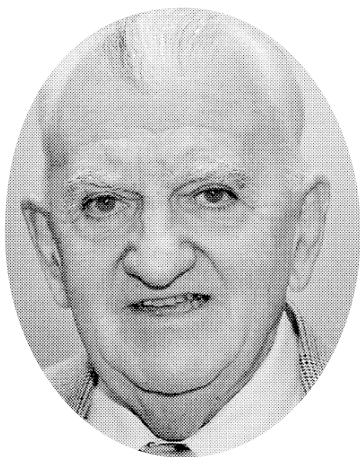


## Ed McSally



**E**d McSally has been an integral part of the sports scene in the city of Norwalk — as much off the playing field as on it — for more than a half century.

Growing up in the Spring Hill section of town, McSally began his playing career in 1948 as a backup catcher on the Connecticut Potato Chips baseball team. McSally backed up Jack White while other teammates included Mickey Russell, Mickey Connolly, Harp Ireland, Jay and Bob Callahan, Lou Bottone, Bill O'Malley, Tiff Gaynor, Ferd Gottscham, Arnie Evans, and Burt Jones.

When he wasn't playing baseball, McSally was an all-start second baseman in fast pitch softball with Lou Tarlov's Clothier.

Then in the 1950s, McSally formed the Hi-Ho Restaurant basketball team in the Norwalk City League and served as player-coach, leading the team to two undefeated seasons and the city championship. Jack Hanzlik, Joe Lametta, Jack Herman, Dan Deering, Bob and Gene Callahan, Bob "Rivets" Miller, Earl Stabell, and O'Malley were among the players on the team.

Also during the 1950s, McSally coached the O'Brien Emeralds in the competitive County League while playing approximately 40 games a year around the state with players such as Bob Rudner, Bill Rogowski, Dick Osborn, Joe Lametta, Bill Zakhar, Harry O'Brien, and O'Malley.

McSally also found time to coach the St. Mary's CYO basketball team in 1958 and '59, while during the '60s he was a co-coach on the Home Oil Babe Ruth 13–15 year-old League team, which won a championship. That same season he joined forces with the legendary Johnny Buschbaum to coach the Brien McMahon 13–15 Babe Ruth League all-star team.

But McSally, a 1944 Norwalk High School graduate and a 1950 UConn alum, would make an even bigger impact in athletics off the field. One of his most notable achievements came in 1947 when he helped reorganize the Spring Hill Tigers football team, obtaining a personal loan of \$2,000 from the late Abe Tarlov to refurbish the team and then repaid the loan out of the gate receipts.

Then in 1958, after the television craze killed the Sunday City Football League, McSally was one of the principle forces behind the formation of the Norwalk Athletic Association, which introduced the city to Pop Warner Football, which still exists today.

McSally's work was far from over, however. He helped change the sports landscape in Norwalk even further when he arranged and started the petitions to the Mayor's office and the Common Council urging them to buy land for a city municipal golf course. And it was through McSally's tireless efforts and perseverance that the Oak Hills Golf Course, Norwalk's only public course, became a reality.

McSally even served on the Parks & Recreation Commission when the city purchased the land in West Norwalk, and afterwards was asked to also serve on the Mayor's Advisory Committee. For the next seven years, he was a member of the Oak Hills Board of Governors while the golf course was being built and eventually opened in 1968.

For all he's done in local sports, McSally still considers his hard work that led to the opening of the Oak Hills Golf Course his greatest sports accomplishment and contribution.

"The course is alive and thriving now after 32 years, and is one of Norwalk's shining stars," he says.

McSally was also very active in the Norwalk High School Fathers Club before his own kids had even started school, and he organized the first Fathers Club Pancake Breakfast, a tradition that continued for years.

An avid fan of the sports teams at both local high schools who still attends many city sporting events, McSally has often headed dinner committees honoring state championship teams from the city.

And tonight will not be the first time McSally will be honored for his contributions to local sports. He is also a past recipient of the Norwalk Jewish Center Sports Award.

McSally and his wife Dorothy still reside in Norwalk, and the 74-year-old father of four and grandfather of two still plays golf four or five times a week, and owns three holes in one — two at Shorehaven and one at Oak Hills.

"I was shooting for the green, not the cup. They just went in," he said. "Irish Luck."