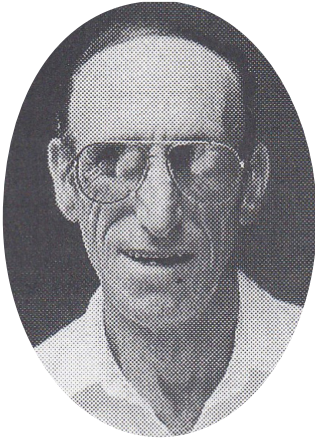


Ralph DiMeglio



Ralph DiMeglio is regarded as one of the best baseball players to ever come out of the city of Norwalk, enjoying an outstanding career that lasted into his early adult life.

But it was something that happened to DiMeglio early in his career, at the age of 12, which he'll always be remembered for and made him a part of Norwalk sports history — he was a key member of the 1952 National Little League All-Star team, which captured the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA.

DiMeglio played a pivotal role in the Norwalkers' magic ride to the world championship, saving his best clutch performances for the most crucial games. He was the winning pitcher and belted a key home run in the district championship game. He then hit two more homers to drive in the game's only runs and hurled a masterful shutout to lead the Norwalk Nationals to a 2–0 win over Southington in the state final. From there, it was on to the regional tournament where DiMeglio was the winning pitcher and hit another home run in the regional championship game as Norwalk

earned a trip to Williamsport.

The National Little League won all three games it played as DiMeglio pitched the game two victory against California and then in the third game slammed another home run — his second of the World Series — as Norwalk nipped Pennsylvania, 4–3, to win the world championship.

Of course, the rest of Ralph's baseball career was pretty impressive too. The Norwalk native grew up in the Strawberry Hill section of town and attended local schools at Fitch, Nathan Hale, and Norwalk High. He played his Little League ball with Kiwanis and coaches Chick Buschbaum and Sal Bottone in 1951 and '52 before playing a year of Pony League in 1953.

The following year, at only 14 years old, DiMeglio joined the American Legion baseball team, where he played for five seasons. It was there, he says, that coach Jack White taught him everything he knows about coaching.

It was also during that time, from 1955 to 1957, Ralph played baseball at Norwalk High for coach Jack Cronin. He was also a three-year member of the NHS basketball team, but it was in baseball that he made his mark as he was rated one of the best catchers around with a tremendous arm. The left-handed long-ball hitting catcher compiled an impressive .318 career batting average, including a sizzling .444 as a senior. As a junior, he was one of the key players on Norwalk's 17–3–2 team, which captured the County Class A crown. He also did some pitching for NHS, displaying a blazing fastball, and in 1971 was named to *The Hour's* 100th anniversary All-Time Greatest High School Baseball Team.

Even after graduation, however, Ralph's baseball days were far from over. In 1958, he signed a professional baseball contract with the New York Yankees and played in their farm system from 1958 to 1963. While the Bombers were winning pennants five of those six years, DiMeglio played on minor league teams in places like St. Petersburg, FL; Kearney, NE; Auburn, NY; Modesto, CA; Binghamton, NY; Greensboro, NC; and advanced as high as Double A ball in Augusta, GA. It was during DiMeglio's season in Auburn, NY, that he met his wife, the former Lucille Derbini. In fact, he calls meeting his wife and winning the Little League World Series “the two best things” to happen to him during his baseball career.

Following his stint in pro baseball, DiMeglio became an electrician and has been with Bottone Electric in Norwalk since 1963. But even after his playing days were over, Ralph managed to stay close to the game he loved, as an assistant coach with the American Legion team for two seasons in the mid '60s. He also helped coach a girls softball team in the Norwalk Athletic Association for seven years.

Ralph and his wife have two daughters and five grandchildren.