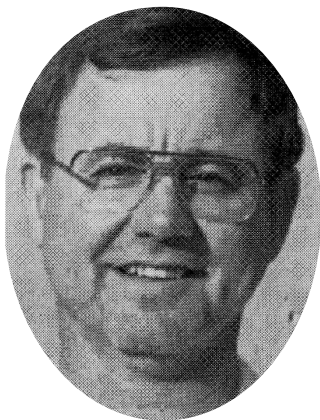


*Special Award
Rob Trifone/Ray Barry*



The Norwalk Old Timers Athletic Association periodically presents a "Special Award" in recognition of longtime friends and supporters of the local sports community. In the past, the award has recognized individuals as well as organizations whose help and support have contributed to the local athletic scene.



This year, however, for the first time ever, the Old Timers' Special Award honors a specific coaching accomplishment. What is also unprecedented is that this is the first year there is more than one recipient of the award.

Brien McMahon head football coach **Rob Trifone** and Norwalk High boys basketball coach **Ray Barry**, who both recently led their respective teams to a perfect season capped off with a state championship, are this year's dual honorees.

Trifone led the Senators to a 12-0 record in 1994 and the Class MM state championship, while Barry guided the Bears to a 28-0 mark last season and the 1995-'96 Class LL state crown. The Norwalk Old Timers salute both local coaches tonight with a special award for their special season.

Just how special were those two teams? Just consider McMahon's '94 gridders were the first unbeaten, untied high school football team in city history, while Norwalk's Dream Team last season became only the second boys' basketball team in state history to go 28-0.

In addition, those two state title seasons were part of back-to-back FCIAC championships both Barry and Trifone led their teams to. In 1994-'95, a mostly underclassmen NHS squad surprised a lot of people by capturing the FCIAC title. When the Bears repeated last season, it marked the seventh time Barry has led the Green and White to the league crown.

Meanwhile, the year after he won the state title in football, Trifone took a McMahon team that lost 19 of 22 starters and was supposed to be 'rebuilding' and led the Senators to a surprising second consecutive FCIAC championship. Now in his 10th year as a head coach at BMHS, Trifone entered this season with a 61-29-1 career record.

Winning state championships is nothing new to either one of tonight's recipients. Barry, who has a 352-111 career mark in basketball, also won the LL state title in 1982. And in 20 years as girls' softball coach at Norwalk, Barry has won another 361 contests, 10 FCIAC crowns, and led the Lady Bears to state championships in 1980 and 1991.

Meanwhile, Trifone experienced another state title in the sport of indoor track when he and fellow co-coach Joe Madaffari guided the Senators to the 1985-'86 Class M championships.