

Coach Vincent J. O'Connor



Coach Vincent O'Connor has an M.S. in Health and Physical Education from Brooklyn College plus an M.A. and Professional Diploma in Guidance and Counseling from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Coach O'Connor played varsity football and track, played in the orchestra and served as school president at John Jay HS. After serving 18 months in Korea, he entered the P.E. program at NYU and coached J.V. at St. Francis.

During his senior year at NYU, he was appointed the varsity coach at St. Francis Prep. His coaching career was marked by early success as the Terriers won the Catholic H.S. Championship in 1955, his first year as varsity coach.

Prep has achieved an outstanding record of success under Coach O'Connor's 54 years of leadership, recording 300 victories, 15 CHSFL and 2AA Championships (with undefeated seasons in 1957, '64, '66, '72, '73, and '83). He received the National Coach of the Year Award in '92 by the U.S.H.S. Coaches Association.

His 1957 team set the record for fewest points allowed by a member team...31 points in 7 games. His 1966 team set the record for most points scored by a member team, 331 points in 8 games.

Coach O'Connor's legacy reads like a Who's Who in American Sports History.

- Prep All Americans include Larry DiNardo, Gerry DiNardo, Frank Pomarico, Marco Battaglia.
- Prep's Super Bowl Winners: Vince Lombardi, Ed Jenkins, Dan Henning, Bill Pickel, Marco Battaglia.
- Other Professionals: Richie Szaro, Mike Strofolino, Charlie Krapata, Frank Pomarico, Chris Goetz, Fritz Avin, Wayne Morris.
- Over 600 former players have played college football. 36 are associated H.S. or college football

His players have been captains on undefeated Championship teams.

- Tom Masterson - Harvard (Ivy League Champions), and
- Larry DiNardo-Notre Dame (National Champions)

Coach O'Connor's very first champion team (1955) sent Tony Armstead to Holy Cross, George Van Cott to Boston College, and Ray Ratkowski to Notre Dame. Many of these student athletes would be the first children in their families to go to college. They were the children of immigrants and blue collar workers, a tradition that still continues.

Great college coaches like Woody Hayes, (Ohio State) who recruited Jimmy O'Rourke and Ara Parsigian who recruited Prep's Notre Dame players. These coaches made the pilgrimage to North 6th and Bedford to see the Prep players. In 1966, Senator Robert Kennedy came to Brooklyn to recruit Richie Szaro for Harvard.

St. Francis Prep in Brooklyn was a school of 1000 boys. A three level building that had no field or weight room. The team would travel 45 minutes to Red Hook Field to practice for 3 hours, then travel back home at night carrying their equipment and books. The weight room at the Prep was the Boy's bathroom and a closet. Even with less than the best in facilities, Prep was the first school to shoot film of their games to use as a coaching and practice tool.

Coach has served as President of the CHSFL and has received over 20 Coach of the Year Awards by the NY Daily News and the CHSFL, and received the 2000 Frank McGuire Award which honors outstanding high school coaches.

Prep teams were always integrated. The first African-Americans to play in the CHSFL were at the Prep.

He turned boys into men and prepared them for life. Some of his players made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country (Lt. James McClug-USMC-Vietnam) and (Captain Timothy Stackpole-FDNY 9/11) among others.

In his honor, St. Francis Prep has established The Vincent & Mary O'Connor Scholarship Fund which will benefit many deserving prep students in the years to come.