



## **AL BLOZIS\***

### **William L. Dickinson HS**

### **Athlete - Football/Shotput**

Al Blozis gained initial fame as a Jersey City legend before dying tragically as an American hero.

He drew immediate attention upon his arrival at Dickinson because of his immense size, but by the time he graduated in 1938, he was known for much more.

Eventually filling out at 6-6 and 250 pounds, while in high school he was an All-State football player and set 24 records in shot put and discus. He also lettered in basketball and swimming.

Al went on to attend Georgetown, where he became a world-record holder in the shot put. He would have been the overwhelming favorite to win gold at the 1940 Olympics, but the games were cancelled because of the advent of World War II. He was so well known for his exploits that United Press International named him one of the three greatest athletes of 1941, along with boxer Joe Louis and golfer Ben Hogan. Al was also a standout football player at Georgetown, and upon his graduation in 1942, was drafted by the New York Giants, who saw him as an ideal tackle.

He became an All-Pro performer for the Giants. But all the while, ever since the United States had entered the war, he had wanted to serve his country. Each time he was rebuffed because of his size. Eventually he was accepted, and even set an Army record by tossing a hand grenade 94 yards at Officer Candidate School. After two full standout seasons with the Giants in 1942 and '43, he joined the team late in the 1944 season while on Army furlough. He helped the Giants reach the 1944 NFL championship game, where they lost 14-7 to the Green Bay Packers. Several weeks after, he shipped off to France to fight in the war. After an extended period of intense action in the frigid winter conditions, at the end of the day on Jan. 31, two men in his platoon failed to return. Al ventured into the dark to find them, but he, too, never returned. He was declared killed in action, and his remains were never recovered.

Al's heroism was recognized by the Giants, who retired his No. 32. He was also recognized posthumously throughout Jersey City, most notably at Dickinson, where the gym is named in his honor.

*\*Posthumous Award*



## **EUGENE CHYZOWYCH\*** **Columbia HS** **Soccer Coach**

Eugene Chyzowych was synonymous with success throughout his lifetime.

Born in the Ukraine, he settled in Philadelphia along with his family in the wake of World War II. He became a standout soccer player in the city, first at North Catholic and then at Temple University, earning him the nickname "The Educated Toe."

His search for a teaching job brought him to North Jersey, where he first landed an assistant coaching position at Chatham in 1961 under another legend, Otto Haas. In 1964, he accepted his first head coaching position at Columbia, where the South Orange-Maplewood school had a young soccer program that wasn't very good, having won a total of four games in its first three years.

After his first team went 4-8, Chyzowych took the step of doing something that was a new concept for soccer in 1965 - he established a community-based feeder system, with the creation of the Cougar Soccer Club.

In a community loaded with large post-war baby boom families, kids began to accept and grow up on soccer, and the Columbia program soon took off. Chyzowych never left the school - he coached up until he had to resign due to health reasons at the start of the 2013 season. Along the way, he even served as coach of the United States National Team in 1973. His final 50-year record was 757-216-73, which makes him the third winningest coach nationally and first among public school coaches. His teams won four NJSIAA Group 4 state titles, 16 sectional championships, 13 Essex County Championships and 24 conference titles.

Chyzowych's coaching success also extended to girls volleyball. When Columbia began to offer the sport in 1977, he was the founding coach, and the program went 247-0 before losing its first match in 1988.

His success also spawned a coaching tree comprised of ex-players that includes highly-successful college coaches like Dave Masur (St. John's) and Lenny Armuth (Drew) as well as high school coaches such as David Donovan (Delbarton), Marty Berman (Seton Hall Prep) and Jack Weber (Verona).

*\*Eugene passed away on May 10, 2014.*



**DON DANSER\***  
**NJSIAA**  
**Administrator**

During a career spanning more than 40 years, Don Danser served as an English teacher, coach, official, NJSIAA Project Manager, Tournament Director and NJSIAA Assistant Director for the sports of cross country, indoor track and outdoor track.

