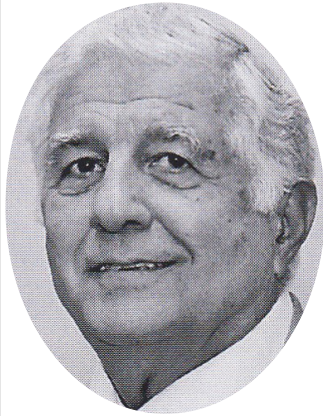


Bobby Santo



Growing up, football was more than just a sport for **Bobby Santo**. It was his life. From the time he was 12 years old and first started playing organized football to his days at Boston College, Santo played and excelled at every level.

A lifelong resident of Norwalk who grew up in the Strawberry Hill area of town, Santo attended local schools at Fitch, Roger Ludlowe Jr. High, and Norwalk High. It wasn't long before a stellar career on the gridiron was born.

Santo began playing football in 1941 as a 12-year-old guard on the Strawberry Hill A.C. team where he played with Al Palumbo, Babe and Abbie Spinola, and the Manzi brothers.

After a second season with the Billies, Santo went on to play the next three years with the Norwalk High School football team. In fact, he started on the offensive line as guard as a 14-year-old sophomore on the 1943 Green &

White team.

It was during the 1945 season, however, that Santo really made his mark in high school circles. The senior captain and standout two-way lineman was an all-conference tackle on the NHS team that won the Fairfield County League championship with a memorable 19-18 win over Stamford in which Santo played a key role. A leader on and off the field, Santo was also elected president of the student council his senior year.

Santo continued his football exploits the following season as a tackle on the 1946 St. Basil Prep team in Stamford, which played some of the top football teams in New York such as Fordham Prep, Cardinal Hayes, Brooklyn Prep, and Seton Hall. Santo's play caught the attention of several colleges, which recruited him, and he received a four-year scholarship to Boston College.

He played the 1947 and '48 seasons with BC before an injury cut his collegiate career short, but not before he had a chance to play with Ernie Staubner, who would later become a line coach with the Dallas Cowboys, and against future football Hall of Famer Art Donovan.

Even after his playing days were over, Santo was still hanging around football fields. He coached Pop Warner Football in upstate Simsbury in 1972 and '73, and also umpired baseball and softball during that time in Norwalk and Simsbury.

Married to the former Millie DeFlorio, the 70-year-old Santo has five daughters, one son, and 13 grandchildren. Besides his career in football, Santo enjoyed a successful career as an insurance salesman and district sales manager who worked in Norwalk, Hartford, New York City, and Florida. Now retired, he spends his free time fishing, gardening, playing tennis, and bowling.