

*Mike Errico Award
Steve Brueski*



Steve Brueski, a fixture on the local sports scene for more than a quarter of a century and who's close to scoring his biggest win yet, is the recipient of this year's Norwalk Old Timers Athletic Association *Mike Errico Award*.

The Mike Errico Award, which recognizes a group, league, team, or individual for its years of service, is named in honor of the late Mike Errico, a former local sportsman who was an original executive board member when the Norwalk Old Timers organization began in 1963. He was the organization's first vice president and later served as president in 1986 and '87.

The 47-year-old Brueski is being honored for his many years of service as a coach and administrator. His love affair with sports goes back to his days as a player in the West Norwalk Little

League and Norwalk AA Babe Ruth program. He later played football at Brien McMahon High School and was the team manager for the Senators baseball team.

But coaching was what he really wanted to do and he didn't have to look very far to get his foot in the door. His father, Walt Brueski, a longtime board member with the Norwalk Athletic Association and in the summer of 1989 a 19-year-old Steve Brueski was coaching a 13-year-old Babe Ruth team.

He coached several teams at different levels until the age of 24 when veteran Norwalk High coach Pete Tucci recruited him to be his freshmen baseball and football coach. One year later, he was promoted to varsity assistant in both sports.

He eventually returned to coach in the Babe Ruth League, before taking over as head coach of the Norwalk American Legion baseball team. He did that for the next six years and compiled a record of 126–56, including a 24–3 regular-season mark in 2010.

That would be his final season as head coach and in 2011 he moved to the “front office” and became general manager of the Legion program, handling all the day-to-day administrative work.

One of his first pieces of business was to bring in former Legion player Chris Brown as the new head coach and in his first season, and Brueski's initial season as GM, Post 12 won its first ever state championship.

After three seasons, Brueski stepped away from the Legion program in 2013. Throughout his tenure as both coach and general manager, Brueski was strictly a volunteer and never took a dime.

He went back to coach freshmen football at Norwalk High as a volunteer, and also returned to the bench as a volunteer coach with the baseball team under Tucci, But last September Brueski's world was turned upside down when he was diagnosed with stage-three colon cancer and immediately began treatment. The good news is he's almost done with the regular treatments and is scheduled to see his doctors soon after tonight's Old Timers dinner. All signs point to him getting a clean bill of health.

But just like when he was coaching, Brueski is using this experience as a teaching moment, telling friends and even young athletes he comes in contact with through his work in the sports community the importance to undergo screening tests for colon cancer.