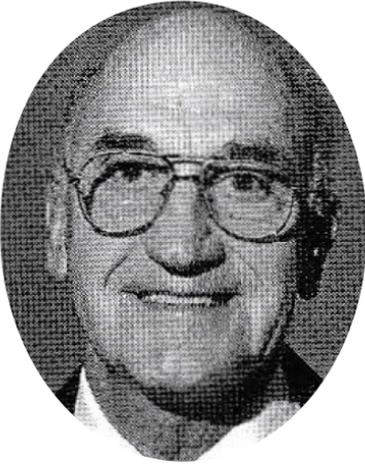


Bob Avery



Bob Avery joins a very select group of Norwalk athletes who have the distinction of not only being an Old Timers award winner but also a world champion. And in Avery's case, the honors come exactly 50 years apart.

Avery was the starting right fielder on the 1952 Norwalk National Little League all-star team that won 11 straight games and captured the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA, 50 years ago this summer.

In fact, Avery is the second member of that team to be honored by the Norwalk Old Timers, joining former teammate Ralph DiMeglio, a 1995 award winner. And fittingly, Avery is being honored on the same night the Old Timers Athletic Association is presenting its Special Award to the Norwalk Ben Whone National LL to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1952 champs.

But while Avery is best known for being a part of that magical summer, his athletic career included so much more, and not only as a young boy but as an adult as well.

A native of Norwalk who grew up near Tracy School, Avery also played for Rotary in 1951, the year Little League baseball was born in Norwalk, and was one of the few 11-year-olds, along with DiMeglio, to make the all-star team.

The following year, both he and his twin brother, John, made the all-star team that won district, state, and regional titles and went all the way to Williamsport, where it rallied for two runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to beat Monongahela, PA, 4-3 in the championship game.

After Little League, Avery went on to play in the Norwalk Pony League in 1953, the second year of that league, while in 1955 he joined the Brien McMahon Babe Ruth League, which was in only its third season. He helped his team win the league championship in 1955, and also made the all-star team, which was coached by Johnny Buschbaum. His brother, George Buschbaum, coached Avery with the '52 Little League champs.

Then in 1956, Avery moved to the Norwalk City League where he played with the Strawberry Hill Athletic Club. He also played with the Norwalk Aces that season in the Danbury Twilight League where he was reunited with Julio Landa, Harry Brower, and his brother John Avery, all teammates on the '52 world champs.

With his baseball days behind him, Avery played softball and basketball in 1958 with Edwards Company in the Norwalk Industrial League.

But it was in 1964 that Avery, at the age of 24, began the second phase of his athletic career as well as a long association with the Laurel Athletic Club. He helped lead the Laurels softball team to a league championship, again playing with Landa, his brother John, and the Brower twins as well as Jack Herman. In fact, when asked what his greatest feat in sports was, Avery's answer might have surprised some. He not only listed "playing baseball with my best friends in the Little League World Series as a young boy," but also "playing as a young man with the Laurel Athletic Club softball team."

Besides softball, Avery was a key member of the Laurel AC bowling team, which captured the Friday Night A League crown in 1980.

Avery's sports involvement also included a 10-year coaching stint as he returned to the Norwalk National Little League. The highlight came in 1972, when, 20 years after he won a world championship as a player in the league, Avery was a coach on the VFW team that went 17-1 and won the league championship.

Even today, Avery is still very much involved with the Laurel Athletic Club. An active member for 38 years, he currently serves on the club's board of governors and is chairman of the Laurels' sports committee.

Now 62, Avery worked at Edwards for 24 years, and is now in his 22nd year with Fire Systems, Inc., in Hawthorne, NY, where he is a purchasing agent.

Avery and his wife of 41 years, the former Angela Pirro, have two children, Bob Jr., who graduated from Penn State in 1990 and is now a landscape architect, and Carol Ann, a '93 graduate of Indiana University and currently a social studies teacher at Staples High School in Westport.

Obviously a big fan of the Big Ten conference, Avery is a football season ticket holder at Penn State.