runners: John Cragg, Jeff Brain, Joe Skaja, Dave Lyndgaard and Norbert Schneider.

Coach Jim Smith entered the St. John's harriers in both the NAIA and NCAA national championships. In the NCAA Division II group St. John's took eighth place: Cragg won second place and was awarded the All-American title for the second time.



Roster: David Arch, James Boehlke, Jeff Brain, John Cragg, Jon Kallman, Michael Kremer, David Lyndgaard, Norbert Schneider, Joseph Skaja, Kurt Wegleitner  
 Conference standing: (1) St. John's, 26; (2) Macalester, 56; (3) St. Thomas, 93; (4) Augsburg, 113; (5) Duluth, 118; (6) Hamline, 131; (7) Gustavus, 181

— 1971-72 —

In a long article that appeared in the *Record* (November 2, 1971), sportswriter Jim Boehlke, who was also a cross-country runner, wrote a preview of the 1971 cross-country season. Apparently exhausted by the effort, he left to some future writer the task of reporting on the meet. Fortunately, a one-page summary of cross-country history was located, entitled "St. John's Cross-Country Highlights 1967-75," which reveals that the 1971 meet really was held, that St. John's won the championship, that Joe Skaja was the individual champion and that three St. John's runners were awarded all-conference honors: Joe Skaja, Mike Kremer and Dave Lyndgaard. In other words, the 1971 cross-country team was a memorable success.

But Jim Boehlke's article was enlightening. Starting with the theory that distance runners are not born but made, and "that any group of harriers is only as good as the runners themselves make it," he analyzes the qualities of mind and body that are needed: "The physical attributes, the competitive spirit, and the love of sport are all requirements for distance running, but the name of the game is discipline . . . . The quest of this discipline makes cross-country the most mentally stringent sport of all" (*Record*, November 2, 1971).

Boehlke pointed out that, although John Cragg and Jeff Brain had graduated and the quality of the team was less than it was in 1970-71, the basic quality of the team suffered little loss because of compensation made by the fabulous increase in the dedication of the entire squad. If it is true that dedication and hard work make the distance runner, then the 1971 team was sure to be a success.

Joe Skaja set the pace by his rigorous training program. Six days of the week he ran a distance of twelve miles a day, running seven miles every morning and five, six or seven in the afternoon. His example was contagious. "Two years ago only the top five ran regularly each morning," wrote Boehlke. "Now, however, no less than twelve run twice a day. Competition is stiffer and no one can let himself slip, or even let anyone catch up." He warned them, "You are your own coach, and you'd better not ease up on your one-man team" (*Record*, November 2, 1971, p. 3).

The analysis and advice must have been observed, for the 1971 Jays again were the MIAC champions. But it was not an easy title to win. Dave Lyndgaard, who along with Joe Skaja was a leading figure

in the development of the team, wrote of the problems that arose during the MIAC meet and how the hard work and self-discipline had paid off:

"The team suffered a considerable blow when Norb Schneider (all-conference '70) fell during the MIAC meet and sustained a leg injury that prevented him from completing the race. The meet was held in a driving rain storm; Dave Lyndgaard fell twice during the race but avoided injury and finished eighth.

"Mike Kremer's fifth place finish, coupled with Mike Fahey's twelfth place, helped considerably to offset Schneider's loss. The real hero of the meet was Kevin Gallagher, who rose to the occasion and came up with a very creditable race to assure SJU's continued domination over the MIAC. Joe Skaja established himself as the MIAC's premier distance runner that year when he arrived all alone at the finish line, well ahead of second place finisher Urho Rakkola of the University of Minnesota-Duluth."

Roster: James Boehlke, Kevin Carlson, Michael Fahey, Kevin Gallagher, David Kayser, Michael Kremer, Nicholas Overby, Andrew Riehl, Chris Rose, Norbert Schneider, Joseph Skaja, Kurt Wegleitner

Joe Skaja

The year 1971-72 marks the end of Joe Skaja's career as a cross-country and track man at St. John's. He was a fierce competitor, colorful and ambitious to reach the top as a runner. In an interview at the close of his college years he named two highlights of his running career: first, his winning of second place in the 26-mile marathon held at Drake University in 1968, when he was only in his freshman year in college; second, his defeat in 1970 of John Cragg in the three-mile MIAC race when he came in ahead of John Cragg, whom he considered the best runner in St. John's history. Skaja's exit from running was spectacular. In the MIAC track meet of 1972 he won all the distance races, the one-mile, the three-mile and six-mile. He was a three-time all-conference winner in cross-country and track—1969, '70, '71. He won the All-American award in track in 1972.

Joe's choice of a profession was to teach in high school and coach. He is now living in Exeter, New Hampshire, however, and, of all things, is the designer for NIKE, the world's number one manufacturer of running shoes.

