



Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame

6th Induction Ceremony
Friday November 25, 2016

Langley's Restaurant at
Great Neck Country Club
Waterford, Connecticut

Platinum Sponsor

The Mortimer Family
and



The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame would like to thank the Mortimer family and GNCC for their wonderful support of our efforts to honor those who have made special contributions to Waterford athletics. In addition to helping us with the induction ceremony, their support helped us reach a goal of a permanent location to honor the members of the Hall of Fame. A perpetual plaque is now displayed outside the Francis X. Sweeney Field House at Waterford High School to serve as a lasting memory of the inductees.

2016 Induction Ceremony - Program of Events

6:00 PM *Social Hour*

7:00 PM *Welcome*

Jim Cavalieri, HOF Committee Chair

7:15 PM *Hall of Fame Inductions/Honorees*

Aaron Curry

Stephen Harper

Bridgit (Lawrence) Buscetto

Joe Miller

Kris Morton

Rick Murallo

Chris Podeszwa

Katie Schoepfer

The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame

The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame was founded in 2002 by The Cactus Jack Foundation to honor those who have made special contributions to Waterford athletics, as a player, coach, administrator or community volunteer.

Class of 2002

Howard Christensen
Richard Cipriani
Gerard Rousseau
Francis X. Sweeney

Class of 2004

Bill Gardner Sr.
Arnold Holm
Jan Merrill Morin
Gary Swanson
Joan Van Ness

Class of 2008

Ron Bugbee
Joe Carey
Karen Mullins
Gene Sutura
Norman Tonucci

Class of 2010

Marlene (Morth) Wiggins
Liz Mueller
Glenn Rupert
David Sousa
Warren Swanson

Class of 2014

Lee Elci
Ed Evento
Billy Gardner Jr.
Jeff Hedden
Vicki (Bartolucci) Malone
Karlton Perkins
Jim White
1973 WHS football Team

For more information, visit us online or on Facebook at:

<http://www.cactusjackfoundation.org/waterford-athletic-hall-of-fame.html>

www.facebook.com/waterfordcthof

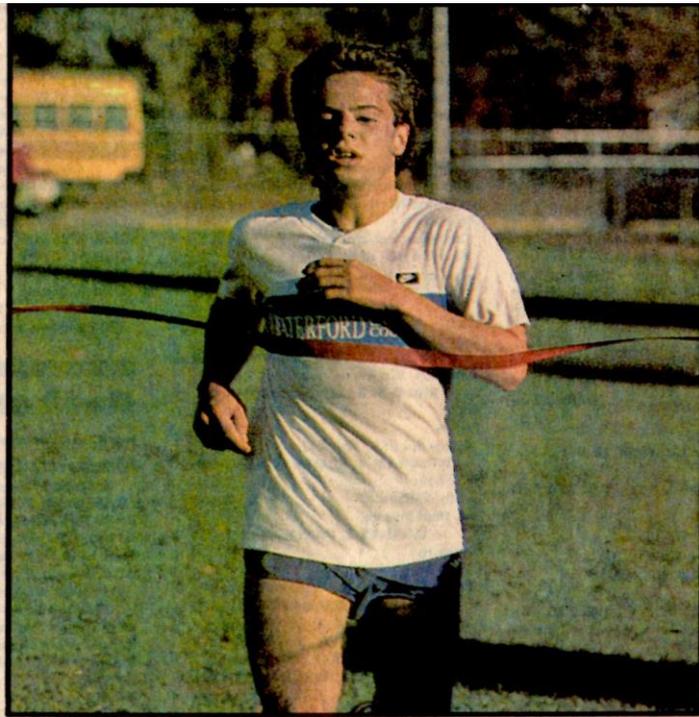
The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame



Committee Members

Jim Cavalieri
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 Rik Little
 Jack O'Keefe
 Rich Radicioni
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 Marlene Wiggins

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Aaron Curry

Aaron was born in Philadelphia, PA and moved to Waterford at a young age. He attended WHS from 1987 – 1990 where he excelled in cross-country and track & field. Upon graduation, he attended Haverford College, running cross-country and track for all 4 years. He attended graduate school at John Hopkins University while continuing to train for the US Olympic Trials. He now lives with his wife, Angela, and three year-old son Chase, in Harleysville, PA.

