

Paul Krasnavage



Paul Krasnavage managed to leave an indelible mark on sports in the city of Norwalk as an athlete and later as a coach.

Born in Hartford, Krasnavage got his start in competitive sports in the Glastonbury Pop Warner Football program in 1961 as a member of the Tomahawks, who were coached by his father, John Krasnavage.

Most of Paul's youth sports experience throughout the 1960s, however, took place after he moved to Norwalk. He played baseball in the Cranbury League in 1964 and '65, played Pop Warner Football for the Norwalk Ramblers in 1965 and for the West Rocks Junior High Trojans in the Norwalk Recreation Football League in 1966 and '67, and threw the shot put on the West Rocks track and field team in 1968.

But Paul Krasnavage really began to make a name for himself when he arrived at Norwalk High School in the fall of 1968. He was a defensive end as a sophomore, but then switched over to defensive tackle and linebacker as a junior and senior and was named to the 1969 All-FCIAC East team and the 1970 All-FCIAC Defensive First-Team. He was also named to The Norwalk Hour's first All-City Football Team in 1970.

In fact, as a senior Krasnavage set a new Norwalk High School record for the most unassisted tackles in a season, and he was also named a Scholar/Athlete.

After graduating in 1971, Krasnavage played defensive tackle at Rutgers University, where he was a three-year letterman, was named All-East, and was the 1974 recipient of the Dave Bender Rush Lineman Award. He was also named an NCAA Scholar/Athlete.

After his playing days, it didn't take Krasnavage long to get into coaching. His first stop was at Messalonskee High School in Oakland, Maine, where he was an assistant coach his first season on the 1975 Class C state championship team. He took over as head football coach the following year and spent three seasons in that role. He was also the head track coach from 1975-79.

In 1979, Krasnavage joined the coaching staff at Wilmington College in Ohio, where he was an assistant coach for linebackers and offensive linemen. During his three seasons at Wilmington, the Quakers reached the 1980 NAIA national championship game and finished runner-up. While there, he also earned his Master's degree at Ohio State University in 1981.

Krasnavage returned to Rutgers in 1982 as a Graduate Assistant on the defensive line, and in 1984 went to Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y., where he was the defensive coordinator and linebackers coach.

He finally returned to Norwalk High School in 1986 to become head football coach of the Bears, who had not produced a winning season in football in 19 years and had won only 37 games in the previous 13 seasons.

By his third season, Krasnavage had transformed the Bears into winners, going 7-3 in 1988 for the program's best record since 1967. He followed that up with consecutive seasons of 7-1-1 in 1989 and 7-2 in 1990 to cap one of the best three-year stretches - 21-6-1 - in NHS football history.

Krasnavage also served as an assistant track coach at NHS from 1986-90, and he was even the Bears' head wrestling coach in 1987 despite no previous experience in the sport. But with no coach, the NHS wrestling program was on brink of being dropped and Krasnavage stepped up and took the job to keep the program afloat until a new coach was found the following year.

After five years as football coach, Krasnavage stepped down from all his coaching duties following the 1990 football season and shortly after became involved with administration in the Norwalk School System. He served as director of Athletics, Physical Education and Health before becoming principal at Tracey Elementary School, his current position.

But Krasnavage continued to be involved in coaching through his son, Drew, and coached him in Norwalk Junior Soccer, Cranbury Baseball, Norwalk Junior Lacrosse and Biddy Basketball. He also coached in the Norwalk Pop Warner Football program from 2000-05, serving as head coach of the Norwalk Jaguars for two years and as an assistant coach with the Bucs, Raiders and Packers.

He also returned to the sidelines at Norwalk High School in 2006 as a volunteer part-time assistant football coach for four seasons, the last three with Drew as the starting quarterback. He is now a sophomore tight end at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa.

Paul Krasnavage and his wife Gina reside in Norwalk.