

Tom Horton



It was 51 years ago this fall that Norwalk High School claimed its first and, so far, only state championship in football, and one of the key players on that 1948 team was co-captain **Tom Horton**.

Horton was a standout two-way performer for the Green & White during that memorable championship season, playing center on offense and linebacker on defense for legendary coach Ike Kern.

But perhaps the biggest play Horton made all season came on special teams when he blocked a kick in a game against Fairfield, which made it possible for NHS to score the go-ahead touchdown and win the game 12-6 to preserve its unbeaten record.

Horton still lists this as his greatest feat in sports during an athletic career highlighted by a number of accomplishments.

Undoubtedly not too far behind had to be the day he and fellow co-captain Bill Rogowski, Norwalk's all-state end, accepted on behalf of their teammates the Waskowitz Trophy, which was emblematic of the state championship. Walt Court, Hank Gregory, Jack Ryan, and quarterback Gene Callahan were among Horton's other teammates on what he described as a "team of guys full of desire."

Growing up in the Broad River/Silvermine area of Norwalk, Horton attended Broad River Elementary School, Center Jr. High, Norwalk High School, and the University of Maryland for one year before joining the U.S. Navy.

But while Horton enjoyed his greatest moments on the gridiron, he also excelled on the baseball diamond. An excellent third baseman, he played for the Center Jr. High team for three seasons, from 1943-'45, and three more years for NHS from 1947-'49, and had some classic matchups against teams like the Laurels and Pastimes.

Even during the Korean War while serving his four years in the Navy, Horton continued to play baseball. He was on the USS Koucal ASR8 submarine rescue ship and played third base for the sub base recreational baseball team in Hawaii in 1951, and later played with the New London sub base team in 1953.

Baseball and football weren't the only two sports Horton shined in. Between the ages of nine and 15, he was an outstanding swimmer for the Norwalk YMCA team. During his career, which spanned from 1939-'45, he won the 50-yard freestyle championship and also captured the 100-yard freestyle at the City Swim Championships at Calf Pasture.

Now a resident of Westport, the 69-year-old Horton is a retired real estate broker.