Aaron began his athletic career at WHS by playing soccer. But, as one of the fastest players on the team, he was convinced by a friend to turn his attention to running. During his time at WHS, he led the cross-country team to a Class M State Championship, going undefeated in dual meets and invitationals during the regular season of his senior year. That same season, he led the Indoor track & field team to a

league championship by winning 3 events; the 1000M, 1500M and 3000M races. He anchored the Sprint Medley Relay team in the State Indoor Championships as they won the State Championship.

Aaron continued his success at Haverford College, one of the top Division III programs in the country where he was a 4-time All-American in the 1500M, winning the 1500M Indoor Championship as a senior.

Upon graduation, Aaron received a sponsorship from Volvo to pursue a bid for the 1996 Olympic Trials in the 1500M. Although he missed qualifying by 1 second, he ran a personal best 3:45.6 at the George Mason Invitational. He enrolled in Graduate School at John Hopkins University to pursue a degree in Biostatistics and Public Health, while also serving as an assistant coach to the men's and women's cross-country and track & field teams. Aaron also continued to run competitively running a personal best 14:14 in the 5000M Championship at Penn Relays and a 50:26 in the Philadelphia Broad Street 10 Mile road race.

After graduating from John Hopkins with a Master's Degree in Biostatistics and a Ph.D in Public Health, Aaron pursued a career in the pharmaceutical industry, and currently leads a team of analytic professionals at Pfizer in Collegeville, PA.

Awards / Recognition

All-ECC: 1987–1990 (indoor / outdoor track & field)
1988 – 1989 (cross-country)

State Class

M Champion: 1989 (cross-country)
1990 (indoor track sprint relay Team)

Div III

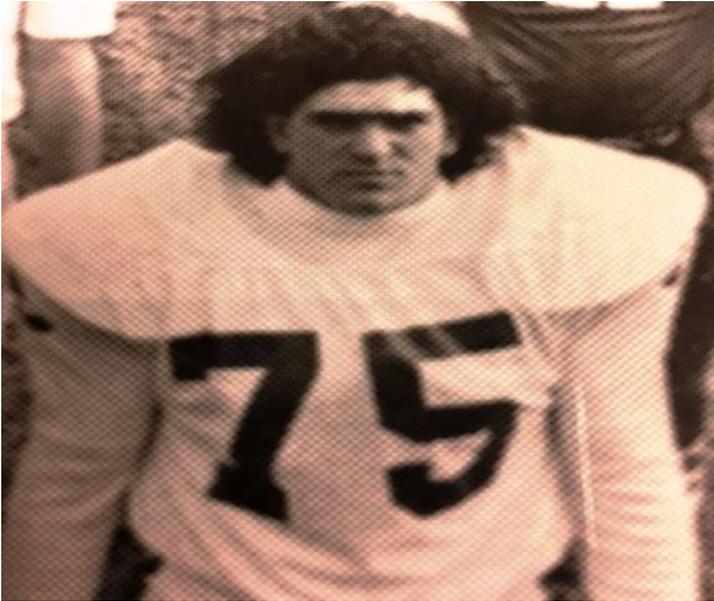
All-American: 1993–1994 (indoor / outdoor track & field)

Div III National

Champion Indoor 1500M: 1994

Varsity Cup (Best Overall Athlete)

Haverford College: 1993-1994



Stephen Harper

Stephen Harper was born in Eustis, FL and moved to Waterford, his Mom's hometown, when he was 3 years old. He attended WHS from 1969 – 1973 where he earned varsity letters in 3 sports: football, wrestling and track & field. Upon graduation from WHS, he attended the University of South Carolina on a full football scholarship, graduating in 1977 with a Bachelor's Degree in Studio Art. Stephen was married in 1978 to JoAnn Canney (WHS class of 1974) and they have 2 children, Ethan and Siobhan. Stephen and JoAnn currently live in his childhood home in Pleasure Beach.

Stephen wrestled for 2 years and participated in track & field for 3 years at WHS. In track & field, he threw the shot put and discus, and was the 2nd leg on the 4x100 relay team, despite being 6'1" and weighing 220 lbs. The relay team won 10 of 12 meets in which Stephen ran.

