

Richard MacDonald



Richard MacDonald played soccer, basketball and baseball while at West Rocks Junior High School, then three years of varsity football at Norwalk High and after that at a junior college in Kansas.

But it is in the sport of slow-pitch softball that this 2009 Norwalk Old Timer honoree is best known for.

MacDonald's involvement in local softball spans nearly five decades, going all the way back to 1963 when he began playing for the Norwalk Aces. During his time with the team, MacDonald competed in the Norwalk Recreation Softball League, the Stamford Shoreline League, the Norwalk Hank Aaron League, and the Sunday Morning League in town.

But MacDonald's softball career was just getting started. In 1966, he went to work at Deluxe Check Printers and became the company representative on the Norwalk Industrial Recreation Council for the next 18 years, eventually assuming the position of coordinator for the Industrial Softball League for several years.

MacDonald wore several uniforms during his softball career, some of them simultaneously. When he was not playing with the Aces, he would play in various tournaments with Chatham Oaks, another local perennial power. During the 1960s and '70s, the team was sponsored by Singewald

Buick and MacDonald, a player/coach, guided them to 12 straight "A" Division sectional championships as well as a number of league titles and several trips to the state tournament.

Then during the winter of 1971, MacDonald was one of the co-founders of the new Norwalk Independent Softball League which played Sunday mornings at Rowayton School and became one of the most competitive softball leagues in the state. MacDonald not only played in the league, but served as commissioner the first three years.

In 1973, MacDonald changed "uniforms" again and became an ASA umpire with the Norwalk Umpires Association. After only two years, he was selected to work the 1975 Major Division state tournament at Raybestos Field.

In the late 1980s, MacDonald began yet another chapter of his softball career when he was assigned by the Norwalk Recreation Department to assist the late Tom Cocchia with the day-to-day functions of the Recreation Softball League. When Cocchia eventually stepped down, MacDonald took over the umpire assignments and in 1993 was named ASA District Commissioner for the Norwalk and Wilton areas.

In that role, MacDonald and his good friend Bill Krause ran many ASA state tournaments at Calf Pasture Beach, in most years more than any other city or town in Connecticut. MacDonald was later named the Southern District Commissioner, adding Westport, Fairfield and New Canaan to the list of towns he oversaw.

And after Krause suddenly passed away in 2005, MacDonald took on the added responsibility of running the district tournaments by himself. In addition, he is still very involved with recreation men's and women's softball in Norwalk on an administrative level. He was also recently appointed to the Connecticut ASA Umpires Executive Board.

But without question, the highlight of his softball career occurred in 2001 when MacDonald was inducted into the Connecticut Slow Pitch Hall of Fame.

Softball wasn't the only sport MacDonald was involved in over the years, however. Growing up in Norwalk, he played for the VFW team in the National Little League and later for Seamon Grill in the Norwalk PONY League. He also played baseball and basketball for the Winnipauk Playground team during summers.

Then came three years of varsity soccer, basketball and baseball at West Rocks Junior High School, while during his three seasons of varsity football at Norwalk High (1961-63) he played on both offense and defense. He played only three games as a senior because of a broken leg, but was still named second-team all-conference center and was selected to play in the annual Connecticut Nutmeg Bowl as Norwalk High's representative. He also received the NHS Fathers Club Athletic Award for football, which was chosen by the coaches.

MacDonald also played one season of varsity baseball at Norwalk, and during his time at Deluxe Check Printers he played softball, basketball and bowled for the company team. In 1975, he received the Bob Carter Achievement Award presented by the YMCA for outstanding service to the Norwalk Industrial Recreation Council.

When MacDonald's softball playing days ended in 1982 and he took a four-year hiatus from the sport, he became involved with swimming, taking over as president of the Parent Group for the Norwalk Aquatic Club. Over the next five years, the team increased membership by 60 percent and hosted several state swim meets.

MacDonald was employed by Deluxe Check Printers for 27 years, and for the past 15 years has worked for the city of Norwalk as the Calf Pasture Beach manager. He and his wife, the former Millie Allen, have two children, a daughter Christine, who swam and later coached at Keene State College and is now the assistant superintendent of Parks and Recreation in Lewisboro, N.Y., and a son, Richard Jr., who works in the entertainment field.