

Ladislau Rastocky



Ladislau Rastocky is living proof that you don't necessarily have to play high school sports to be a terrific athlete.

In fact, many regard "Lotso" Rastocky as perhaps the best athlete from Norwalk who never played high school sports.

Born in 1926 in Brezo, Czechoslovakia, Rastocky moved to Norwalk as a youngster and attended Lincoln Elementary School, Ben Franklin Jr. High, and Norwalk High School, but did not compete in interscholastic athletics.

He was certainly good enough, but one of the primary reasons Rastocky didn't play was because in 1944 he joined the Navy at the age of 17.

"Lotso was probably one of the best all-around athletes Norwalk ever had," Old Timers president Art Bobrowsky, who grew up in the same era, said, "He would've been all-anything if he had ever played in high school."

But when he returned home from the service in 1947, Rastocky made up for lost time in a big way. Football was his best sport and during the late 1940s and early '50s, he played locally for Strawberry Hill, the Laurels, Pastimes, and Ship's All-Stars.

The hard nosed Rastocky played on both sides of the football as a receiver and defensive end, and he was also considered one of the best punters of his time.

The versatile Rastocky also enjoyed a stellar baseball career, playing third base for Corsairs, Strawberry Hill, and Norwalk Tire, consistently batting over .300 and helping all three teams win the city championship.

In between baseball and football seasons, Rastocky played basketball in the Senior Class A League for city champion Strawberry Hill, and for the Elks where he was a teammate of the great Bill Domalewski.

And if all that wasn't enough, Rastocky still found time to become a pretty good local bowler, once rolling a 280 game and a 660 series while maintaining a 182 average.

"He was just a great athlete," said Al Palumbo, a member of the Old Timers Committee who saw Rastocky play. "In football, Lotso was an outstanding receiver. He had what you called 'sneaky fast speed.' He was also a tough, hard nosed player on defense, and he was really a great punter in the class of Jack Staff and Walt Court.

"In basketball, Lotso was a pure shooter who was very deceptive and very rugged," Palumbo, who coached Rastocky on the Strawberry Hill basketball team, added. "And in baseball he always hit over .300 and was a sure glove. He was also one of the best bowlers around. Just a great, great all-around athlete."

Perhaps still making up for lost time, Rastocky stayed active in sports by umpiring Little League baseball for a number of years. He worked as a roofer for Scallon & Meyer Co., and later for the Main Roofing Co.

Rastocky and his wife the former Marie Fiore, have been married for 49 years and have four sons and eight grandchildren. Proving that the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree, one of Rastocky's sons, Steve, was a pretty good athlete in his own right and later played professional jai alai in Milford.