Don, who grew up one of 12 children, always loved to teach, and even after he retired from the profession, loved any opportunity to help and enlighten others. He was known as the "Answer Man" at NJSIAA, and would light up at any opportunity to share his knowledge and help people.

Don taught Latin for three years in Armonk, N.Y., and then moved to the Philadelphia School District, where he helped create a language arts program for elementary schools based on Latin. In 1972, he accepted a job as an English teacher at Rancocas Valley High School. It was there that he also began his career with track and cross country, first as an assistant cross country coach, and then as a head coach. In his 10 years as a head coach, his teams went 81-39.

The 1970s was also the decade when Don became an official and started directing meets, including most every major event in South Jersey.

In 1997, he became director of the state cross country championships. That year he also retired from teaching at Rancocas Valley to take a position as NJSIAA Project Manager. He was promoted to Assistant Director in 2001. Aside from his cross country and track duties, Don was also in charge of NJSIAA's cooperative sports programs, the ShopRite Cup point system and editing all major publications on a yearly basis.

He received numerous service awards, was inducted into several Halls of Fame and was also a member of the NFHS Record Book Committee and its Track and Field Rules Committee.

*\*Don passed away on June 15, 2015.*



## **ERIN DONOHUE**

### **Haddonfield Memorial HS**

### **Athlete**

### **Track & Field/Cross Country**

Erin Donohue established herself as one of the greatest track and field and cross-country stars in New Jersey history during a legendary career at Haddonfield High School. How great was Donohue? Check out these stats.

Donohue, who graduated from Haddonfield in 2001, finished her historic high school career with nine Meet of Champions titles (two in cross-country, one indoors and six outdoors). She probably would have won more M of C titles, but she only ran one indoor track season after starring on the basketball court through her junior season. Donohue scored over 1,000 career points in basketball and led Haddonfield to a state Group 2 title.

But Donohue's best sport was track and field. Donohue won three national titles in the mile, including a then state record 4:42.96 when she won the mile in the final high school race of her career at the 2001 National Scholastic Championships at North Carolina State University. Donohue also finished her career with a state record 15 state outdoor Group Championship titles out of a possible 16. Donohue won the 800, 1,600 and 3,200 four straight years at the outdoor state Group Championships, and also won the javelin three times. At the 2001 M of C, Donohue, after already winning the 1,600 and 3,200, nearly won the javelin, placing second to Chelsea Salisbury of Buena by just three inches.

In 2000, Donohue was named to the All-Century Team by The Star-Ledger, and she was chosen as the state's Athlete of the Year multiple times. After graduating from Haddonfield, Donohue starred at the University of North Carolina, earning All-American honors seven times, running on several Championship of America winning relay teams at the Penn Relays, and captured an ACC title in the javelin.

After graduating from North Carolina in 2005, Donohue accepted an internship with Nike's In-Store Communications department and continued to train around the Nike campus in Beaverton, Oregon. By the beginning of 2006, Donohue was training full-time and competing as a professional. In 2007, Donohue made the U.S. World Outdoor Championship team in the 1,500, and a year later accomplished her biggest goal when she finished second in the 1,500 at the U.S. Olympic Trials to earn a spot on the 2008 U.S. Olympic team. In 2010, Donohue made the U.S. World Indoor Championship team in the 1,500, and in 2015 she qualified for the U.S. National Championships in the 800. After surgery prevented her from competing at the U.S. Olympic Trials in 2012, Donohue qualified for the 2016 Olympic Trials in both the 800 and 1600.

Now retired from competitive racing, Donohue finished her career with personal bests of 4:03.49 for 1,500, 1:59.99 for 800, 2:37.42 for 1,000, and 8:55.07 for 3,000.



## **TODD FRAZIER**

### **Toms River South HS**

### **Athlete - Baseball**

Todd Frazier has been one of the state's most well-known athletes from the time he was 12 years old.

He first gained acclaim as a star on the Toms River East American team that won the 1998 Little League World Series. He was the winning pitcher, went 4-for-4 and hit a home run in the championship win over Japan.

