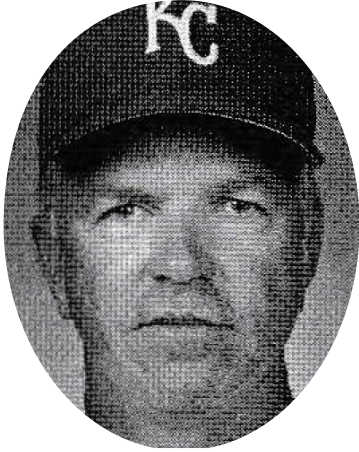


Bobby Schaefer



There have been only a handful of baseball players from Norwalk to ever make it to the Major Leagues, but **Bobby Schaefer** took a different route.

The former Norwalk High School second baseman recently completed his second season as the bench coach for the Kansas City Royals and his 23rd year overall in professional baseball.

This is actually Schaefer's second tour of duty with the Royals and the sixth Major League organization he's worked for.

And it all began in Norwalk where Schaefer, as a junior in 1961, was the starting second baseman for Norwalk's FCIAC championship baseball team that went 17-3 in the conference and finished 18-4 overall. He returned as the starting second baseman as a senior in 1962, leading the club in walks and finishing with the third-highest batting average on the team.

Schaefer would go on to play baseball at the University of Connecticut where he served as a co-captain and was named to the All-New England teams. He also received the Outstanding Senior Athlete Award from the UConn Club, the same organization that would later honor him with the Red O'Neill Distinguished Alumni Award.

With a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education and a Masters in Education, Schaefer was a teacher and coach from 1968-'80, including a stint in the mid '70s when he served as the head baseball coach at Ledyard High School in the eastern part of the state. For years, Schaefer lived in Norwich during the off season with his wife, Betty, and two daughters, Lori and Jamie.

Schaefer broke into professional baseball in 1980 with the New York Yankees organization as manager of the Greensboro Hornets of the South Atlantic League. He was only there for two seasons, but earned Manager of the Year honors both years and several years later was selected as manager of the Greensboro Hornets All-Decade Team for the 1980s.

In 1982, Schaefer joined the Mets organization as a coach with the Triple A Tidewater Tides of the International League. He was in the Mets' farm system for four years, serving as manager of the Jackson Mets of the Texas League in 1983, while in 1984 and '85 he returned to Tidewater as manager of the Tides.

He then went to work for the Detroit Tigers in 1986 as manager of their Double A Glens Falls team in the Eastern League, which afforded him a couple of road trips a year close to his Connecticut home. He was also named the Eastern League's 1986 Manager of the Year in his only season in Glen Falls.

Schaefer joined the Kansas City Royals for the first time in 1987 as manager of their Memphis Chicks team in the Southern League, before being "called up" to the Majors in 1988 and spending the next four years with the Royals as a first base and dugout coach, coaching such players as George Brett and Bo Jackson. Schaefer even served as an interim manager of the Royals for one game in 1991.

In 1992, Schaefer moved from the dugout to the front office as a Special Assignment Major League Scout with the Royals, the same position he would hold in 1993 with the Boston Red Sox. Schaefer would spend six years with the Red Sox, the last five, from 1994-'98, as Director of Player Development.

The following year, Schaefer would join his sixth Major League organization, the Baltimore Orioles, where he was appointed Special Assistant to the General Manager from 1999-2001.

But after 10 years away from the field, Schaefer rejoined the Kansas City Royals in 2002 as a bench coach. And this past 2003 season, sitting alongside manager Tony Pena in the dugout, the Royals were one of the surprise teams in baseball, staying in contention in the American League Western Division until the final weeks of the season.

The 59-year-old Schaefer now makes his offseason home in Fort Myers, FL, although a big part of him still remains in his native Nutmeg State as a member of the City of Norwich Hall of Fame, and the Connecticut High School Coaches Hall of Fame.

And tonight he is being honored in his former hometown by the Norwalk Old Timers.