Stephen played varsity football for WHS for 3 seasons under coach Dick "Cip" Cipriani. He started on both offense

and defense as a junior, which was very rarely done in that era. The goal was for Stephen to play both fullback and DT as a senior due to his power and speed, but a leg injury prevented him from playing on the offensive side of the ball. The injury didn't prevent him from excelling at DT where he dominated the line of scrimmage on his way to an award-winning season for both himself and the team. He was named one of 3 tri-captains, and along with All-State running back Jim White, led the Lancers to a record of 7 – 2, earning a share of the ECC championship. Stephen earned All-ECC and All-State honors, becoming the 1st defensive player in school history to be named to the All-State team. Due to his incredible senior season, Stephen was named to the All-Time New Haven Register All-State team earlier this year.

Stephen went on to play football at the University of South Carolina where he made an immediate impact. The 1973 season was the 1st year under NCAA rules that freshmen could play on the varsity team. The team had 4 freshmen players who would go on to have long and successful NFL careers, including Steve Courson of the Pittsburgh Steelers, one of the offensive linemen of the great Steelers teams of the late 70s. But, according to Bill Currier (one of those future NFL players), the 1st freshman to get noticed was Stephen Harper. Due to his exceptional combination of speed, strength and quickness, none of the other freshman could block him, including Steve Courson. The next season, Stephen was headed towards a very successful career when he got injured and injuries continued to plague him throughout his college career. Currier said that Stephen had the most promise of any player on the team and that even though he didn't accomplish his athletic goals, he had a huge impact on everyone he came in contact with. His concern and the way he treated others changed many lives while he was at the University of South Carolina.

Awards / Recognition

All-ECC:	1972
All-State:	1972
All-Time New Haven Register All-State Team:	2016



Bridgit (Lawrence) Buscetto

Bridgit (Lawrence) Buscetto grew up in Waterford and attended Waterford High School from 1975 to 1978. She was an outstanding athlete at WHS participating in 3 sports; basketball, field hockey and track & field. Upon graduation from WHS, Bridgit received a 4-year scholarship for track & field to UCLA where she competed until returning home to finish her education at Connecticut College. Bridgit currently lives in New London with her husband Michael Buscetto Jr.

Bridgit focused on field hockey and track & field while at WHS but decided to play basketball in her senior year. She played well enough as a first-time player to be selected to play in the prestigious CT Big Brothers / Big Sisters game.

Bridgit played field hockey all 4 years at WHS. She earned all-conference honors as a Goalie 3 times and was named team captain as a senior.

Bridgit also participated in track & field all 4 years, specializing in the shot put and discus. She earned all-conference honors 3 times, won 5 state championships and set several school, conference and state records, including:

- State AAU Indoor record in 4 kilo shot put
- WHS record in discus of 114'-9" (still stands today)
- WHS record in 8lb shot put of 44'-9 1/2" (still stands today)
- ECC & State record in 8 lb shot put of 44'-9 1/2"

As a senior, Bridgit qualified for the Golden Gate National High School Invitational Track and Field Meet in California, was named the Outstanding Field Athlete of the Year by the CIAC Track Coaches Association, and as captain of both the field hockey and track & field teams, Bridgit was the first female athlete to win the WHS Captains Award.

Bridgit received a 4-year scholarship for track & field to UCLA where she competed before transferring to CT College where she earned her degree in English and Secondary Education. During that time she was an assistant coach at WHS for field hockey and track & field and played basketball for CT College in her senior year.

Bridgit's involvement in WHS athletics sparked a lifelong passion for working out and for competition. Most recently, she has competed in 8 triathlons, two half marathons, and various 5K road races.

Awards / Recognition

All-ECC:	1976 - 1978 (field hockey) 1976 - 1978 (track & field)
State Class M Champion:	1977 (discus) 1977 & 1978 (shot put)
State Open Champion:	1976 & 1978 (shot put)
CIAC Outstanding Field Athlete of the Year:	1978



Kermit B. "Joe" Miller Jr.