At Toms River South, where he graduated in 2004, Todd was an All-State performer who set numerous school season and career records in categories including home runs, runs scored, stolen bases and walks. He also helped TRS win two Group 3 state championships. He also was a 1,000 point scorer in basketball.

Todd's next stop was Rutgers, where he was a three-year starter. He led the Scarlet Knights to a Big East championship, and in 2007 was chosen Big East Player of the Year and was named an All-American.

He was a first-round draft pick by the Cincinnati Reds in 2007, and debuted with the team in 2011. While with the Reds, he finished third in the 2012 National League Rookie of the Year voting, and was a two-time NL All-Star. He also won the Home Run Derby at the 2015 All-Star game. Todd was traded to the Chicago White Sox following the 2015 season, and then to the Yankees prior to the trade deadline in July, 2017. He then signed a free agent deal earlier this year with Mets, and just completed his first year with the team.



**ASJHA JONES**  
**Piscataway HS**  
**Athlete - Basketball**

Asjha Jones is one of the most successful basketball players in New Jersey history. The 1998 graduate of Piscataway High has been an NJSIAA state champion, an NCAA champ and an Olympic gold medalist.

Jones set Piscataway career records by finishing with 2,266 points and 1,256 rebounds. As a senior, she was chosen state Player of the Year and an All-American. She led the Chiefs to the Group 4 state title as a junior.

She played collegiately at Connecticut, where she scored 1,502 points and collected 794 rebounds, and played on teams that won NCAA titles in 2000 and 2002, with the latter team going undefeated.

Her professional career included several seasons overseas and a dozen years in the WNBA, after she was drafted in the first round (fourth overall) by Washington in 2002.

She was on the United States team that won the world championship in 2010, and the caper to her career came in 2012, when she played for the US team that won the gold medal at the Olympics in London.



## **TONY KARCICH** **St. Joseph Regional HS** **Football Coach**

Few people have had as great an impact over the state football scene over the past 50 years than Tony Karcich.

A product of Hackensack High School, where he was an All-Bergen County linebacker, he played collegiately at Syracuse, where he graduated in 1969. Karcich started his coaching career as an assistant at Hackensack in 1969. He became head coach at Bergen Catholic in 1974, where his teams won three sectional championships in nine years.

Karcich then stepped away from coaching to work on Wall Street. After sitting out the 1983 and '84 seasons, he realized his heart belonged with athletics. He returned to football coaching, and became the head man at St. Joseph in Montvale in 1985. The team there had gone 4-5, 3-6 and 1-8 in the three seasons prior to his arrival. His first season produced a 5-3-1 record, and two years later, the program won its first sectional championship. In all the time since Karcich arrived on the scene, St. Joseph has had just one losing season.

He remained coach through the 2013 campaign, and during that time won 17 sectional and group championships. Six of his teams finished No. 1 in state rankings.

His final tally was 338 victories, which is a Bergen County record and ranks among the best in state history.

He's received numerous prestigious honors, including his induction into the Hackensack, Bergen Catholic, St. Joseph, State Coaches Association and Region II Wrestling Halls of Fame.

Karcich also served as St. Joseph Athletic Director for 25 years until he retired in June. As a show of appreciation for all of his service, St. Joseph held "Tony Karcich Day" in October, fittingly on the day when Green Knights hosted Bergen Catholic. As part of the festivities that day, the field at DiNallo Stadium was named in his honor.



**LYDELL MITCHELL**  
**Salem HS**  
**Athlete - Football**

Lydell Mitchell has made the most of his stellar three-sport career at Salem, where he was part of its class of 1968.

A football, basketball and track standout, it was his gridiron play that earned him a scholarship to Penn State.

Mitchell became a star for the Nittany Lions, where among his accomplishments were the three NCAA single-season records he set in 1971 - touchdowns (29), rushing TDs (26) and points (174). During that season, he rushed for a school-record 1,567 yards and finished fifth in the Heisman Trophy voting. He ended his career with 2,935 rushing yards, which was accomplished in three years.

