

Art Reale



Art Reale made his mark in local sports in not one, but two towns, and as both an athlete and administrator.

Norwalkers probably best remember him as the longtime commissioner of the successful Norwalk Industrial Basketball League from 1966 to 1987. For 21 years, he also coordinated all the sports programs at Nash Engineering, where he worked in personnel, such as softball, basketball, volleyball, and bowling leagues, as well as all in-house sports programs like bocci, horseshoes, volleyball, golf, etc.

But Art Reale was well known in area sports circles long before this. The 73 year old Westport resident grew up in Saugatuck and attended Staples High School, where he was a three-year starter in football, basketball, and baseball, and captained all three sports his senior year.

In football, he was a halfback his first two years before switching to quarterback his senior year, and was a key member of the 1938 SHS state championship football team. He was also a standout guard in basketball and shortstop in baseball.

Reale continued his baseball career with the Wilton Farmers Athletic Club in 1938 and '39, and then played three more years with the Westport Chevies from 1940-'42. Among his teammates back then were John Buschbaum, Joe Kulsar, Red Mills, Frank Impy, and Bob Edge with the Farmers; and Al Scully, Neil Duffy, Joe Nistico, and Skau brothers with the Chevies.

He would later play baseball in Norwalk with the Connecticut Potato Chips, helping them win the city championship with teammates such as Phil Matregrano, Tommy Scarso, and Joe Santo. Reale also played with the Colonials in town, teaming up with the likes of Tony Reda, Matregrano, and the Fumo brothers.

But it was in the sport of softball where Reale received the most accolades. A standout third baseman, he played third base for two seasons with the Westport All-Stars, helping them win the New England crown, and then four more seasons with the Arrows. This led to a spot on the Raybestos Cardinals' original team in 1948 as Reale also helped them win the New England championship.

He would go on to be inducted to the State of Connecticut Fast Pitch Softball Hall of Fame in 1971 as a third baseman, along with his former teammate, pitcher John "Cannonball" Baker. In fact, Reale was on the State Softball Hall of Fame Committee for 20 years.

Reale is married to the former Eugenia Starzyk and they have two daughters and three grandchildren. Since his retirement, Reale has spent the last six years working as an animal control officer with the Westport Police Department. In addition, he's been involved with the United Fund of Norwalk as well as the Norwalk Management Association and Committee for 16 years.

But Art Reale still keeps his hands in sports as he enjoys playing golf at Longshore with former teammates, such as Cannonball Baker.