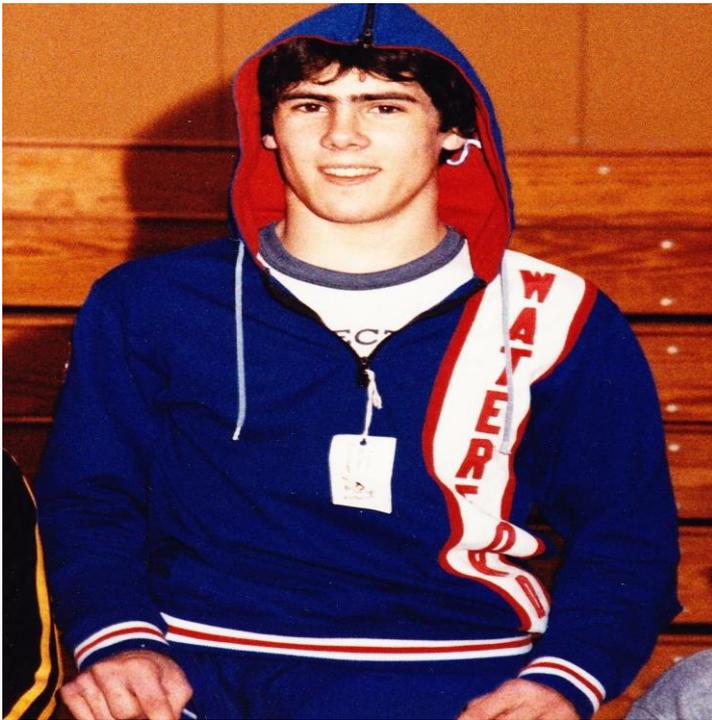
Kermit B. "Joe" Miller Jr. was born on October 30, 1932 in New London. He grew up the oldest of 4 children and developed a love for sports and competition from an early age. Joe attended St. Mary's school where he played basketball in the 7th and 8th grades. He then attended Chapman Technical High School where he played the center and linebacker positions on the football team and played guard on the basketball team. Joe served in the U.S. Navy from 1951 – 1955 where he was a member of the Great Lakes Boxing team. He played fast-pitch softball for leagues in New London, Groton and East Lyme in the mid-to-late 1950's. Joe also played semi-pro football for the New London Pequots from 1956 - 1959. He started working for General Dynamics Electric Boat Division in 1956 and retired in 1996 after 40 years of service.

Joe married Juanita Hales in 1956 and moved to Waterford in 1960 where he has lived since. Juanita passed away this past January, Joe and Juanita would have celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this past September. Together, they raised 3 sons; Glen, Kevin and Bruce. All 3 boys graduated from WHS and inherited Joe's love for sports as they participated in many during their time at WHS, including basketball, baseball, football, wrestling and track.

Joe began his long involvement and commitment to Waterford sports in the mid-1960s as his boys were growing up. He coached the Holly House and Sylvester's Texaco ("SylTex") teams in Waterford Little League South from 1966 -1977. He coached the "Body Men" team in Waterford Babe Ruth from 1969 - 1979, winning the league championship in 1979 and he was a coach on the 1975 all-star team that won the District 6 championship. Joe coached Pee-Wee football from 1967 - 1972, with his team winning the Super Bowl in 1972. Joe also coached Pre-Teen Basketball at the YMCA from 1967 -1971. Upon retiring from coaching, Joe umpired baseball games for many, many years for Little League and Babe Ruth and he was an active member of the Waterford Booster's Club. For his dedication and efforts to Waterford and youth sports, Joe was awarded the Waterford High School Booster Award in 1994 and the Ron Meadows Volunteer Award for his work with the Chris Potvin Invitational Tournament in 1995.

Joe has 6 grandchildren; Kimberly, Emily, Erin, Amy, Ryan and Rachel. All attended WHS with Rachel now a freshman. They participated in many sports and activities and Joe and Juanita were always at every event, whether it be dance shows, field hockey, softball, baseball, football, or volleyball games. Joe also regularly attends many other high school and town sporting events to show his support for the kids in Waterford. He is quite proud of the "lifetime" pass he earned due to his years of service to the community.

Joe Miller is a wonderful example for our Waterford community and we thank him for his dedication and efforts over the last 50 years.



Kris Morton

Kris Morton was born on Nov. 27, 1968, in New London, the son of Michael Morton and the late Ruth (Czerwinski) Morton. He attended WHS from 1982 – 1986 where he was an exceptional and record-setting wrestler. Kris passed away on June 9, 2010 at the age of 41.

