

Art Kadish



For nearly half a century now, Art Kadish has made track and field his life.

Or, to be more exact, he's made the pole vault his life.

Growing up in Norwalk, Kadish played all the typical sports boys his age played: Little League Baseball, Bidly Basketball, and Pop Warner Football, where he played halfback for the Norwalk Ramblers.

When he arrived at Brien McMahon High School, he joined the football and basketball teams, not as a player but as the statistician in both sports. He also tested his athletic skills in

wrestling and as a diver on the swim team.

But it was in the sport of track and field where Art Kadish really found his niche. He competed in the pole vault for coaches Jack Casagrande and Walt Czekaj from 1964-67, and as a senior in the spring of '67 Kadish finished runner-up in the state and third in New England. He held the school record at McMahon for more than three decades.

He was just getting started, however. After McMahon, Kadish went to Southern Connecticut State College (as it was known then) and finished ninth in the country at the Track and Field Collegiate Division Nationals with a height of 15-4.

Kadish graduated from SCSC in 1971 with a degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation, and was the recipient of the men's "Outstanding Physical Education Student" award.

Even after his own career as a competitive pole vaulter was over, Kadish would remain very much a part of the event. While earning his Master's at Southern, he joined the Owls' track and field staff as an assistant coach and ended up coaching from 1971-99, working primarily with the team's pole vaulters.

During his years with the program, Southern Connecticut produced 18 Division II All-Americans and three national champions in the pole vault.

Kadish's contributions to his alma mater went far beyond the track team, however. He was an associate professor at the college for 27 years in its Exercise Science Department (which he received his MS in) and was a specialist in Exercise and Nutrition.

He was also responsible for starting the men's volleyball program in 1980-81 and served as the team's head coach the first three years. In their very first season, the Owls went 24-0 and won the New England Intercollegiate Volleyball League championship.

In 1981-82, the program moved up to Division I and placed fifth in New England, while in '82-83, Kadish's final season, SCSU finished runner-up in the New England D-II tournament.

And the pole vault wasn't the only skill Kadish excelled in. From 1978-85, he was an accomplished badminton player, at one time ranked as high as eighth in the state of Connecticut. He's also an avid golfer and in 1980 shot a 67 at the Wallingford Country Club to tie the course record.

Kadish retired from Southern Connecticut in 1999, but returned as an assistant track coach from 2003-09. Then from 2009 to this past spring, he was a volunteer track coach at nearby University of New Haven.

He now resides in San Diego, Calif., but still visits his East Coast roots where many long-time friends remain. A music lover, Kadish has his own one-man band in which he plays guitar and sings. Back in the 1980s and '90s, he provided music for Special Olympic events, and this past summer he performed in Norwalk.