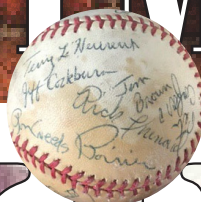


TALKING BASEBALL



And, in Sanford, that always includes John Cochin

To this day, John Cochin has a reputation in Sanford.

“Wherever I go, people always say ‘Oh, I had your father as a teacher,” said his daughter Brenda McCarthy, who just just heard this again recently when she was selling a home as a realtor. “Make sure you say hi to your dad for me!’ All his students loved him.”

John Cochin, now 85 years old, is a 1955 graduate of Sanford High School and three-sport athlete, who started teaching in the Sanford schools in 1964. He taught Earth Science and Chemistry before retiring from teaching in 2010.

“People still know him, and they have a lot to say about him,” said Brenda, Sanford High School Class of 1979, who was also a student in her dad’s classroom. “And they knew us because we were his daughters and we’d go to every game.”

John began a storied baseball coaching career at Sanford High School in 1971. John led teams to two major championships for Sanford High School: a Telegram League Championship in 1974, and a State Championship in 1978. He was the Sports Editor at the Sanford News for the duration of the paper’s existence, and loved to attend games and write about Sanford’s athletes. In 201, he was inducted into the Maine Baseball Hall of Fame.

As a coach, he was regarded for his game strategy and also his keen perception for talent. Roland Cote, who coached freshmen baseball and assisted Cochin, recalled varsity try-outs one spring.

“John said to me ‘this kid is going to be a good player.’ I said ‘how do you know that, John?’ I didn’t think he had that great of a try-out. He said ‘I’m telling you. Not only is he going to make the team, he’s going to pitch for me eventu-



John Cochin

Help fund the John Cochin field

Supported by his students and players through the years, the Sanford Schools Legacy Foundation is raising funds to name the new baseball practice field at Sanford High School in John Cochin’s honor. To make a tax-deductible donation, visit www.sanfordschoolslegacyfoundation.com/give for donations under \$500. Donations above \$500 may be sent via check to the foundation at 917 Main St., Suite 200, Sanford, ME 04073.

ally.’ I go, ‘ya, right.’ ... And he was right. He became one of our best pitchers for a long time.”

A different pitcher, Andy Adams of the state championship team in 1978, recalled Cochin as a great coach with a keen sense.

“I always respected him because he was a good game strategist, a guy who knew where to put people and when to play them, and that enabled us to win,” said Adams, who was also Cochin’s student in chemistry. “He knew when to bunt, when to steal, where to play players,

those type of things.”

Adams said he’ll never forget the state championship game in 1978. Just before gametime, Coach told Adams he was going to rest the senior star. Though pitchers weren’t restricted as they are now, Coach thought Andy needed rest because he had pitched the last two games that week to get them to this final game. Adams protested. “Hey, we didn’t come this far, and I didn’t pitch this much so somebody else can start the game. I feel great, you gotta let me start. ... I pleaded my case, and he let me start.”

Sure enough, Adams pitched the whole game — and won it all. Cote said that was a testament to them both, especially Cochin. “How many coaches would do that? But John felt Andy felt good enough to pitch, and he deserved it. That’s the kind of guy John is. I really feel he is one of the best baseball coaches in all of baseball. He was very, very perceptive. Not everybody can do that. He knows talent.”

He also knew patience, said McCarthy. “He was always a teacher, even to us. He would always help us with our homework, most in math and science.”

John has three daughters — Brenda, Lisa Gerry and Kristi Peters of Sanford — and growing up “he would play catch with us and taught all of us to play baseball. And he loved to take us to Red Sox games, that was huge!”

Through the years it was ball and Cochin’s daughter, now Kristi Peters, that kept him in touch with Adams.

“I would see him occasionally, but the common denominator recently was my daughter who played softball for his daughter, who became the varsity coach. John followed his daughter as a coach, and I followed my daughter as her player.”

And that allowed them to relive their glory days. “Of course, everytime I see him we end up talking about the old days, right?”