

Pete Tucci



Championship teams seemed to follow Pete Tucci throughout his playing and coaching career.

Not at the very beginning of his athletic career, however. In fact, the very first team Tucci played on as a nine-year-old in 1958, Rowayton Fuel, went 1-17. But as a 10, 11 and then 12 year-old, the shortstop/second baseman helped Fuel win three straight Rowayton Little League championships.

Tucci won two more championships in 1962 and '63 in the Norwalk Pony League playing shortstop for Rip Van Winkle, coached by his uncle, Ralph Tucci. The following summer Tucci moved up to the Babe Ruth League and helped lead 7-Up to the 1964 crown, the sixth straight summer his team won a league crown.

A graduate of St. Joseph's Parochial School in Norwalk, Tucci also played baseball at Fairfield Prep High School (Class of 1966), while during the summers of 1965 and '66 he played shortstop and second base for the Norwalk American Legion and legendary coach Phil 'The Skipper' Matregrano.

When his baseball playing days were over, Tucci switched to softball and played for such local powerhouses as Sonny's, Lawrence's Tigers, the Laurels and Smitty's. He also began playing a new position: Pitching, and he helped hurl his teams to two city championships and four national tournament appearances.

In addition, Tucci pitched and played first and second base for Burndy Corporation from 1973-85, reaching the city finals all 13 years while winning eight championships.

Just about the same time Tucci's softball days were winding down in the late 1980s, he began his successful coaching career. He was the head coach of the final two football teams at Central Catholic High School in the fall of 1988 and '89, as well as the Cavaliers' head baseball coach for part of the 1988 season and all of 1989 and '90.

Under Tucci, the Central Catholic baseball team won the Western Connecticut Conference Wild Division championship in each of the school's last two years. His 1989 squad went 14-7 and reached the Class S state quarterfinals, while the 1990 Cavaliers, the last baseball team in CCHS history, finished 17-6 and advanced to the state semifinals.

Tucci also coached the local American Legion baseball team from 1989-92, leading Post 12 to the South Division title all four years, and in 1992 its first Zone IV championship in over two decades.

After Central Catholic closed its doors, Tucci joined the athletic department at Norwalk High School, serving as an assistant coach with the Bears' football team for eight seasons, running the defense from 1990-97.

Then in the spring of 1991, Tucci was named the new head coach of the NHS baseball team. He took over a team that went only 3-17 the previous season, and led the Bears to a 9-11 mark his first season, just missing the state tournament.

That would be the only time Tucci's Norwalk High baseball teams would miss the postseason. In his second season, he led the 1992 Bears to an impressive 18-7 record, which tied a school record for most wins in a season. Norwalk matched another school record that season by reaching the state semifinals.

But the Bears broke both records the following year as they went 25-1 and advanced all the way to the 1993 Class LL state championship game. In fact, the Norwalkers won their first 25 games before losing in the state finals to Cheshire in a battle of unbeaten teams. NHS also became the first team in FCIAC baseball history to finish 20-0 in the regular season. The Bears then swept two more games to capture the program's second FCIAC championship.

Tucci would lead Norwalk High back to the state finals and another runner-up finish in 1995, losing to East Hartford 2-0, while in 1996 the Bears would win a second FCIAC crown under him. Tucci would coach the Bears for a total of nine years, winning five division titles, before retiring following the 1999 season with a 162-59 record. Combined with the 37-20 mark he compiled in his two-plus seasons at Central Catholic, Tucci accumulated 199 career victories.

In 1998, he added the title of head football coach to his Norwalk High duties and in his first season led the Bears to a school record nine wins, the program's first Western Division title as well as its first appearance in the FCIAC championship game and CIAC state playoffs. They were FCIAC runner-up and lost to eventual state champion Southington in the Class LL semifinals to finish 9-3 overall.

As a result, Tucci holds the distinction of the most victories in a single season by a Norwalk High football and baseball coach. He led the Bears to an 8-2 mark in his second season as football coach in 1999, and is currently in his 10th season as head coach at NHS, and 21st season overall coaching high school football.

What's more, he came out retirement in 2004 to re-join the Norwalk High baseball program as an assistant coach, and was on the bench this past spring when the Bears won the 2007 FCIAC championship.

Yes, championship teams seemed to follow Pete Tucci around.

But perhaps the statistic he's most proud of is having coached more than 200 student-athletes the last two decades who went on to play sports in college, including five who played professional baseball.

One of them was his own son, Pete Tucci Jr., while his daughters Carla and Trina also played sports at Central Catholic and Norwalk High. Tucci and his wife, the former Theresa DiMeglio, reside in Norwalk and have seven grandchildren.

A 1970 graduate of Fairfield University, Tucci was a CPA in New York City and later director of finance for Burndy Corporation, while for the past 20 years he has run his own business, Pete Tucci Tax Services, out of Norwalk. He has also served as treasurer for both the Norwalk United Way and the Laurel Athletic Club, and has been active on committees at St. Joseph's Church.