Kris achieved unparalleled success during his wrestling career at WHS. He was a 3x ECC champion, 4x state divisional champion, 2x State Open runner-up and 2x State Open champion. Kris was named to the Scholastic All-American wrestling team in 1986 by "Wrestling, USA" magazine, only the 3rd CT wrestler to that point to achieve that honor.

Kris wrestled at WHS for Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame coach Glenn Rupert. Coach Rupert said that "Kris's

technique was not the smoothest that he had ever seen in these parts, but his attacking, aggressive style made him the dominant force that he was as he went undefeated in 1986. He was probably the most competitive wrestler that I ever had”.

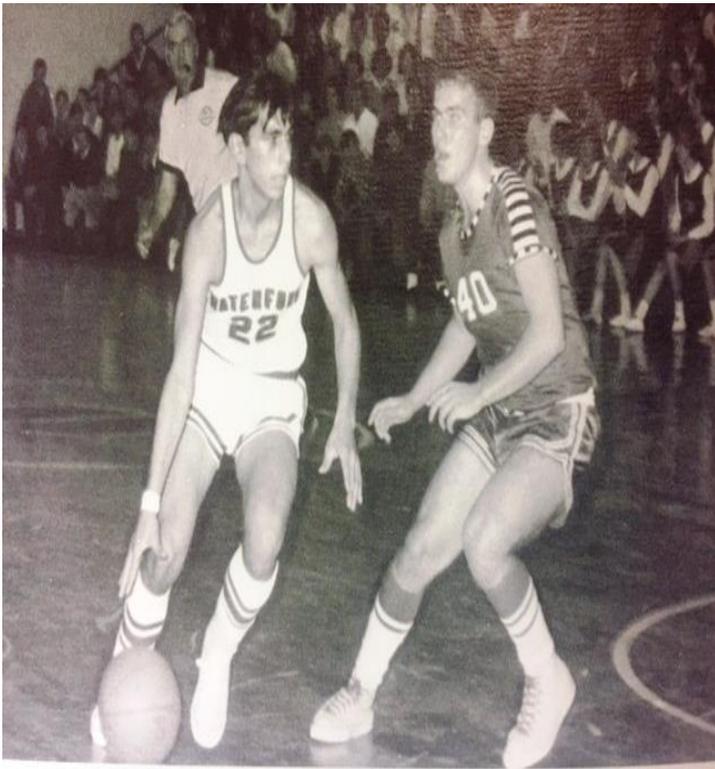
Rupert also remarked that Kris’s favorite victory was during his freshmen year at the State Open. It was perhaps the match that set the tone for the remaining 3 years of his career. He was matched against Louis Carrios of Buckley HS from Hartford. Kris was losing by 3 points with less than 1 minute remaining in the match. He pulled off a reverse with about 30 seconds left to win the match. Kris said “I proved something to myself that day; I showed myself that I could do it”.

Kris wrestled in the 91 pound weight class as a freshman and was the ECC, Class M and State Open champion. As a sophomore, he wrestled at 105 pounds, was the Class S State Champion and State Open runner-up. He wrestled at 119 pounds as a junior, winning his 2nd ECC and Class S state championship and again was the State Open runner-up. He capped his excellent wrestling career as a senior with his best season, as he finished undefeated in the 126 pound weight class with a record of 38 – 0, ending the year as the ECC, Class M and State Open champion.

Overall, Kris had a career record of 123-20-2 with 67 pins. He was ranked 9th in the country in the 126 pound weight class as a senior. At that time, Kris was only the 2nd wrestler in CT history to have won a state championship in all 4 years of his high school career.

Awards / Recognition

ECC Champion	1983, 1985, 1986
State Division Champion:	1983, 1984, 1985, 1986
State Open Runner-up:	1984, 1985
State Open Champion:	1983, 1986
“Wrestling, USA” magazine	
Scholastic All-American:	1986



Rick Murallo

Rick was born and raised in New London, where he lived through the 5th grade and where he picked up a love for basketball. He could always be found playing on some court in New London, such as Toby May, Bartlett School or anywhere a game was taking place. He played for Jennings School in the 4th and 5th grades before moving to Waterford starting in his 6th grade year. Later in life, Rick passed along his love of the game to his sons Trevor and Cory, who both played for WHS, with Cory helping lead WHS to its 1st-ever State Championship in 2012.

