

Sports

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Our Athletes



Former Blue Knight Ryan Gemmell returns a Connecticut interception in the first quarter.

Connecticut wins the cup

Knights play a key role in CT/RI game

By JOHN GORALSKI
SPORTS WRITER

Ryan Gemmell fell at the feet of his high school coach under a big stack of Rhode Island players. On Saturday, June 27, Rhode Island had stopped Connecticut's extra point attempt and had marched unfettered across the Rentschler Field turf in East Hartford, but Gemmell ended their quest for the early lead.

Football

The former Blue Knight tipped an endzone pass and returned it almost 30 yards before opponents tracked him down. Gemmell had made a strong opening statement at the 2009 Governor's Cup interstate football game and had sparked a defense that would finish with five turnovers and a 31-13 win. The recent graduate lifted himself from the grass and leapt into his coach's arms in celebration.

"It was a game-changing play, because some momentum came back to us," said Southington High School football coach Bill Mella, Connecticut's head coach in the annual Governor's Cup contest. "We scored but didn't get the two

“

Those guys are just special kids. It was so great to see them succeed and to have them stand out like they did.

”

Bill Mella,
Governor's Cup coach

[point conversion]. They were driving, but...bam...there was Gemmell, but that's what he does, man. He comes downhill. He robs things. He appears out of nowhere."

Gemmell was one of three former Blue Knights to anchor the defense. Matt Roncaioli and Kenny Duffy played a pivotal role.

2009 Governor's Cup — June 27
Connecticut 31
Rhode Island 13

Gemmell said that he was happy to play alongside his teammates one more time.

"I couldn't ask for a better end for my senior year. We played a respectable game and came away with the win with two of my best friends and teammates," he said. "I was just so glad to be able to play with them again in this game. At Southington, we like to stress our good defense. We had three people come here that did pretty well on defense."

Defense was the difference. Connecticut led, 12-7, after a sluggish first half, but trailed 13-12 with seven minutes remaining in the third quarter. Connecticut rallied for three late scores to get the win.

"Rhode Island's an all-star team, too," said Mella. "As much as we think that our offense is going to come out and put up points, they have some really talented kids on that team. You really have to hand it to them. They put

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Town champions

South Little League wins second title in a row

By JOHN GORALSKI
SPORTS WRITER

Each time Dalton Quint found himself in a hole, he climbed back out. On Tuesday, June 23, Quint pitched the entire game in the town championship finals and erased a pair of two run deficits with a pair of two-run homeruns.

His teammates manufactured the go-ahead run in the bottom of the seventh inning, and the Southington South Little League Giants earned the 2009 town championship with a 7-6 victory over the West Little League Cardinals.

Little League

"The kids wanted to win the game, and they just went out and got it," said Giants manager Tim Rose. "They didn't give up, and that's the message. We were down by two runs in the sixth inning, but they came back to get it."

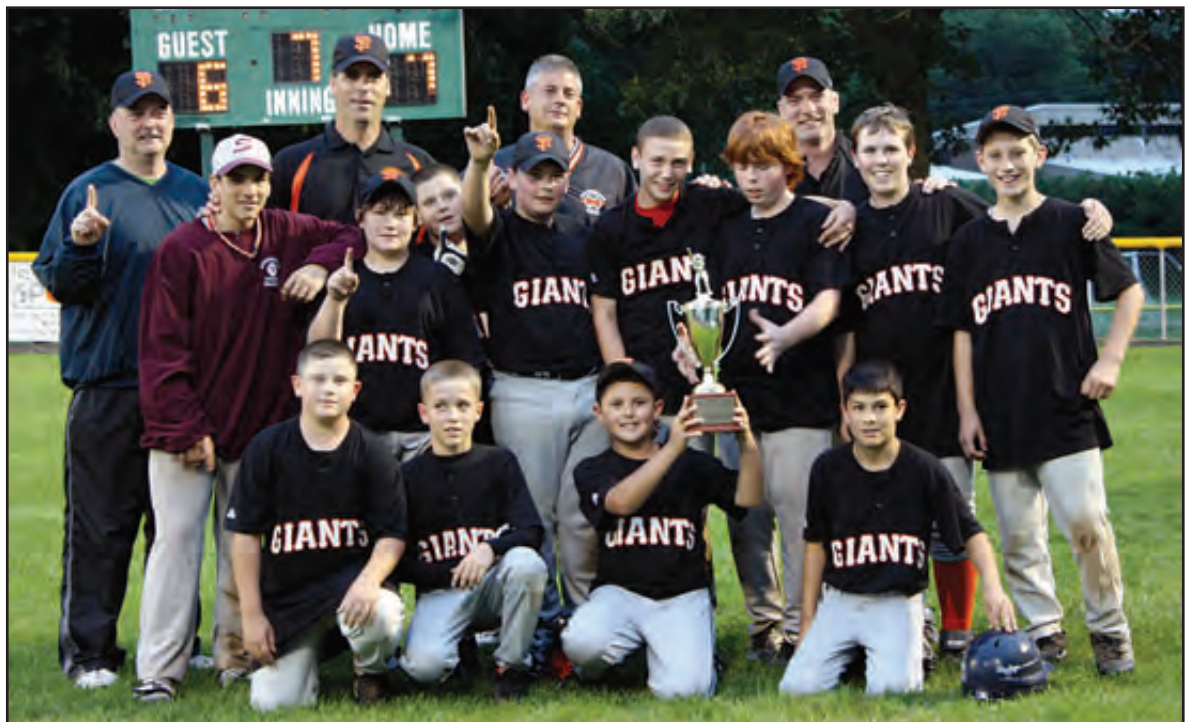
For more than 30 years, Southington South suffered a championship drought in the



Town Champions

Tom Rose, Manager
Dalton Quint
Tim Angell
Justin Blake
Jack Coyle
Tyler Smith
Jasen Rose
Antonio Martinez
Connor Crean
Kyle MacLean
Tom Birmingham
Brandon Birmingham
Mitchel Nappi

annual tournament amongst the three local leagues, but times are changing for the South. For the second time in a row, the Recreation Park league is the town's Major League champions.



SUBMITTED

With a 7-6 victory in the championship game, the Giants captured the town title as Southington South Little League won its second straight town championship.

"Honestly, we don't talk a lot about the town championship. We try to stay within our league because we do some things a little differently," said Rose. "We don't let our kids throw curveballs. We just throw changeups and fastballs. I think that has something to do with why we hadn't won in such a long time."

The tournament showcased a

trio of league winners, and each club captured at least one victory. The West Cardinals (2-2) beat the North Pirates (1-2) in the opening round and again in the semifinals. The Giants advanced with a bye in the opening round, but fell to the Pirates in their first game before rallying for a pair of victories over the West.

"The West and the North were

very talented," said Rose. "The two 12-year-old pitchers that they had were studs. They were great pitchers, and they battled in every game against each other. They really beat each other up, so we were fortunate that we had that bye."

To advance to the championship round, the West survived a

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