He next became a mainstay in the NFL for the Baltimore Colts, where he was a three-time Pro Bowl selection, surpassed the single-season 1,000-yard rushing mark three times and ended his pro career with 6,534 rushing yards.

After his retirement, Lydell became successful businessman. Along with former Penn State teammate Franco Harris, a Rancocas Valley graduate and fellow NJSIAA Hall of Famer, they own Super Bakery, a company that produces nutrition-oriented foods for schoolchildren. He and Harris also partnered to rescue the Parks Sausage Company in Baltimore, which was the first African-American owned business in the U.S. to go public.





## **RICK PORCELLO** **Seton Hall Prep** **Athlete - Baseball**

In the span of just over a decade, Rick Porcello has gone from a Seton Hall Prep star to Cy Young Award winner to 2018 World Series champion with the Boston Red Sox.

Porcello is considered perhaps the best player in the long history of the Seton Hall Prep baseball program. The 2007 graduate played three varsity seasons, pitched in 34 games, started 21, completed 14 and ended with a 20-1 record with four saves and 0.88 earned run average. He was also an outstanding hitter, with 116 hits, 69 runs, 24 doubles, 16 home runs and 87 RBI. He walked 32 times and had a .491 career batting average. During his time on the varsity, the team went 88-5-1, with two Greater Newark Tournament and three Non-Public A state championships. He was named National Player of the Year as a senior by Gatorade, USA Today and the American Baseball Coaches Association.

Rick opted to turn pro that summer after being drafted in the first round by the Detroit Tigers. He reached the majors in just two years, and debuted with a 14-9 season at age 20 in 2009, resulting in a third-place finish in the American League Rookie of the Year voting. He had double-digit win totals in each season with the Tigers before being dealt to Boston in a four-player deal at the conclusion of the 2014 season. In 2016, he posted a 22-4 record with the Red Sox that resulted in his winning the American League Cy Young Award.

This year, he was an important part of Boston's World Series-winning team. He went 17-7 during the season and then followed with starts in each round of the playoffs with relief appearances in two other games.

Porcello, who has a 135-106 career record in the majors, has not forgotten his roots. Seton Hall Prep now plays at a state-of-the-art field in West Orange that was made possible by his generous donation. That field, at the school's Kelly Athletic Complex, has been named in his honor.



**WILLIAM J. RAFTERY**  
**St. Cecilia HS**  
**Athlete - Basketball**

He has one of the most famous faces and one of the most recognizable voices in the sport of basketball. And for Bill Raftery, it all started in an immigrant household in Kearny. Raftery, whose parents came to New Jersey from Ireland, grew up playing basketball, baseball and soccer in the Hudson County town.

He attended St. Cecilia High School in Kearny, where he was a star in all three sports. Basketball, however, was clearly his best. As a senior in 1959, he set a state record by scoring 827 points. It boosted his career total to 2,193, which established a state career scoring record.

His next stop was LaSalle University in Philadelphia, where he averaged 14.6 points during his career. He was then invited to training camp with the New York Knicks, but was one of the final cuts. He landed a job as recreation director in Kearny, and was soon hired as head basketball coach at FDU Madison, where he stayed four years. He then moved on to Seton Hall, where he went 154-141 during an 11-year run that saw the Pirates grow into a charter member of the Big East Conference.

He resigned prior to the 1981-82 season, and soon started his amazing broadcasting career. He initially worked college games for the Big East, CBS and ESPN, and also replaced Phil Jackson as the color analyst for New Jersey Nets games on SportsChannel. During the course of his 37-year association with CBS, he's risen to become the analyst for the past four NCAA Final Fours. Prior to that, he was also the radio analyst for the Final Four at Westwood One Radio Sports for 23 years. When the Big East was reconstituted in 2013 and aligned with FOX Sports, Raftery joined the network and became the lead analyst for its conference telecasts on FS1.

In 2017, he was inducted into the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame, and earlier that year won his second consecutive Sports Emmy Award for Outstanding Sports Personality/Sports Event Analyst for his work during the NCAA Tournament for CBS/TBS/TNT/TruTV. Among many other prestigious honors, he has been inducted into the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Hall of Fame, and has received the Curt Gowdy Media Award from the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.