Rick played basketball for WHS for 4 years from 1965 – 1968. He began his career at WHS by becoming only the 2nd freshman in school history to start on the varsity team.

He helped lead WHS to a period of sustained success in the mid-sixties with the 1965 / 1966 and 1967 / 1968 teams each reaching the state semi-finals. The 1967 / 1968 team won the ECC league championship, going 10 – 0 in the league, including a 5OT win over Killingly.

Rick was a key player on those winning teams, averaging 25.4 PPG as a junior, setting a school record with 38 points scored in a game and being named to the New Haven Register All-State team. He was even better as a senior, averaging 29.2 PPG, broke his own school record by scoring 47 points in a game, established a school record by making 17 consecutive free throws in a game and being named 1st team All-State by the New Haven Register. Rick scored over 1,000 points in his WHS career.

Rick received interest from several schools to play basketball at the collegiate level, including Syracuse, Villanova and Providence College. He accepted a scholarship to the University of New Haven where he played for 1 year before accepting a scholarship and transferring to Central CT, where he played for 3 years under coach Bill Detrick. Highlights of his college career include being named the MVP in the Nova Scotia Classic and earning All-Tournament First Team honors in the Springfield Hall of Fame Tip-Off Tournament where he set the tournament assist record for most assists in a game.

Since the end of his playing days, Rick has coached at several schools, including stints as the Men's assistant coach at the USCGA, boy's freshman and varsity assistant coach at NLHS, girls Head coach at NLHS and Marianapolis Prep and boys Head coach at WHS.

Awards / Recognition

All-ECC:	1966 / 1967, 1967 / 1968
NH Register All-State:	1966 / 1967, 1967 / 1968
WHS Record for PPG:	38 (1967), 47 (1968)
WHS Record for Consecutive Free Throws made in a game:	17 (1968)



Chris Podeszwa

Chris Podeszwa is a Waterford native who attended WHS from 1985-1989 and earned 9 varsity letters while playing soccer, basketball and baseball. In his senior year, he was named captain in all 3 sports. Upon graduation, Chris went on to play baseball at UConn where he was a 4x letter winner. He then played professional baseball for 2 seasons and has been coaching collegiate baseball since 1996. Chris lives in Waterford with his wife, Isabella, and children, Sophia, Connor and Emilia.

Chris was a 4 year starter on the soccer team which won 2 ECC championships and advanced to the state championship game in 1987. Chris was named All-ECC in his junior and senior years and All-State in his senior year.

Chris was a 3-year starter at shortstop in baseball where the team won 2 ECC championships and the 1988 State Championship. He was a 3x All-ECC honoree and was named All-State as a senior. He was also a 3-year starter for New London American Legion, helping the team win a

State Championship in 1987 and advance to the State Championship game in 1989.

Chris attended UConn, playing 8 of the 9 positions on the field. The 1990 team was the 1st in school history to win the Big East tournament championship, the 1993 team received UConn's 1st ever "at-large" bid to the NCAA tournament.

Upon graduating from UConn, Chris played professionally for 1 season with the Chatham Ironmen in New Brunswick, Canada where he led the league in HRs/RBIs. He also played and coached for 1 season in Sweden for the Skelleftea Bears Baseball Club. In that year, the Bears won the Swedish National Championship, Chris was named the league MVP and he led the league in HRs/RBIs.

Chris began his coaching career by working for MLB as an Envoy coach in Germany helping prepare the Junior National team for the European Championships. He was an assistant coach at Mitchell College and UConn Avery Point. During his time at Avery Point, the team won the NJCAA Region XXI championship in 1999 and 2000, and the Northeast Region championship and a trip to the Division II World Series in 1999. Chris coached for Yarmouth-Dennis in the Cape Code Baseball League from 1997-2013, a time in which they won 3 league championships. Chris has been an assistant at UConn since 2004, a time where the team has made 4 NCAA tournament appearances, won 4 regular season/conference titles and advanced to the 2011 Super Regionals for the 1st time in school history.

