

A Brief History of the Pool



1980 - Mitch's Lounge (246 E. Exchange St – across from the Akron U athletic field on Exchange Street, where the McDonalds restaurant is located now).

The Pool began life here, an idea hatched by Mitch's Lounge owner Tom Nicola, and a dozen or so regular patrons.

The first 'sheet' was filled out by hand, with each *member/player* selecting their picks for each game of the week, including a guess on the total points scored in the Monday Night game, which served as a tie-breaker in case two people ended up with the same number of wins.

Here's some facts on how long ago 1980 was, and how enduring the Pool has been.

Since 1980:

- We've seen 7 Presidents.
- The **USA Today** newspaper didn't start production until 1982.

- Gasoline was \$1.19 a gallon in 1980.
- In 1980, the Sears Catalog offered a UHF - VHF enabled 19-inch “Big-Screen” color TV with a hot feature—a wood-paneled remote control with four buttons—for just \$485.
- A state-of-the-art VHS machine — on which you could watch pre-recorded movies at home!— cost \$699.
- A regular burger at McDonalds cost .40 cents in 1980.

Sometime in the mid 80’s, the Pool had its first computer printout, done by friends at the Board of Elections next door. Tom still has one of the original printouts, which was created on an ancient dot matrix printer - with tear off perforated edges, and alternating bands of green and light green rows. Every once in a while, I make him haul it out of storage, and bring it to the banquet to show it off.

Over the next dozen years, the Pool gradually increased its membership, and in 1992 I joined the Pool myself. A few years later in 1995, the Pool had become real work for the original Secretary who finally quit, and Tom asked if I could take over the job.

I’ve been doing it ever since.

In 1996, Art Modell moved the Cleveland Browns to Baltimore, and renamed the team The Ravens, but due to a massive outcry from Browns fans across the country, the Browns returned to the League in 1999.

In 2003, Tom finally received the offer he’d been waiting for, and although he always thought it would come from Akron University through its expansion, it was McDonalds that made him the offer he couldn’t refuse, and Mitch’s Lounge closed its doors on New Year’s Eve 2003.

To say Mitch’s Lounge was a legendary watering hole near Akron University would be an understatement. I have often said that it had such an eclectic mix of customers, that on ‘any given Friday night, there were just as many cops & lawyers in the place, as college kids & criminals’.

Once, while bartending on a slow summer night, a middle-age couple came in and sat at the bar and we struck up a conversation. I could only smile, when the husband recounted his days at Akron U, and the great times he’d had at Mitch’s. Then he turned to his wife and proudly said, “This is the first bar I ever threw-up in.”

And here’s is the best example of all, that Mitch’s Lounge was truly a legendary Bar.

Chicago Bears Quarterback Mitch Trubisky was named after it! His parents both attended Akron University, and both played on a flag football team at the athletic field across the street from Mitch's.

After games they would all walk across the street to Mitch's for a few beers to cool off. Mitch's Lounge held such a special Place in their heart, they named their son after it.

Don't believe it?

Follow these two links to interviews by his parents where they tell the story themselves.

This article recounts their flag football at Akron U.

<https://heavy.com/sports/2019/01/mitch-mitchell-trubisky-where-from-ethnicity-parents/>

This article confirms naming their son after a bar they frequented while attending Akron U.

<https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2705441-who-is-mitch-trubisky-the-drafts-top-qb-answers-the-question-everyones-asking>