## **MIKE ROZIER**

### **Woodrow Wilson HS**

### **Athlete - Football**

Mike Rozier turned a standout career at Woodrow Wilson in Camden into stardom at Nebraska, culminating in a Heisman Trophy-winning season in 1983.

Rozier wasn't heavily recruited at Woodrow Wilson, where he graduated in 1980. He was noticed by an assistant coach from Nebraska while watching film of another player from a rival school.

He spent a year at a junior college in Kansas, before arriving at Nebraska. After a solid sophomore season for the national powerhouse Cornhuskers, he had a breakout year as a junior in the fall of 1982. That autumn, he broke a school record by rushing for 1,689 yards, was a consensus All-American and finished 10th in the Heisman balloting.

As a senior, Rozier ran for an astounding 2,148 yards and 29 TDs, while averaging 7.8 yards per carry. Aside from repeating as an All-America, he also won the Heisman, finishing ahead of Steve Young and Doug Flutie in the balloting.

Mike played two years in the USFL and seven more in the NFL, where he was a two-time Pro Bowl selection with the Houston Oilers.

As a salute to to what Rozier accomplished during his career, the football field at Woodrow Wilson is named in his honor.



**KRISTEN SOMOGYI**  
**St. Peter's HS**  
**Athlete - Basketball**

Kristen Somogyi was a history-maker during her years at St. Peter's of New Brunswick, where she graduated from in 1992.

Kristen's most notable achievement was her career total of 3,899 points. It was not only a state record for girls, it broke the boy's record of 3,310 that had been set by her father, John, a generation earlier at St. Peter's.

She was a three-time All-State and All-American, she led her team to two Non-Public B state titles and a Tournament of Champions crown as a senior.

She started her college career at Virginia, where her team won a conference championship and reached the Elite Eight in the NCAA Tournament. She then transferred to Rutgers, where she scored 1,109 points in two seasons with the Scarlet Knights.



## **JAMES SPANARKEL**

### **Hudson Catholic Regional HS**

### **Athlete - Basketball**

Jim Spanarkel is one of the greatest athletes to hail from Hudson County. A basketball and baseball star at Hudson Catholic, he also played both sports at Duke University.

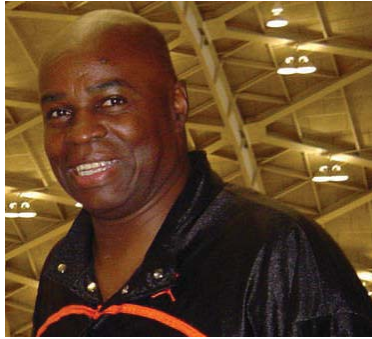
As a basketball player, he was a 1,000-point scorer for Hudson Catholic, where he graduated in 1975. He was a three-time All-County player and two-time All-Stater on the hardwood. A highlight of his hoops career was a victory over St. Anthony in the 1975 Hudson County final, in a game played before thousands at the Jersey City Armory.

In baseball, he earned All-State recognition as a pitcher and first baseman.

Even though he played both sports at Duke, basketball was clearly his specialty. He was a three-time team MVP, a two-time All-Atlantic Coast Conference selection and a two-time All-America. He was named most outstanding player at the NCAA East Regional in 1978, during a run where the Blue Devils finished national runner-up. He ended his career as Duke's first 2,000-point scorer, and was inducted into the school Hall of Fame in 1990.

Spanarkel was taken 16th overall in the first round by the Philadelphia 76ers in 1979. His NBA career spanned five years.

Spanarkel has also had a successful career as a broadcaster, as an analyst for the Brooklyn Nets on YES and NCAA games for both CBS and FOX Sports.



**BRIAN TAYLOR**  
**Perth Amboy HS**  
**Athlete - Basketball**

Brian Taylor is regarded as one of the most talented athletes ever produced out of Middlesex County.

