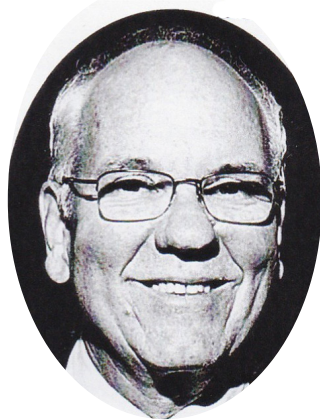


Don Foust



Don Foust never met a rebuilding project he didn't like. Or one he didn't turn around quickly.

Foust certainly displayed a knack for taking over as head coach of struggling girls basketball programs and leading them down successful roads.

Perhaps his best work was done at Norwalk High School, where he was named head coach of the girls basketball team in 1976-77 and inherited a team that won only five games the previous season.

It didn't take Foust long, however, to make an impact as he guided the Lady Bears to a 12-7 record his first season while going 18-4 and reaching the state semifinals his second year. They would be the first two of seven straight winning seasons for NHS under Foust, including 20 or more wins his last five years.

By his third season, the Bears had become one of the FCIAC's elite teams, going 15-0 in the conference, including a 53-52 win over defending league champ Stamford in their second to last game to capture the West Division title. Norwalk would lose a rematch to the Black Knights in the FCIAC title game, and then reach the Class LL state final where the top-seeded Bears came up short against Conard. Those would be the Bears' only two losses in a 23-2 campaign.

In 1979-80, Norwalk would again go 20-0 in the regular season and 21-2 overall, repeating as FCIAC runner-up. The third time proved to be a

charm in 1980-81 as the Bears captured the FCIAC championship and two weeks later added the Class LL state crown to cap off a 24-1 season.

Norwalk would repeat as FCIAC champs in 1982 and '83, while returning to the Class LL state final in '83, which would be Foust's last game at NHS. During his seven seasons, the Bears compiled a 143-22 record, including a record 58 straight FCIAC regular-season wins. He also led the Green and White to five straight FCIAC finals, three appearances in the Class LL state title game, and in 1982 was named the Daily News Coach of the Year.

Looking for a new challenge, Foust left NHS to become the new head coach of the University of Bridgeport women's basketball team in 1983-84. Again he faced a major rebuilding job, taking over a team that won only three games the year before. But two years later, Foust led the Purple Knights to 19 wins, and the next five seasons they would win 20 or more games and be ranked in the top 20 in the nation in Division II all five years.

Like Norwalk High, Foust would also coach seven seasons at UB and his 129-72 career record (121-50 after his first year) included a 25-5 mark in 1989 when he led the Lady Knights to its first NCAA tournament appearance and was named New England Collegiate Conference Coach of the Year.

He stepped down following the 1990 season and after 22 years – including eight as an assistant coach in boys basketball – Don Foust thought he was done coaching. That is until his wife, Natalie, talked him into coaching his own children's teams at St. Thomas School in Fairfield.

Foust did that for 10 years and in 1997 coached his daughter's fifth and sixth grade team to a perfect 28-0 season and the New England Diocesan championship. The following year they went 25-3 and won a second straight state title, while in 1999 they went 24-1 and were state runner-up.

When his final child was done playing, Foust, after 32 years, again thought he was done coaching. But then Notre Dame High School of Fairfield, where his daughter played, talked him into coming out of retirement. And again he took over a struggling program that had finished last the year before and led it to 17 wins and a division title his first season. The following year, the Lancers posted 21 wins and reached the state semifinals.

Finally, after 34 years, Don Foust was done coaching, but not before he won over 400 games, an achievement that earned him induction into the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2000.

Foust was also a part of two FCIAC championship teams in boys basketball as an assistant coach at Stamford Catholic in 1970 and at Norwalk High in 1972.

Born in White Plains and raised in Stamford, Foust is a 1963 graduate of Stamford Catholic High School, where he played four years of basketball and led the team in scoring as a senior while earning all-division honors.

He went on to play freshmen basketball at St. Bonaventure University and later played for Clairol in the Stamford Industrial League and for the Stamford YMCA Travel Team, where he scored over 20 points a game. He was also named MVP of the Collegiate Summer League at Scalzi Park in 1964.

A longtime teacher, guidance counselor and later a housemaster at Norwalk High, Foust retired in 2004 after 39 years in the education field. Even in retirement, however, he is still involved with the Norwalk Board of Education as director of the Norwalk Adult Education program, and owns and operates a limousine business. In 1998 he was ordained a Deacon in the Diocese of Bridgeport and was a Deacon at Blessed Sacrament Church in Bridgeport from '98 until 2009. Last year, he became an administrator at Holy Rosary Church, also in Bridgeport, and is the only deacon in the Bridgeport Diocese to also be the administrator of a parish.

Foust and his wife Natalie have four children and three grandchildren. Their daughter Jacqui Vines, Vice President and General Manager of Cox Communication in Louisiana, was recently honored by the Norwalk High School Alumni Association Wall of Honor.