

Eric Lund



Eric Lund left this world far too soon, passing away in 1972 at the age of 22 after an epic 4½ year battle with leukemia. But not before he made an indelible mark on the Brien McMahon and University of Connecticut soccer programs.

The Rowayton native was a junior starting fullback on the 1965 state champion McMahon soccer team, the first state title in any sport by the five-year-old high school. Then, as a senior, Lund helped the Senators capture the 1966 FCIAC crown.

Shortly after enrolling at UConn in the fall of '67, however, a 17-year-old Eric Lund was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. But that didn't stop him from still performing on the soccer field while receiving treatment.

In fact, Lund was named All-New England in 1970, while in '71 he was named captain of the Huskies. His goal was to make All-American as a senior, while another goal was to run the Boston Marathon. Lund felt if he kept his body in shape, he could beat the disease and was often seen running on the McMahon track between hospital visits.

But on Feb. 22, 1972, Eric Lund passed away at the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. Lund's determination and fighting spirit touched many, including the doctors who gave him no more than two years to live.

In his memory, the UConn soccer program created the Eric S. Lund Award, which honors the "Most Improved Player who best exemplifies the tremendous desire to excel, enthusiasm, and courage of Eric Lund."

In 1974, his mother, Doris Lund, wrote of her son's inspirational story in a bestselling book *Eric*, now translated in over 20 languages around the world and made into a movie.