

Tim Wagner



It would be difficult to find another local athlete from any era who put together as dominating a senior year as **Tim Wagner** did at Brien McMahon High School nearly five decades ago.

The 1972 graduate was a three-sport athlete, a three-sport captain, and, best of all, an All-FCIAC First Team selection in all three of his sports — football, wrestling, and track and field. And to top it off, it was certainly no surprise that Tim Wagner was named the Senators' 1971-'72 *Career Athlete*.

Wagner's standard of excellence throughout his high school career in general and his senior year in particular not only made him one of the best all-around athletes to ever come out of McMahon, but also one of the best to ever call the city of Norwalk home.

And in the spring of 1972, Wagner was indeed considered the best high school athlete in Norwalk his senior year when he received the Norwalk Fire Fighters Association's annual *Outstanding High School Athlete of the City* award. The prestigious honor was a fitting exclamation mark to his outstanding scholastic career.

Wagner's athletic journey began not far from the Rowayton community where he grew up. He was a pitcher and catcher in the Rowayton Little League and Babe Ruth League, and played football for the Red Devils, Roton Middle School's team in the successful tackle football league the Norwalk Recreation Department sponsored back then.

His football career continued up the street at Brien McMahon and by the time he was a sophomore — exactly 50 years ago in the fall of 1969 — the six-foot, 210-pound Wagner was the Senators' starting offensive tackle. By the time he was a junior he was All-City and All-FCIAC on a McMahon team that went 8-1, at the time the best mark in school history. He closed out impressive high school career on the gridiron by again garnering All-City and All-Conference honors his senior year.

While a successful career in wrestling laid ahead, that was not Wagner's original winter sport at McMahon. Like many kids growing up in Rowayton, he played pond hockey in the winter and made the Senators' hockey team as a freshman.

But Wagner's high school hockey career lasted only one season, thanks to Jack Casagrande, his line coach in football, who talked him into coming out for the wrestling team. Wagner quickly took to his new sport and as a sophomore and junior he was the Senators' varsity wrestler in the unlimited weight class.

As a senior, Wagner dropped down a weight class to 187 pounds and went undefeated in the regular season as he helped McMahon win the 1972 FCIAC championship. He finished 18-1 overall and added another first-team all-conference honor to his resume.

When spring rolled around, Casagrande again recruited Wagner, this time for his track team. "Jack was like a father away from home," Wagner said. "He was just a great motivator. Even though he could be tough, he had a huge heart."

In track, Wagner threw the shot put, discus, and javelin, and while he excelled in all three, the javelin became his signature event. As a senior he won the state championship and his school record of 201 feet, 7 inches still stands 47 years later.

Wagner was recruited by Eastern Kentucky University and as a freshman he finished runner-up in the javelin at the Ohio Valley Conference Championships. He left EKV after one year and enrolled at Norwalk Community College, where he played for the NCC club football team. After one semester he joined the Navy and upon returning home rejoined the football team at NCC. Wagner was a key player on the 1976 NCC team that went undefeated in the regular season and reached the national semifinals.

Wagner even returned to his alma mater several years later as an assistant coach with the Senators' wrestling and track teams. He eventually moved to Florida to be closer to his parents and has lived in the Sunshine State for the past 15 years.