

Joe DeFlorio



If you followed local sports in the city of Norwalk during the 1940s, then the name **Joe DeFlorio** should certainly be a familiar one.

On the football field and the basketball court, DeFlorio made his mark in city annals. Born in South Norwalk and raised in the Springwood section of town, DeFlorio attended St. Joseph School and Ben Franklin Jr. High before graduating from Norwalk High School in 1949.

A two-way performer on offense and defense, DeFlorio played football during the '40s for the Lone Stars, Strawberry Hill, and the Norwalk Tigers under such local coaches as Ship Mastro, Lou Renselli, Al Palumbo, and Paul Autore.

But the highlight of his career on the gridiron came in 1948, DeFlorio's senior year, when he played on the state champion Norwalk High School football team for coach Ike Kern. In fact, he scored the winning touchdown in Norwalk's come-from-behind 25-21 win over Greenwich, which helped preserve an unbeaten season.

Then as fall turned to winter, the versatile DeFlorio traded his cleats for sneakers and excelled on the hardwood. With the skills to play both guard and center, DeFlorio began his local basketball career with the Lexington Avenue Athletic Club in his neighborhood under popular coach Jim Fusco. He went on to also play for Matt's Cleaners and Palco Hat, as well as the school teams at St. Joseph's and Franklin, and the St. Joe's CYO team.

In fact, when his playing days were over, DeFlorio coached the school and CYO basketball teams at St. Joseph in the late 1940s and early '50s.

A self-employed grocer, the former standout athlete operated "DeFlorio's" on Lexington Avenue, not too far from many of his athletic feats growing up. He was also active with several local civic organizations in the community, such as the Norwalk Neighborhood Association.

Now 67 years old and retired, DeFlorio and his wife, the former Martha Luczkowski, have six children, 5 grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.



*The aging process is a lot like grapes,
some turn to vinegar,
but the best turn to wine.*