

From: **St. Francis Xavier** <injug.stx1976@gmail.com>
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 Subject: St. X 50th Reunion - The Match
 To: St. Francis Xavier <injug.stx1976@gmail.com>

Classmates of 1976, it is I, Francis, back again with another weekly installment of Class of 1976 lore. This week I am taking us back to a sporting event in our junior year that did not occur on the field but in the cafeteria.

The Match



Setting the Stage

It all started with a dare between Tom Blinn, who was considered the “wise crack” of the Class of ’75 and a tenured science teacher who was known for his self-confidence, command of his subject matter, and a disciplinarian. It was an early Fall day in 1974 that would set the stage of what was to become the most celebrated event of the school year when Tom approached his best friend, Steve Linz, a reserved, but highly decorated athlete known for his incredible feats on the wrestling mat and football field, and asked a simple, but unexpected question – would you accept the invitation to arm wrestle Mr. Arata during 5th bell in the cafeteria? While hesitant at first, Steve accepted the challenge and before one knew it, the news spread quickly around the school and in the hallways between class periods. Again, it was supposed to be just a dare between a student and teacher that became the most talked about story at St. X for years to come.

The Day

It was a surprisingly cool, but beautiful day in early October. The academic year and Fall sports were in full gear, and the morning started as scripted – the first bell rang at 7:55am, classes began shortly thereafter at 8:00am, followed by the school principal, Mr. Trainor, reciting his morning announcements on the loud speaker not knowing the news flash of the day would eventually be this main event. As 5th bell approached, the school and student body were a buzz preparing to give witness of “the match” between this said teacher and student.

The Match

As the two sat down at an 8 ft. table located near the entrance of the school cafeteria, the crowd of students began to encircle them. Some witnesses say the gathering was ten rows deep consisting of those students primarily from the Class of ’75 and ’76 who shared common lunch periods. The pre-match began with Tom reviewing the standard rules of engagement and, in his humor-like disposition, egging his best friend on to represent the class well or else. Without further fanfare, the match began.

As with most arm-wrestling matches, it is quite common for two competitors to exhibit their strength and prowess in the early stages. This match was no different as during the first 45 seconds the two warriors went back and forth, their arms moving slightly side-to-side, and their elbows steady. But this was just the advent of what was about to come. At 90 second mark, Steve saw an opening when Mr. Arata paused momentarily and relaxed his grip, which ended up being the key turning point in the match.

The Crack

It was in that split second, Steve applied all of his inner-strength and discipline learned from years of weight lifting and conditioning drills on the field of play, to force Mr. Arata's arm toward the table surface. Then, the unexpected sound of a "crack" silenced the crowd as Mr. Arata's arm went down while his shoulder went the opposite direction. Never seen by those with degrees in Anatomy and Physiology, the contortion of his shoulder and the once attached arm laid in limbo while the crowd was left in shock. There, in complete disbelief, sat Mr. Arata in excruciating pain staring at his competitor wondering what went wrong.

The Aftermath

The EMT's arrived within the hour, attended to the faculty's fallen warrior, and promptly wheeled Mr. Arata to the ambulance for his trip to a local hospital. Classes resumed and "the match" was forever etched in the history of St. Xavier lore.

It was supposed to be friendly dare between a teacher and a student, but it become an event that was accounted and talked about for years, especially among those who gave witness for what was described as an "unbelievable" course of events that led to "the match" in a school cafeteria on a cool and sun-drenched October day.

Godspeed, FX

I am sending this email to you and other members of the St. Xavier High School Class of 1976 in full brotherhood with the St. Xavier High School Class of 1976 reunion committee. As we prepare for Easter during Lent, we are sending these emails in preparation for our 50th reunion May 28-30. Although my fellow Jesuits have graciously named the high school to honor my service to the Lord, this email, all other email, communications, the reunion committee in no way speak for or on behalf of St. Xavier High School. My reunion committee brethren have obtained your contact information from members of the St. Xavier High School Class of 1976 who want to help spread the good news of the 50th reunion. We will not share your contact information with anyone including St. Xavier without your permission. If any of our communications begin to offend, annoy, bore, invade your sense of privacy and you'd like me to remove you from our email distribution list, please let me know by replying back to me.

AMDG, Francis Xavier