

Frank Fay



Frank Fay played a total of six different sports at various times in his life. But perhaps his greatest contribution to local athletics came off the field.

The 67-year-old Fay was born in Brooklyn, NY, and, because of his father's job with the FBI, he moved around often and lived in different parts of the country early in his life. But during those early years, he spent summers in Rowayton and eventually moved here in 1941.

After attending Rowayton School and Ben Franklin Jr. High, Fay went to Norwalk High School and as a senior was a backup guard on offense and defense on the 1948 state championship football team. He was also a defenseman on the NHS ice hockey team as a junior.

One of Fay's best sports, however, was baseball and, along with two of his brothers, Tom and Joe, he helped form the Rowayton Boys. The team played in the City Recreation Intermediate League in 1947 and '48, the same season Fay pitched a no-hitter, before moving up to the Senior League in 1949 and '50.

Fay was also an infielder for the American Legion team during the summer of '49, but he says one of his proudest moments in sports was when the Rowayton Boys won the Fairfield County Baseball League championship.

Fay, a pitcher and shortstop on that 21-5 club, compiled a glossy 10-0 record, while also leading the team in batting.

Following his graduation from Norwalk High in 1949, Fay attended Kimball Union Academy, a prep school in New Hampshire. While there, he was captain of the baseball team, a member of the soccer team, and helped the basketball team win the New England Class B Prep School championship in 1950.

He went on to attend Yale University where he played intramural baseball and as a freshman led his intramural touch football team to the championship. Little did Fay know at the time that years later touch football would become a big part of his athletic life.

Even while in the Army during the Korean War, Fay continued to play baseball in France, and he was also a champion rifleman at Fort Dix. After returning home, he played baseball locally for Norwalk Tire and the Hilltops, which won the city championship. Also, in 1958 he helped fellow Rowaytonite Vinny Vellotti form the Rowayton Little League, volunteering his time as an umpire and instructor.

After his baseball days, Fay played one year of fastpitch softball with the 1959 city champion O'Brien Press team, which included the Cundari brothers. He then switched to slowpitch softball and was a pitcher and infielder with the Fairfield County Savings Bank team, which won a division championship and included the four Callahans, Leroy Vaughn, and Frank Morgan. Fay also played one year with the Blue Moon, two years with Ferris Hill Club, and three years with Chatham Oaks, winning four city titles with the three teams. He also played one year with the Aristocrats and won another division crown.

In addition, Fay played with Freddie's Bears, which won the first Danbury Slowpitch Softball Tournament in 1962 and also captured a pair of city titles in the Norwalk Senior Basketball League. He even played against the great Calvin Murphy once in 1964 when the future Hall of Fame basketball player was a sophomore at Norwalk High School and coach Jack Cronin arranged a scrimmage against a group of local players.

"He was so fast nobody could touch him," Fay said of Murphy. "I think we held him to 30 points."

But perhaps where Fay had the greatest impact on local sports was when he founded the highly successful Inter-City Touch Football League in 1962 and was the only commissioner in the 35-year history of the league. It was the first touch football league of its kind in New England and over the years featured teams with former pro and collegiate players from Norwalk and surrounding towns from Bridgeport to Greenwich.

Fay did everything from lining the field to keeping stats and doing the writeups. He was even a standout quarterback in the early years of the league, leading the Rowayton Bears to six straight championships from 1963-'68, another trip to the finals in 1969, and a sparkling 65-5-1 record during that span.

In 1961, Francis X. Fay, Jr., began a career as an award-winning reporter for *The Norwalk Hour* newspaper. In 1978 he was the recipient of the prestigious Master Reporter Award from the New England Society of News Editors as he was chosen first among reporters from 105 daily newspapers in New England, the first reporter from Connecticut to win the award. He's also won two first place awards from United Press International, and two more from the Connecticut Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. In 1985 Fay was named senior writer at *The Hour*, where he is now in his 38th year with the local daily.

Fay was married 33 years to his wife, the former Valle Weber, who passed away in January of 1997.