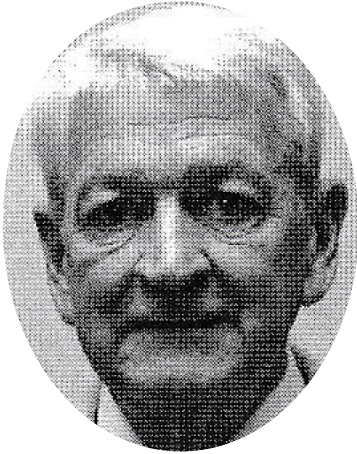


## Jack Weisheit



There was a time when you couldn't say the name **Jack Weisheit** without putting the word "Coach" in front of it.

Coach Jack Weisheit was a fixture on local ball fields during most of the 1970s and '80s, coaching at nearly every level, and sometimes even two teams at once.

Born in West Hartford in 1938, Weisheit grew up in Rowayton and attended Rowayton Elementary School, Ben Franklin Junior High, and Norwalk High School. He earned a reputation as a fine-fielding second baseman playing with several Norwalk teams during the 1950s, including the Rowayton Athletic Club, the West Norwalk Aces, and the Blue Ribbons. Even while in the service, Weisheit continued to play baseball with the Navy's Fasron team.

Weisheit's athletic ability wasn't restricted to just baseball, however. He also played for the Norwalk High ice hockey team under Hall of Fame coach Tom Scarso, and could always be found playing hockey at local ponds and ice rinks throughout Fairfield County.

But it was well after his own playing days on the ice and the diamond were over that Weisheit made his biggest impact on the local sports scene. He began coaching his own two sons, John and Jim, in the Norwalk International Little League.

With that, a long and successful baseball coaching career was born as Weisheit continued up the ladder with stints in both the Norwalk Junior Babe Ruth and Senior Babe Ruth leagues.

But perhaps Weisheit's best coaching job took place in the early 1980s after both his kids were done playing and he agreed to take over as manager of a struggling Norwalk American Legion baseball program. The first thing he did was recruit Charles "Bud" Smith and the late Fred Belinsky as assistant coaches, and together the three of them breathed new life into the local team.

Weisheit also convinced the best 16 to 19 year old players in Norwalk to play Legion ball. One of the young players he recruited was a rising star named Maurice Vaughn, the future American League MVP.

Under Weisheit's leadership, Norwalk's once-proud Post 12 team returned to its winning ways on the field. And in short time, the local Legion became one of the more competitive and successful teams in lower Fairfield County again.

"The Legion team was floundering back then," recalled Old Timers committee member Ferd Gottscham, who's also on the American Legion sports committee. "But Jack grabbed a hold of it, formed a good committee, and got the program back on track and went to the playoffs a couple of times."

By the time Weisheit stepped down as coach, the foundation for future championship Legion teams had been laid down. Weisheit still lists his years as manager of the Norwalk Legion team and the turnaround he directed as his greatest accomplishment in sports.

Weisheit's contributions to local athletics went well beyond the coaching lines, however, and included more than just baseball. In fact, he was a three-sport administrator, serving as vice president of the Norwalk Junior Babe Ruth League, commissioner of Norwalk Athletic Association Pop Warner Football program, and one of the founders of the NAA Junior Basketball League as well as an original coach with the SECON team.

In addition, he was a member of the Norwalk AA Executive Committee, and an original member of the organization's scholarship committee.

Weisheit and his wife, the former Mercedes Gutierrez, have one grandchild. Now 64, Weisheit is currently vice president of Sutherland Excavating Contractors, Inc., and he is still an active member of the American Legion Post 12 where he is a trustee and chairman of the athletic committee.

The only thing missing is the word "Coach" in front of his name.