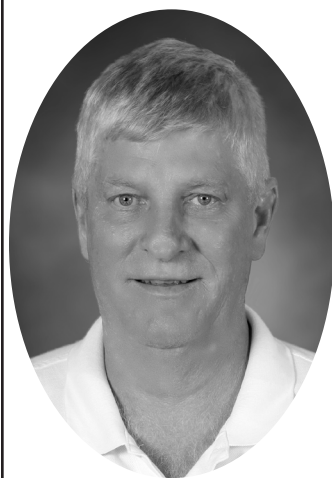


Kevin Welch



No one on a pair of skates ruled FCIAC ice rinks more than **Kevin Welch** when he played for the Norwalk High School hockey team nearly four decades ago.

The 1978 NHS grad rewrote the school, city, and conference record books during his three outstanding seasons with the Bears, setting scoring marks never before attained by a skater from Norwalk.

Choosing to play in the successful Mid-Fairfield Youth Hockey program his freshman year, Welch didn't join the high school team until he was a sophomore. He made an immediate impact in that 1975-'76 campaign as he scored 31 goals to set a new single-season school and city record.

Welch would register 25 more goals his junior year before ending his scholastic career with another recordbreaking season as a senior in 1977-'78. The All-FCIAC first-team selection scored 38 goals in 22 games for the 13-8-1 Bears to break the city of Norwalk record he had set two years earlier. What's more, his 33 goals in 14 FCIAC games not only led

the conference but were also a new league record.

Meanwhile, Welch's 94 career goals in just three seasons shattered the old city mark of 68. With 57 assists to his credit, Welch also became the city's all-time leading scorer with 153 career points.

Welch established yet another city record when he scored six goals in one game as a sophomore to lead the Bears to a 6-5 win over Ridgefield in the CIAC state quarterfinals. Norwalk was eliminated in the state semis while Welch was the only NHS player named to the all-tournament team.

Born in Schenectady, N.Y., Welch and his family moved from Acton, Mass., to Norwalk in 1969, and the old Crystal Ice Rink became their playground. In fact, many local sports fans regard the Welch's as Norwalk's 'No. 1 Hockey Family.'

Kevin was the middle of five brothers, four of whom played at Norwalk High and three who took turns being the Bears' all-time leading scorer.

Rick Welch became the first NHS player to score 100 career points and the 1975 graduate finished with 106 in three years. Kevin joined the Bears the following season and his 153 points not only broke his brother's school record but set a new city mark.

That record was then broken by younger brother Mike Welch, a 1981 graduate who played four seasons at Norwalk High and ended his career with 212 points, which was also a new state record.

The youngest sibling, Steve 'Zip' Welch, was a goalie who graduated from NHS in 1983. For 11 straight seasons, from 1972-'73 to 1982-'83, there was at least one Welch wearing Green and White. The oldest brother, Dennis Welch, played at Fairfield Prep.

Kevin Welch continued playing hockey long after his high school days, skating — and still scoring — in senior hockey leagues in Stamford and Bridgeport as he helped his team win championships in both leagues.

But hockey wasn't the only sport he played. For the last three decades Welch has played slowpitch softball with a number of Norwalk teams, including Burndy when it won the Industrial League championship. He won another title playing for the Gallo's Sandbar Legends in the Norwalk Old Timers Softball League.

A father of two sons, Welch spent 12 years as a coach in the Ben Whone National Little League and won a championship with Kiwanis. He was also a coach with the Partners Café women's softball team, which won back-to-back Norwalk Recreation League titles in 1989 and '90.

But Kevin Welch will always be known for his scoring prowess on the ice in the sport of hockey. Tonight, he'll be recognized for those accomplishments by the Norwalk Old Timers.