

Phil Matregrano *“Skipper”*



The ‘Skipper’ was a part of Norwalk baseball lore for more than six decades.

Phil ‘Skipper’ Matregrano passed away on April 11, 2015 at the age of 90, but he left behind a lifetime of baseball memories as a player in the 1940s and a coach for many years.

A good-hitting third baseman who played with the Yankees’ Class B minor league team in 1946, Matregrano began coaching at a young age. In fact, he was a player-coach for Norwalk Tire when it won the 1948 city championship and Matregrano was voted team MVP.

He was a player-coach with the Pastimes, the Norwalk St. John’s, YPHA, the Yankee Clippers and Wilton AC. No wonder he was known as the ‘Skipper.’

But he acquired the nickname long before that. “When I was 14 or 15, I played baseball for the Jefferson School playground in the summer, but the guy in charge told me he didn’t know anything about baseball,” Matregrano explained in a 2003 interview. “So I coached the team. I guess that’s where it all started.”

He coached three generations of players, including some pretty good American Legion teams in the 1960s and a powerhouse NEON team in the late ‘70s.

“One year we played in the Stamford Twilight League, the Bridgeport City League and the Connecticut Collegiate League, and won all three. We went something like 74-4 that year.”

Matregrano also coached on the high school level. From 1977-81 he was the head baseball coach at Central Catholic, while from 1989-93 he served as an assistant at Brien McMahon under Joe Madaffari, his former American Legion player. Current coaches Pete Tucci of NHS and McMahon’s John Cross also played for the Skipper.

“He made everyone who worked with him better on and off the field,” Madaffari said.