

## *Patti Richmond*



**P**ATTI RICHMOND never met a sport she didn't like. In her more than five decades as an athlete and coach, Richmond has been involved in eight different sports and had a profound impact in each of them.

That includes the four sports she excelled in during her four years at Norwalk High School, where she earned the nickname "Mighty Mite" as a tribute to her 4-foot-11 stature. But despite her diminutive size, the talented Richmond always seemed to come up big in the most critical moments of a game.

That was never more true than in March of 1975 when she helped lead the Lady Bears to the first of their record eight FCIAC championships in girls basketball with a thrilling 49–42 overtime win against defending state champion Trumbull. In fact, it was the very first FCIAC championship game ever played and matched the West Division champion Norwalkers against East Division winner Trumbull, which handed the Bears one of their two regular-season losses. It was Richmond, a junior guard, who took over the game in the closing minutes. She scored the Bears' final four points of regulation from the free throw line to send the game into overtime, and then converted two more clutch foul shots a minute into the extra session to put Norwalk on top for good. On the Bears' next possession, Richmond nailed a long corner jumper before caning another two free throws with 37 seconds left and adding a fast break layup for good measure to seal the victory. She finished with 14 points as she scored 12 of Norwalk's final 15 points, including eight of her team's 11 points in OT. The Bears, who also won the West Division title, finished 16–3 that season.

As one of only two returning starters her senior year, Richmond averaged 12.2 points a game and was selected as a High School All-American.

But basketball wasn't the only sport Richmond excelled at in high school. In the fall, she was a standout player on the field hockey team, which reached the 1975 state quarterfinals. The Bears were eliminated by an unbeaten Staples squad, which coming into that game had not been scored upon all season. But Richmond, a senior, became the first—and only—player that season to score on goalie Lisa Brummell, who today is a part owner of the WNBA Seattle Storm. Staples won the game 4–1, but Richmond spoiled Brummell's perfect season. In fact, of the 18 goals NHS scored that season, Richmond had 10 of them.

Richmond, a three-sport captain, was also a key player on the first two Norwalk High softball teams in 1975 and '76. As a junior she batted .368 with 25 stolen bases while being named First-Team All-FCIAC. Before softball became an official sport at NHS, Richmond ran track as a freshman and sophomore and was a member of the 440 relay team, which set a new school record.

Following graduation, Richmond took her athletic talents to Springfield College where she majored in physical education and played field hockey her first two years. She also took up a new sport, women's lacrosse, which she played all four years.

Richmond's teaching career included six years at an international school in Seoul Korea, where she began her coaching career with the school's girls tennis, volleyball, and basketball teams. Upon returning to the States, she made a career change and, while earning her Master's Degree in School Counseling at the University of Bridgeport in the mid-1980s, Richmond did

an internship at Brien McMahon and coached the Senators' field hockey team for two seasons.

Now a guidance counselor at Hampshire Regional High School in Westhampton, MA, Richmond currently coaches a local 10-and-under girls softball team in Easthampton, MA. She hasn't lost her competitive fire as an athlete, either, becoming an avid golfer while also playing tennis in a USTA league.