



# BOUNCINGS

10 June 08



Byki

1 : 1

Smart-kacze

The Big Game  
Maine East HS - 10 June 1983

## Big Game launch pad for Byki history

After months of trash-talking, posturing and preparation, Stare Byki Football Club played the first match in their history on June 10, 1983 at Maine East HS in Park Ridge. The Byki took on their arch-rivals, the Smart-kacze, and came away with a 1:1 draw in a match that the Byki thoroughly dominated everywhere but on the scoreboard.

The teams had been competing in a range of sporting contests, all of them won handily by the Byki. Soccer was next up on the schedule, but this challenge had a bit more bite to it than the previous ones. Edi Pinkowski, the ringleader of the Smart-kacze, whose name was a play on words of the Polish term for "snot-nose," came firing away at the Billy Goat Tavern on November 26, 1982, when he met up with George Gorecki and Stef Wiecek. The young lad had trouble handling his beer that day, and he and his

cohort Rich Hass threw down the gauntlet, saying that their group could beat the Byki on the soccer field. "I told them we would kick their ass," said Pinkowski.

Putting up that type of challenge wouldn't pass without a response, and Wiecek and Gorecki thought that a match could be organized the following morning. But the short notice and frigid conditions scotched those plans and the groups agreed to make it a proper match the following spring.

Both teams had plenty of time to assemble their squads in preparation for the match, which had been dubbed The Big Game by interested onlookers. When June 10 finally rolled around, the only thing that was big was the confusion. Thanks to poor planning, the match almost didn't get played

The Smart-kacze were responsible for securing the field and getting nets for the goals. The venue was supposed to have been Harrer Park in Morton Grove. Pinkowski naively thought that the field would be empty that evening and hadn't bothered to obtain a permit. When the teams arrived at the park and found another match was already in progress, a mad scramble ensued to seek out a vacant field. The group eventually migrated over to Maine East HS. But all of the time that was lost during this zany adventure resulted in the teams being forced to play 35-minute halves, due to dwindling daylight.

Despite their scant amount of training for the game, the Smart-kacze came out as the early aggressors. The Byki started off in tentative fashion, as turnovers in their end of the field abounded. Henry Zajac nearly

### The Byki turn 25!

#### Byki 25th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, July 19

Byki Reunion Game at 4:00 PM

25th Anniversary Party  
Goose Island Brewery  
1800 N Clybourn in Chicago  
7:00 - 10:00 PM

Check us out on the Internet at [www.starebykifc.org](http://www.starebykifc.org)



converted a Byki giveaway into a dangerous shot on goal in the first ten minutes.

The Smart-kacze kept up the pressure and were rewarded after a quarter of an hour when Ted Piotrowski stepped in front a square pass 20 yards in front of the Byki goal. Piotrowski sprinted in alone on keeper Les Jankiewicz and slotted home for a 1:0 lead.

The goal lifted the spirits of the youngsters and Piotrowski pressed for a second strike shortly thereafter, only to see his attempt go wide of the target. The Byki still could not fully shake off their tentative play, but did manage to earn a few corner kicks late in the first half. "I was disappointed by the way we started the match," said Gorecki. "With all of our preparation, I thought we would be the more organized team at the beginning. By halftime, I thought that the Smart-kacze had played about as well as they were going to play."

Momentum slowly started shifting towards the Byki after the break. John Starkowski and George Twardowski played bigger roles for the Byki in the second half, as they began pressuring the Smart-kacze all over the field. One-way traffic started pointing towards the Smart-kacze goal and an equalizer appeared inevitable.

But the one-way traffic hit a dead end in the form of goalkeeper Greg Bujwid. Playing in his first soccer match ever, the 17-year-old Bujwid made a series of stunning and incredible saves on certain scoring chances. Striker Andy Wojtkowski was victimized on several occasions and could only shake his head as he ran back upfield.

The Byki got their opening 15 minutes from the end. A bouncing ball in front of the Smart-kacze area confounded Chris Kalinowski, who handled the ball in his attempt to clear it away. With a free kick just outside the 18 and to the right of the keeper, Gorecki had his sights on leveling the score. "We had spent a lot of time at training working on set pieces," said Gorecki. "I had gotten pretty good in hitting the upper corner, so I was definitely going for it." Rather than

curling his shot over the wall, Gorecki instead hit it hard and low. Zajac, the last man in the wall, extended his foot to try to block the shot. The ball grazed the underside of his foot and found the back of the net, escaping Bujwid's desperate, full-stretch lunge.

The Byki were jubilant, but there was still work to do to try to win the game. Bujwid, however, proved to be solid as a rock and the Byki were unable to find their second goal. The teams left the field even at 1:1, a result that many observers thought was fair. The Byki had carried the play for long stretches, yet could not translate their advantage into any more goals. The Smart-kacze used early pressure to break out on top and then relied on a red-hot debutante goalkeeper to get the result.

The players gathered at Mark Sokolowski's house for a post-game party. The trash-talking continued, as the Smart-kacze lobbied for a rematch. Their leader, however, had other ideas. Pinkowski declared that there would be no rematch because when two teams are equal, a draw is the correct result. Whether the two teams were really equal that day is a topic that was hotly debated in the aftermath, as well as for some time afterwards. Many Byki believed that the better team did not win that day.

Regardless of the result, The Big Game became a springboard for a competitive club. Many of the best Smart-kacze joined the Byki over the next two years, as the group took the first steps on a 25-year journey in search of football fulfillment.

#### SCORING SUMMARY

Smart-kacze: Piotrowski; 15th; 0:1.  
Byki: Gorecki; 55th; 1:1.

**BYKI LINEUP (4-3-3):** Jankiewicz – Nowobilski, Witek, Owsiany, Urbanowicz – Chudzinski, Sokolowski (c), Siemaszko – Wiecek, Wojtkowski, Gorecki. **Bench:** Ciepiela, Figol, Klonowski, Starkowski, Twardowski.

**SMART-KACZE LINEUP (4-3-3):** Bujwid – Pinkowski (c), Rys, Kalinowski, Ostrowski – Zadlo, Chudzik, Styczen – Hass, Piotrowski, Zajac.