
Honoring and Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

Box 1192 - Jamestown, NY 14702

September 2019

CSHOF Board & Officers Elected

The election of the Board of Directors of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame was held at its June 24th meeting; and at its July 29st meeting the Board elected the officers to lead the organization for the next year.



Randy Anderson

Russ Ecklund

Lee Johnson



Ron Melquist

Bill Race

Bob Schmitt

The officers are an experienced group of leaders. Randy Anderson begins his 11th year as an officer; Ron Melquist has served 25 years as either president or vice-president; Bill Race has served 20 years as vice-president and Bob Schmitt will serve his 5th term as vice-president. Secretary Russ Ecklund begins his 20th year and treasurer Lee Johnson starts his 15th term.

The CSHOF is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization with no paid employees. All officers and Board members serve without compensation or benefits. Their dedication to the CSHOF mission can be seen on the following table showing years of dedicated service to the organization:

2019-2020 CSHOF Board of Directors

NAME	POSITION	YEARS
Anderson, Mike	director	2
Anderson, Randy	president	15
Barton, Dick	director (& inductee)	14
Bongiovanni, John	director	6
Carlson, Franni	director	2
Cederquist, Cal	director (& inductee)	9
Cummings, Mike	director	2
Deppas, Lou	director	11
DiMaio, Joe	director	13
Ecklund, Russ	secretary	29
Heppeler, Tom	director	10
Huckno, Wally	director (& inductee)	17
Johnson, Chip	director	32
Johnson, Lee	treasurer	18
Kindberg, Scott	director	13
Larson, Fred	director	16
Lassen, Lori	director	4
Loll, Gary	director	2
Marshaus, Stan	director (& inductee)	8
Martin, Keith	director	6
Melquist, Ron	vice-president	31
Peters, Sr., Gary	director	4
Polechetti, Dave	director	10
Pucciarelli-Rice, Angela	director	5
Race, Bill	vice-president (& inductee)	24
Rea, Tammy	director	8
Rollinger, Bill	director (& inductee)	22
Schmitt, Bob	vice-president (& inductee)	7
Sinatra, Dr. Charles	director	32
Sirianni, Jay	director	5
Tomassini, Ed	director	9
Diethrick, Russ	founder, emeritus director (& inductee)	
Heslink, Terry	emeritus director	
Lundberg, Denny	emeritus director	
Tane, Komo	emeritus director (& inductee)	

DONT WIDEN THE PLATE

The speech below was given by John Scolinos, legendary baseball coach at Pepperdine ('46-'60) and Cal Poly ('62-'91), at a coaches' convention in 1996. It still is relevant today.

Coach Scolinos was 78 years old and five years retired from a college coaching career that began fifty years earlier. He shuffled to the stage to an impressive standing ovation, wearing dark polyester pants, a light blue shirt, and a rope around his neck from which home plate hung — a full-sized, stark-white home plate.

After speaking for twenty-five minutes, not once mentioning the prop hanging around his neck, he finally said...



"You're probably all wondering why I'm wearing home plate around my neck," he said, his voice growing irascible. "I may be old, but I'm not crazy. The reason I stand before you today is to share with you baseball people what I've learned in my life, what I've learned about home plate in my 78 years."

Scolinos asked the coaches in the room. "Do you know how wide home plate is in Little League?"

After a pause, someone offered, "Seventeen inches?"

"That's right," he said. "How about in Babe Ruth League?"

Seventeen inches was a guess from another reluctant coach.

"That's right," said Scolinos. "How wide is home plate in high school baseball?"

"Seventeen inches," the coaches said, sounding more confident.

"You're right!" Scolinos barked. "How wide is home plate in college?"

"Seventeen inches!" was said, in unison.

"How wide is home plate in minor league pro ball?"...

"Seventeen inches!"

"RIGHT! And in the Major Leagues, how wide is home plate?"

"Seventeen inches!"

"SEV-EN-TEEN INCHES!" he confirmed, his voice bellowing off the walls. "And what do they do with a Big League pitcher who can't throw the ball over seventeen inches?" Pause. "They send him to Pocatello !" he hollered, drawing raucous laughter.

"What they don't do is this: they don't say, 'Ah, that's okay, Jimmy. If you can't hit a seventeen-inch target, we'll make it eighteen inches or nineteen inches. We'll make it twenty inches so you have a better chance of hitting it. If you can't hit that, let us know so we can make it wider still, say twenty-five inches.'"

"Coaches... what do we do when your best player shows up late to practice? What if he gets caught drinking? Do we hold him accountable? Or do we change the rules to fit him? Do we widen home plate?"

Four thousand coaches grew quiet, the fog lifting as the old coach's message began to unfold. He turned the home plate that was hanging around his neck toward himself and, using a Sharpie, began to draw something. When he turned it toward the crowd, point up, a house was revealed, complete with a freshly drawn door and two windows. "This is the problem in our homes today - with our marriages - with the way we parent our kids - with our discipline.

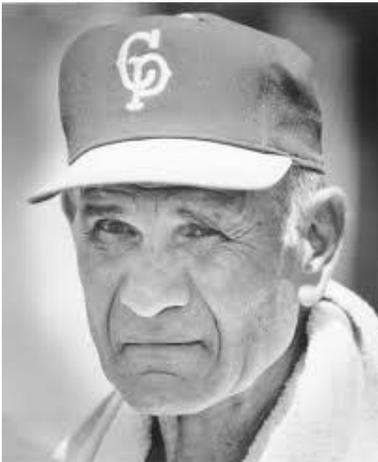
"We don't teach accountability to our kids, and there is no consequence for failing to meet standards. We just widen the plate!"

Then to the point at the top of the house he added a small American flag. "This is the problem in our schools today. The quality of our education is going downhill fast because teachers have been stripped of the tools they need to be successful to educate and discipline our young people. We are allowing others to widen home plate! Where is that getting us?"

The room was silent. He replaced the flag with a Cross. "And this is the problem in the Church, where powerful people in positions of authority have taken advantage of young children, only to have such an atrocity swept under the rug for years. Our church leaders are widening home plate for themselves! And we allow it."

"And the same is true with our government. Our so-called representatives make rules for us that don't apply to themselves. They take bribes from lobbyists and foreign countries. They no longer serve us. And we allow them to widen home plate! We see our country falling into a dark abyss while we just watch."

At a baseball convention where coaches expected to learn something about curve balls and bunting and how to run better practices, they were learning something far more valuable.



John Scolinos

"If I am lucky, you will remember one thing from this old coach today. It is this: "If we fail to hold ourselves to a higher standard, a standard of what we know to be right; if we fail to hold our spouses and our children to the same standards, if we are unwilling or unable to provide a consequence when they do not meet the standard; and if our schools and our churches and our government fail to hold themselves accountable to those they serve, there is but one thing to look forward to ..."

With that, he held home plate in front of his chest, turned it around, and revealed its dark black backside.

Coach Solinos concluded: "Coaches, keep your players, your own children, your churches, your government, and most of all, keep yourself at seventeen inches. Don't widen the plate."