

Phil Tegano



Phil Tegano has spent more than half his life around the game of football.

In fact, Tegano, who turned 60 this past May, has been involved with his favorite sport for 44 of those years, most of them as a player.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and growing up in East Norwalk, Tegano's first exposure to organized football came in 1963 as a member of the Nathan Hale Junior High School Green Devils where he played nose guard on defense and wide receiver on offense for three years.

That was just a tune up for the next three years as a member of the Norwalk High School football team, starting all three seasons at defensive end and earning All-FCIAC honors as a junior and senior in 1966 and '67. He was also voted the team's Most Valuable Defensive Lineman.

Perhaps the highlight of his scholastic career, however, came after he graduated, in the summer of 1968, when he was chosen to play in the prestigious Nutmeg Bowl, Connecticut's annual all-star game featuring the best senior players from all over the state. As a member of the West team, coached by Jerry McDougall, Tegano recorded a remarkable 25 tackles, 17 of them unassisted, including six quarterback sacks. He also blocked a punt and was named the West MVP by the sports writers

covering the game.

Tegano went from NHS to Graceland College in Iowa where he started at defensive end his first two seasons in 1968 and '69. He transferred to Norwalk Community College in 1970 and started at DE for the school's successful club football team the next two years. Tegano was not only named all-conference and the Cougars' team MVP both seasons, but in 1971 he received All-American Honorable Mention in club football as he helped lead NCC to a No. 16 ranking in the nation.

That was also the season the Cougars upset Westchester Community College, the No. 3 club football team in the country, 16-14 as Tegano keyed the defense with 23 tackles, 17 unassisted, including five QB sacks against an explosive WCC offense. Afterward, Tegano received the game ball from NCC head coach Ed Hall.

With two years of eligibility remaining, Tegano returned to Iowa and played two more seasons of football for Graceland College in 1972 and '73. He was named to the Heart of America Conference all-league team both years, while as a senior in 1973 he received All-District honors and was tabbed the team's Most Valuable Defensive Lineman.

After Graceland, Tegano would play one year of semipro football as a safety with the Bridgeport Jets of the Atlantic Coast Football League before embarking on a long – and successful – career in the highly competitive Inter-City Touch Football League that played Sunday mornings at Rowayton School.

Tegano played 21 years with the Darien Sportsmen, seeing action at running back, linebacker and end for coach Henry Egan, and helping the Sportsmen win six league championships, including three in a row from 1974-76.

In fact, he played in the ICTFL title game 15 times during his 21-year career, and in 1993 received the league's prestigious "All Timers" award. Tegano played one more season before finally calling it a career in 1994 at the age of 45.

But he still remained involved with the sport of football as an active member of the Brien McMahon High School Football Booster Club for 11 years, from 1996 to 2006, including the last six years as the club president. Two of his sons played for the Senators.

During his playing career, Tegano also coached football as an assistant with his alma mater at Norwalk High, first during the 1974 season under head coach Sam Testa, and then in 1992 and '93 under Mike Santa Lucia.

Football wasn't the only sport Tegano excelled in, however. A longtime recreation softball player, he began playing with the Bruski Athletic Club from 1966-68, before joining Singewald Buick. He also played with T's Construction, T's Aces and the Norwalk Aces (in fact, Tegano was the "T" in T's Construction and T's Aces.) He was part of several city and sectional championship teams that twice finished third in the state playoffs, as well as win titles in the Norwalk Independent League and Hank Aaron League.

Tegano also coached baseball in the Norwalk Small Fry League from 1988-90, and then in the West Norwalk Bambino League from 1991-96. He was the head coach of four district championship teams and an assistant coach with a state championship 10-year-old all-star team. He also served as president of the league in 1995 and '96.

A product of the International Little League and Norwalk PONY League growing up, Tegano played baseball as well as basketball at Norwalk High. But it was in the sport of football where he made his biggest impact and left his mark.

The father of four – all former athletes at McMahon – still makes his home in Norwalk.