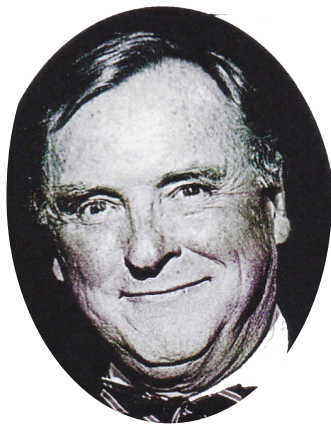


Jack Couch



The year was 1990 when Jack Couch, still fairly new to the Norwalk community, began looking for a place for his twin sons, Chris and Jake, to play lacrosse, a sport he was passionate about growing up.

Someone told him about the newly formed Norwalk Junior Lacrosse program in town and the Couch twins began playing as second graders in 1991. Their father also became involved as a coach and gradually on the NJL Board.

And with that, the face of lacrosse in Norwalk would change forever.

Couch would become a driving force behind the growth of Norwalk Junior Lacrosse and the popularity explosion of the sport in town. Besides coaching, he wore several hats on the NJL Board, including president.

In 1992, only his second year with NJL, Couch became Norwalk's representative to CONNY, the Connecticut-New York Youth Lacrosse Association, and in 1993 he became secretary and Rules Committee chairman of CONNY, positions he still holds.

Then when the National Junior Lacrosse Association (NJLA) was formed in 1994, Couch became CONNY's representative as well as secretary of that organization as it initiated the National Youth Festivals.

And in 1995, when the NJLA voted to participate in the formation of a National Governing Body for lacrosse, Couch's past experience with U.S. Sailing made him a natural to be on the committee that developed the US Lacrosse bylaws and organizational structure over the next three years. From 1998, when US Lacrosse was officially founded, through 2003, Couch served as

the Youth Council representative on the Board of Directors and the Strategic Planning Committee.

All the while, however, Couch remained actively involved with Norwalk Junior Lacrosse. In fact, his involvement on the state and national levels helped him on the local level as he encouraged interest and promoted growth in lacrosse throughout Norwalk.

Thanks in large part to his efforts over the last two decades, the Norwalk Lacrosse Association supports the lacrosse programs at both local high schools, sponsors post-college club teams, hosts a six-team masters summer league, and sponsors summer lacrosse for youth, high school, men's open and grand masters. In all, it provides opportunities to play lacrosse for enthusiasts from ages 6 to 60-plus.

Even Jack Couch himself can still be found out on the field at Veterans Park playing in the Norwalk Summer Lacrosse Grand Masters Division.

The 67-year-old Couch was born in Moline, Illinois and lived in the Midwest until seventh grade. The following year his family moved to Baltimore, a hot-bed for lacrosse, and Couch was introduced to the sport in the fall of 1956 when his eighth-grade Phys Ed teacher at St. Paul's School handed him a lacrosse stick and instructed him how to use it.

But he really caught the lacrosse bug in the spring of '57 when he watched from the stands as the St. Paul varsity high school team upset heavily favored Seawanhaka High School to snap their record 91-game winning streak.

A few years later, Couch would play for St. Paul's and was a two-way midfielder for the 1960 and '61 teams that won league championships. He also played briefly at Harvard and after college moved to Chicago where he began his career in advertising. While there he played eight years with the fledgling Chicago Lacrosse Club, playing every position but goalie and twice making the All-Midwest Club as a middle and defenseman.

In 1973 Couch's advertising career took him to Boston where he put lacrosse on hold and focused on his other athletic love, sailing. Over the next 15 years he qualified for three Olympic Laser Class World championships and made a run at the 1980 Olympics.

He was transferred to New York and moved to Norwalk where he joined several sailing organizations, serving six years on the Board of Directors and four years as vice president of US Sailing.

It was also in Norwalk that he married his wife Kiki and fathered twin sons. A few years later, he discovered the Norwalk Junior Lacrosse youth program.

Besides lacrosse, Couch also played football and wrestled at St. Paul's, the same three sports his twin sons played at Brien McMahon. They helped lead the Senators to a state championship in lacrosse as juniors and were named all-state as seniors.

After graduating in 2001, Jake and Chris Couch both attended West Point and played for the Army lacrosse team. Jack Couch, who served as co-president with his wife of the Brien McMahon Football Booster Club when their sons played, became a volunteer webmaster of "Army Lax Parents" from 2003-05, and since 2006 has been an alumni parents' representative for "Friends of Army Lacrosse."

From 2002 through 2005, Couch scaled back his involvement with US Lacrosse, CONNY and NJL so he could attend his sons' games at Army (he missed only one in four years). But after they graduated from West Point, he realized he missed coaching the younger kids and returned to the sideline with Norwalk's fifth and sixth grade lacrosse players.

He also returned as president of the Norwalk Lacrosse Association and presided over a 96 percent growth in the girls program and a 59 percent growth in the boys program.

Couch's tireless work in youth lacrosse has certainly not gone unnoticed. In 2005 he was named Connecticut High School Lacrosse Coaches Association "Man of the Year." In 2006 he was inducted into both the New England Lacrosse Hall of Fame and Connecticut Lacrosse Hall of Fame. And in 2007 he was selected as the "Norwalk Sports Person of the Year" by the Fairfield County Sports Commission.

Chris and Jake Couch are both Captains in the U.S. Army, and Jack Couch became a grandfather for the first time when Jake and Lisa Couch brought Cora Justine Couch into the world on Sept. 19 in Texas. No doubt a future lacrosse player.