— 1972-73 —

Jim Boehlke in his preview of the 1972 cross-country season (*Record*, September 15, 1972) predicted good things for the Johnnies. It was almost an unqualified prediction, for though the team would miss the



"indestructible Joe Skaja," the core of the team was made up of well established runners such as the talented Dave Lyndgaard, Kevin Carlson, Mike Fahey and Nicholas Overby. There was also an impressive array of freshman runners coming up that included some of the ten best runners in the public and Catholic schools of the state, among them Pat Feehan, Timothy Heisel, Timothy Miles and Al Van Landschoot from Catholic high schools, and Bill Martell from Wisconsin. Coaches Smith and Ceronisky were assured of the depth that sometimes wins track and cross-country meets despite the lack of star performers. As for the other schools in the conference, this was, they felt, the year for beating the Johnnies, now four-time champions of the MIAC.

The schedule for 1972 was heavy with invitationals: Iowa State, Luther, Bemidji, Manitoba, St. Cloud, Notre Dame and St. Olaf. After the meet at Bemidji, from which St. John's emerged in fifth place, it became evident that the Tommies were beginning to overshadow the Jays and an element of disquiet began to make itself felt on the squad. Chuck Ceronisky, however, after watching the team practice, observed signs that encouraged him. He remarked, "Don't tell the boys I said it, but Lyndgaard is going to take the conference" (*Record*, November 3, 1972, p. 4). He was correct; St. John's again won the MIAC championship. Lyndgaard blazed his way to the front for first place and the individual championship of the conference. He showed himself to be a complete leader, one who thrived under competition, as was demonstrated again in 1973 when he won the NCAA All-American award in cross-country.

In a subsequent report Dave Lyndgaard gave his own account of what took place in the 1972-73 conference meet: "In one of my fondest memories of sports, St. John's responded to the challenge with an outstanding team effort. My knee by this time had grown strong enough for me to win the race and to continue the string of SJU runners who won the individual title. Then a flu-ridden Tim Heisel managed to finish sixth. Almost unbelievably, Kevin Carlson completed the race in fifth place, a totally unexpected surprise. Nick Overby, running the race of the season, slipped to twelfth place. The real surprise was Pat Feehan. A spring knee injury had kept Pat from training all summer and limited his training that fall. Spurred on by the knowledge that his teammate and friend Mike Fahey was still too weak from the flu to help the Jays, Pat clinched the title for SJU with a thirteenth place finish. Bothered afterwards by the knee injury, this was to be the last race in which Feehan was able to compete at, or even near to, full strength."

In the NAIA district play-offs at Como Park, St. John's came out in first place with a score of 45 points, St. Thomas had 53 and Hamline 89. Dave Lyndgaard led the Johnnies with a first place finish in the meet and taking the 1972 individual title.

— 1973 —

The 1973 cross-country season lacked much of the drama of 1972, probably by the fact that this year St. John's relinquished its five-year reign over the MIAC. The Jays finished the season in second place behind Hamline, which had been coming up fast with a strong team. As the season developed it gradually became evident that, however strong St. John's might be, Hamline was just a shade stronger. The final MIAC meet score of the two contending colleges was 38-50, a matter of only twelve points difference. In the MIAC meet Dave Lyndgaard ended in fourth place, Jerry Faletti fifth, Tim Heisel eighth, Kevin Carlson ninth and Nick Overby eleventh.

In the absence of cross-country information in the *Record*, Captain Lyndgaard wrote a summary of the season, as follows:

"Prospects for the 1973 season appeared bright as the St. John's harriers began preparing for the defense of the MIAC cross-country title. After all, last year's entire varsity had returned and included as special features Captain Dave Lyndgaard, the holder of the MIAC 1972 cross-country title. There were also on the team two champions from the track team: namely, Tim Heisel in the steeplechase and Kevin Carlson in the three-mile run. Early successes were even more encouraging. The 1972 conference runnerup, St. Thomas, was an even stronger team than in 1972, and yet St. John's handled the Tommies easily in early meets. The only worry and obstacle to a repetition of the championship was the young and rapidly developing Hamline team.

"Hamline avoided St. John's during the regular season by not scheduling the invitationals traditionally attended by both schools and set the showdown for the MIAC meet in St. Paul. A veteran but apprehensive St. John's squad confronted the Pipers at the MIAC meet. Their fears were realized when Hamline defeated the Johnnies, despite a strong effort by the Jays. The following week, on the same field, the two teams took aim at each other again. St. John's improved on its efforts at the MIAC, but so likewise did Hamline, with the results being the same—Hamline first and St. John's second.

"The loss was a bitter disappointment to St. John's, but the team resolved to run well at the NCAA national tournament—and well they did. A difference of a few seconds in the races separated Hamline and St. John's, but the Pipers once again came out ahead."