

Michael Herring



Mike Herring never met a sport he didn't like. Or one that he didn't succeed in.

The 1967 Central Catholic High School graduate succeeded in three of them half a century ago, leaving his mark in football, basketball, and track and field for the Cavaliers. In the summer he excelled in a fourth sport as a key member of the Norwalk American Legion baseball team.

Herring's passion with sports began long before that, however. Growing up in East Norwalk, Herring was nine years old when he started playing baseball for the Lions in the International Little League. Over the next 10 years he moved up to the Norwalk PONY League, the Norwalk Babe Ruth League, and eventually the Legion.

Meanwhile, Herring was introduced to football through the local Pop Warner Football program and played for the Norwalk Ramblers in 1961 and '62. It was also in 1962 and then '63 that Herring played basketball at Nathan Hale Junior High.

All roads led to Central Catholic where Herring played three years of varsity football for future Hall of Fame coach Jerry McDougall, whom he calls "one of the most influential people in my sports career." Herring played on defense as a junior and helped the Cavaliers go 7-1-1 and receive a CIAC Class B Award of Merit. He was also the backup quarterback and scored three touchdowns, all in one game, including a 40-yard interception return.

He became the starting QB his senior year in the fall of 1966 and set a new school record by throwing 11 touchdown passes. He was also one of the team's leading rushers. His all-around ability was on full display in the season opener as he fired three TD passes, ran 64 yards for another score, and added a two-point conversion run as the Cavs beat Barlow 42-20. Herring completed 6-of-8 passes for 112 yards and added 162 yards rushing on just seven carries.

Central finished 8-1-1 and won a second consecutive Merit Award while Herring was named team MVP and all-state honorable mention.

Herring was also a senior co-captain and second-leading scorer on the CCHS basketball team, averaging just under 10 points for the 13-9 Cavaliers, who reached the Class M quarterfinals before losing to eventual state champion Middletown 65-61. Herring scored a team-high 17 points in his final game.

He also played baseball in high school, but as a senior switched to track and all he did in his first meet was win five events and set three school records. Herring would lead the team in scoring as the Cavaliers won the Thruway League title.

But without question the highlight of Herring's senior year at Central Catholic was being named the city's best athlete. The Norwalk Fire Fighters Association created the prestigious 'Outstanding High School Athlete of the City' award in 1966 and Norwalk High School's Calvin Murphy was the inaugural winner. Herring was the second recipient.

He also continued playing baseball in the summer, batting leadoff for the American Legion Post 12 team. Then at Central Connecticut State University, Herring played intramural football and basketball, winning championships in both.

Even after college, Herring's sports career was far from over. He would soon add another sport to his repertoire, playing slow pitch softball with local powerhouse Chatham Oaks. And during his 21 years at Nash Engineering, Herring won Industrial League titles in softball, basketball, and volleyball. He also won three Norwalk Recreation Touch Football League crowns.

When his playing days were finally over, Herring coached his two sons in Little League baseball, youth soccer, and recreation basketball in Trumbull. He's also run six marathons, including NYC three times and Boston once.