Awards / Recognition

All-ECC:	1987 - 1989 (baseball) 1988 - 1989 (soccer)
All-State:	1989 (baseball, soccer)
CT State Champion:	1987 (NL Legion baseball) 1988 (Waterford baseball)
Swedish National MVP & League Champion:	1995
Coaching highlights:	11 league / tournament championships, 42 players drafted, 9 All-Americans



Katie Schoepfer

Katie Schoepfer was born and raised in Waterford, the daughter of Martin and Mary Jane. At an early age, she followed in her brother Andrew's footsteps, playing any sport that she could, including basketball, softball and soccer. As she grew, she focused on soccer, initially playing for the Waterford soccer Club and then on various other area / state club teams including Southeast Premier, Oakwood, South Central Premier and Connecticut ODP. This led her to making multiple regional and youth national teams. Katie attended WHS from 2002 – 2006 where she excelled like no other female player in school history. She went on to an award-winning career at Penn State University and then was drafted and still plays professionally in the National Women's soccer League. Katie currently lives in Boston, MA.

Katie had an unprecedented and record-setting career at WHS. She was a 4x varsity letter winner, 4x All-ECC,

4x All-State and 4x All-New England honoree. She was named the Player of the Year all 4 years by both The Day and the Norwich Bulletin. She earned All-American honors and named the Gatorade CT Player of the Year in her senior year. During her career at WHS, she became Connecticut's All-time leading goal scorer with 157 goals.

Katie went on to star at Penn State, annually a top 25 Division I soccer program. As a Nittany Lion, she was named to the Big Ten All-freshman team, was a 3x All-Big Ten honoree, 3x All-Region honoree and was named the Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year as a senior. Katie was a 2x All-American and also named a Scholar All-American.

Upon graduation, Katie was drafted to Sky Blue in the 2009 Women's Professional soccer draft. After one season in New Jersey, she signed a contract with the Boston Breakers. She has been a member of the Breakers for 6 seasons, making her the longest tenured player in club history. She has captained the team and is second all-time in appearances, trailing only Kristine Lily. She is also on the top 10 list in club history for goals scored.

Katie is passionate about teaching the game of soccer. She is in her third season as a volunteer assistant at Boston University; she is a U-11 club coach and participates in as many clinics as she can.

Awards / Recognition

All-ECC:	2002 - 2006
All-State:	2002 - 2006
All-New England:	2002 – 2006
The Day & Norwich Bulletin Player of the Year:	2002 – 2006
Gatorade CT Player of the Year:	2006
Big Ten All-freshman:	2007
Big Ten All-Conference	2007 - 2009
Collegiate All-Region team:	2007 - 2009
Collegiate All-American:	2007, 2009
Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year:	2009
Collegiate Scholar All-American:	2009

The Cactus Jack Foundation

The Cactus Jack Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that had its origins in 1989 as a grass roots charity whose mission is to aid individuals, families and other charitable organizations in need throughout Southeastern Connecticut. Ed "Cactus Jack" Evento was a free spirit, who for many decades gave countless hours of his time to people from all walks of life. He was a firm believer in giving something back, and not in small doses. Cactus Jack was an inspiration to many and it is with his sense of community that the foundation is named.

Cactus Jack's memory and spirit were honored each year from 1989 through the mid-1990s with a softball tournament that attracted teams throughout New England. Since 1997, the foundation has held the annual Cactus Jack Charity Golf Classic. In 2002, the foundation joined with The ARC of New London County as co-sponsors of the annual Jack O'Keefe Strides for the Handicapped Road Race and also formed the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame. In 2016, the foundation partnered with Mike Buscetto's "Bash at the Beach" to form the Cactus Jack Pediatric Fund which provides support for children and young people in need throughout Southeastern CT.

The foundation is proud to be able to give back to the community in the same spirit of Cactus Jack himself.

Cactus Jack Foundation Board of Directors

Tim Arsenault
Rick Beaney
Mike Buscetto
Tim Gigliotti
Dan Pickett
John Ryan
David Sutera
Jack Voelker



The Cactus Jack Foundation salutes this year's inductees to the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame. Congratulations on an honor well-deserved!

We would also like to thank all of the members of the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame for your contributions to Waterford Athletics and the fond memories that you have given to the Waterford community!

Thanks to the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame Selection Committee for another outstanding job and for your dedication in honoring those who have made special contributions to Waterford Athletics!

Finally, a big thank-you to all of you for your continued support of The Cactus Jack Foundation. We could not do what we do without your help and generosity. It is truly appreciated!



Great Neck

COUNTRY CLUB