

Alan Staack



You can't win championships without role players, and **Alan Staack** may have been the ultimate role player on the 1948 state championship Norwalk High School football team.

Staack played a small but very important role for the Green and White during that magical 7–0–1 season, serving as the backup quarterback behind Gene Callahan and as the holder on extra points for place kicker Lee Seymour.

But whether it was being on the field or watching from the sidelines, Staack learned some valuable lessons of life from coaches Ike Kern, Bob Hunt, and Herb Gentry during his two seasons on the NHS gridiron, lessons that have stayed with him 53 years later.

"It was just an honor to be on that team," the 70-year-old Staack said recently. "Even though I was a reserve, the devotion you put in and the discipline you learned was incredible. You learned so much playing on a team like that.

"I like to tell people that all the algebra you learn in the classroom you forget," the 1949 graduate added. "But the things you learned playing on that football team stayed with you forever. It taught me a lot about life."

Even today, Staack has remained close friends with former teammates Walt Court and Hank Gregory, as well as friends with many other members of that team.

Born in 1931 in Norwalk and raised in the Winnipauk section of town, Staack also played softball growing up and was a pitcher on the Winnipauk softball team from 1945–'50. In fact, he was a contemporary of Hall of Fame softball pitcher Rocky Marucci of Norwalk.

After his Norwalk High days, Staack continued his football career with the Strawberry Hill Athletic Club in 1950 for a team coached by Al Palumbo.

It was also in 1950 that Staack, a student at the University of Connecticut at the time, joined the Air Force. But that didn't stop him from still participating in sports as a member of the Air Force softball team while he was stationed in Salem, AL, from 1950–'52, and in Wiesbaden, Germany from 1952–'54. During that time, Staack played in several tournaments in England, France, and other parts of Europe.

Staack went on to become a builder and real estate developer with his family's business, Charles Staack & Sons, and served on the board of directors for First Federal Savings Bank of Norwalk, Summit Bank, and Norwalk Savings Society, in addition to the advisory board at People's Bank. He was also on the Central Catholic High School Advisory Committee and is a member of the Norwalk Catholic Club.

Now retired, Staack has managed to remain close to sports as an avid golfer and has been a member of the Shorehaven Golf Club for the past 38 years. He has also served on the board of directors at Shorehaven as well as at Oak Hills for two terms. Staack also belongs to the Junior–Senior Golfing Society of Connecticut, and he's a member of Jonathan's Landing Golf Club in Jupiter, FL, where he spends a couple of months every winter.

Married to the former Shirley Smith, the Staacks have one daughter, Robin, who has run both the Boston Marathon and New York Marathon twice, no doubt inheriting some of her father's athletic genes.