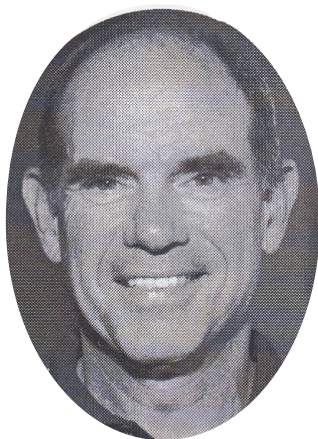


Billy Howard



Billy Howard has been a fixture on the local sports scene for nearly half a century in one capacity or another.

It all began in 1960 when a 10-year-old Howard was one of the original players in the newly formed Cranbury League. He played three years there for Phil's TV before moving up to the Pony League and helping Bowlerskate win the 1963 championship. One of his teammates that year was fellow 2007 Norwalk Old Timers honoree Pete Tucci.

After the 1964 season, Howard moved up to the Norwalk Babe Ruth League in '65. He also played Pop Warner Football in 1963 and in the Norwalk Recreation junior high school tackle football league in 1964 with West Rocks.

That was a prelude of things to come as Howard went on to play football at Norwalk High School from 1965-67, serving as a senior captain in '67 when he was named first-team All-FCIAC Offense and helped NHS to a 6-2-1 record for its first winning season in nearly two decades.

Howard was also a member of the Norwalk High track team in the spring from 1966-68, competing in the half-mile, the hurdles, javelin and long jump, while as a sophomore in '66 he was a diver on the NHS swim team.

Following his graduation from Norwalk in 1968, Howard attended the U.S. Naval Academy and played for the Plebe football team that fall, and then went on to play at Lehigh University from 1970-72.

Upon returning to Norwalk, Howard soon began the second phase of his athletic career. He would play 17 years in the Norwalk Recreation Touch Football League with LaRosa's, Schaefer's Sporting Goods, TZ Roofing, the DRJ Builders Oaks, and the Giants.

He was also a standout slow-pitch softball player for more than two decades, including 12 years with the famed Sonny's of Westport softball team, a perennial state and regional powerhouse. Howard later teamed up with the legendary Sonny DeMattio to form Sonny and Bill's, another softball power he played with for two seasons.

Howard also played three years with Cotaling's Auto Body, two seasons with Fairfield County Savings, and one year each with Richter's All-Stars and Chatham Oaks.

In addition to his own exploits in athletics, Howard became one of the most respected high school basketball and football officials in Fairfield County. He began officiating basketball in 1975 and is a member of the Fairfield County Board of Approved Basketball Officials (IAABO #9). He will begin his 33rd season on the hardwood this winter.

Meanwhile, Howard began officiating football in 1979 and is currently in his 29th season. He has worked 12 FCIAC championship games and six state playoff games, and has been secretary/treasurer of the Fairfield County football officials since 1994.

Prior to becoming an official, Howard spent the 1975 season as an assistant football coach with his former team at Norwalk High School. He later coached in local youth leagues when his children played, coaching in the Norwalk Athletic Association Girls Softball League from 1990-96, and in the West Norwalk Cal Ripken Baseball League from 1996-2000. He has also been the assignor of umpires and an umpire himself for NAA Softball since 1998.

Howard has even remained close to local sports through his business, Sonny & Bill's Sports Center, for the past 27 years.

The Norwalk native and lifelong city resident is married to the former Jeannine Buchholz and they have three children, LeeAnn, Stephanie and Mike, all former local high school athletes.