He was an All-American as both a guard in basketball and quarterback in football at Perth Amboy, where he graduated in 1969.

He helped his team win a state title as a junior, during a year in which he once scored 84 points in a game. He ended his career with 2,495 points, which at the time ranked second in state history.

He continued his basketball career at Princeton, where he scored 1,239 points, which ranked second at the time behind Bill Bradley on the school scoring chart. Taylor scored those points in just two years, since freshmen were still ineligible at the time, and he opted to forego his senior year to turn pro.

He went on to play a total of 11 years in the ABA and NBA. He was the ABA Rookie of the Year with the New York Nets and teamed with Julius Erving to lead the Nets to ABA titles in 1974 and '76. He also made two appearances in the ABA All-Star game.



**KEIKO TOKUDA**  
**Clifton HS**  
**Athlete - Tennis**

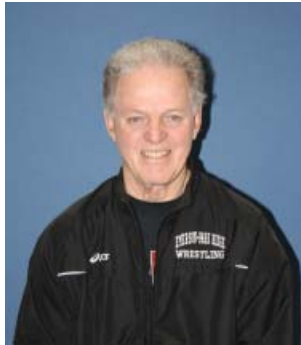
Keiko Tokuda graduated from Clifton in 1998 as one of the most dominant athletes in state history. A tennis star for the Mustangs, she is the only player to win four NJSIAA singles championships, which she accomplished from 1994 through '97. Not only that, she was undefeated during her career, compiling an 86-0 record. And if you're looking for more dominance, she only lost two sets in her career - one apiece to Anastasia Pozdniakova of Moorestown Friends during the state tournament as a freshman and sophomore.

Keiko was born soon after her parents immigrated from Japan to Clifton in 1979. She played first singles during all four years of high school, and also won four straight Passaic County singles titles. Concurrent to her high school career, she was at one point ranked 13th in the world among players 18 and under, and was the National 18-and-under clay court champ in 1996. She played in the junior events at Wimbledon, the French Open and the U.S. Open.

It wasn't all easy for Keiko. During the summer of 1997, just before her senior year, she was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis. She spent three weeks in the hospital, and lost almost 30 pounds. Tennis had to wait for a period, but she gradually rounded into form, made it to the state tournament and capped her undefeated career with a 6-1, 6-2 championship victory over Maren Haus of Manasquan.

Tokuda graduated 13th in her class at Clifton, and she went on to attend Stanford University on a full scholarship. She was a member of Stanford teams that won NCAA championships in 1999, 2001 and 2002 and was runner-up in 2000. She was a team captain her final two seasons, and also earned All-America recognition. She graduated with a major in International Relations and minor in Psychology.

After playing a year on the WTA Tour, Keiko decided to retire from tennis in December of 2002. She has remained in the San Francisco area, and is currently head of marketing for Front, a computer software company.



**STAN WOODS**  
**Emerson Jr-Sr HS /**  
**Park Ridge HS**  
**Wrestling Coach**

Stan Woods is a living legend.

The 78-year old has been the wrestling coach for Emerson, and later the Emerson/Park Ridge co-op, since 1967. During those 51 seasons, his teams have had just one losing season, captured 37 league titles, nine sectional championships and the Group 2 state championship in 2016.

His teams have also won 751 matches, which makes him the winningest wrestling coach in New Jersey history.

Woods is a graduate of Roxbury High School and East Stroudsburg University. He's received numerous awards, such as the Bill Powley Service Award for Bergen County wrestling, induction into the State Coaches Association Hall of Fame, the Harry Lake Award from the New Jersey Wrestling Coaches Association, and recognition by National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

He served on the NJSIAA Wrestling Committee from 1978 through '89, and was also president of the NJWCA from 1973 through '75.

He was named state Coach of the Year in 2007, has been named Bergen County Coach of the Year six times, and has had 11 of his teams named Team of the Year in Bergen County. A total of 100 wrestlers under his guidance have won District championships, and 28 have won Region titles.

In perhaps the greatest show of how much that Stan has meant to his school, the gym at Emerson is named in his honor.