

Russ Dennis



Of all the great football players who have graced the gridiron over the years from the city of Norwalk – and there have been many – Russell Dennis may have had the best pair of hands out of all of them.

During the late 1940s and early to mid '50s, Dennis was an outstanding end for Norwalk High School and then the University of Maryland, leaving his mark at both schools as a top receiver.

Born in Norwalk and raised in East

Norwalk, Dennis played football at Norwalk High during the 1948, '49 and '50 seasons under head coach Ike Kern. As a senior in the fall of 1950, Dennis earned All-State and High School All-America honors for the Green and White, and was offered as many as 13 college scholarships.

He finally decided on the University of Maryland, where he continued to excel as a standout end for the Terrapins from 1951-54. As a senior, Dennis was named to the All-Conference second team, the New York Daily News All-America team, and he received the team's Best Offensive Lineman Award.

Dennis had many big days on the football field for both Norwalk High School and Maryland. In fact, when asked to pick his most memorable feat in sports, he listed one from each school: his 70-yard touchdown catch in Norwalk's 1950 Thanksgiving Day game against Danbury, and his 50-yard TD reception for Maryland against the University of Mississippi in 1954.

He was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in 1956, but never made it to training camp because he was also drafted into the U.S. Army. That didn't stop from playing football, however, and he starred as an end for his team in Fort Dix in 1957 and '58, making the All-Army team.

But football wasn't the only sport Dennis played and excelled in. At Norwalk High, he played center on the basketball team and first base for the baseball team. He also played both sports at Roger Ludlowe Junior High School from 1946-48, leading the basketball team in scoring and the baseball team in hitting with a .452 average.

Now living in Edgewater, Maryland, Dennis played recreation volleyball from 1967-89, and the father of two daughters also coached girls softball.

Dennis still closely follows the University of Maryland in football as a member of the school's Terrapin Club and Gridiron Club. In fact, he served as an "Honorary Co-Captain" for Maryland's opening game this season.

It wasn't the first time Dennis was honored by one of his alma maters. In 1956, the Norwalk High School Fathers Club presented him with its Alumnus of the Year Award.

Dennis has also been very active in his community, serving as vice president of the Annapolis Roads Property Owners Association.

Now retired, Dennis, who turned 72 on Nov. 2, worked as a recruiter and financial manager for the National Security Agency. He and his wife, the former Joan Heilman, have two daughters and two grandchildren.