

Paul Jacoby



When it comes to the sport of softball, the city of Norwalk has had a proud and tradition-rich history very few towns can match.

With that in mind, any conversation about that storied history has to include the name Paul Jacoby.

The man known to almost everyone as ‘Jake’ has been a fixture on the Norwalk softball scene for more than four decades. He began playing in the early 1970s and didn’t stop until just a few years ago. And in between he was always among the elite players in the city. In fact, in a 1981 article in *The Hour* newspaper, Jacoby was selected as one of “The 10 Best Softball Players” in the city of Norwalk according to a panel of local softball officials.

Of course, that shouldn’t have come as a surprise. ‘Jake’ was always comfortable around diamonds. Before he got the softball bug, Jacoby was a standout baseball player at Norwalk High School. A 1972 graduate, the third baseman/pitcher played three years of varsity baseball for the Bears, serving as a co-captain his final two seasons while being selected to *The Hour’s* first-ever All-City baseball team in 1971. He also played two years of baseball at Eastern Connecticut State University and four summers with the Norwalk American

Legion Post 12 team.

It was while he was playing baseball, at the age of 16 right after his junior year at NHS, that Jacoby began playing softball in the Norwalk Rec League with Richter’s All-Stars. Even at Eastern Connecticut he played intramural softball, losing only one game in four years. That came in the championship game his freshman year, after which his team went undefeated and won the title the next three seasons.

Back in Norwalk, Jacoby played with Richter’s for two seasons before joining Dry Dock Café in 1973 and eventually Italia Restaurant. He helped Italia win a city championship, the first of several city crowns Jacoby would win with different teams. Italia also played in the Norwalk Independent League and Jacoby once set a new Indy League record with 16 straight hits.

Jacoby often played for more than one team in a season and from 1975–86 he played for perennial power Singewald Buick, who later became the Aces. And from 1985–87 he played for Sonny’s, another perennial powerhouse, which won the Norwalk Independent League three straight years as well as a state championship in 1986.

From 1987–89, Jacoby hooked up with the UPS softball team and helped them capture the regional championship all three years while making the all-tournament team. He also played 13 seasons with the newly named Norwalk Aces from 1988–2000, winning the Sunday Morning League twice, the Friday Night League once, and the overall city championship once.

In 2001, Jacoby played for Custom Phone, a team he would later sponsor and become player/coach of when it became known as Jacoby Outdoor Maintenance. In 2004, the same year he turned 50, Jacoby also played for a team called ‘4 Corners,’ which won the Over-40 Triple Crown national championship in St. Augustine, Fla.

In 2008, his Jacoby Outdoor Maintenance team won the first-ever wood bat state championship. That was fitting because Jacoby, a strong advocate of wooden bats, was the driving force behind starting a wood bat softball league in Norwalk. When he approached the Recreation Department with the idea, he was told if he could find eight teams that wanted to play, the city would form a league. Jacoby came up with 10 teams. The popular league, now known as the ‘Mimi’ Lawrence Wednesday Night Wood Bat Softball League, has since grown to 11 teams.

Jacoby continued to play and coach Jacoby Outdoor Maintenance until 2009 when he began playing in the Norwalk Sunday Morning Old Timers League. Jacoby, who recently celebrated his 60th birthday, finally hung up his spikes three years ago.

Besides being a player, coach and sponsor, Jacoby has been involved in softball on other levels. Since 1980, he’s been a softball umpire, while for nine years (2002–10) he coached high school girls softball at Brien McMahon, the first seven as an assistant under Ed Faulkner and the last two as head coach of the Senators.

While baseball and softball were always his calling cards, Jacoby also played four years in the highly competitive Inter-City Touch Football League with the Darien Sportsmen from 1979–82, winning the league championship with them in 1981.

Also an outstanding bowler, he rolled a perfect 300 game in March of 2006.

Born in Newark, N.J., Jacoby moved to Norwalk at an early age and has lived here ever since.