

Sports



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Hall of Fame

Gunning for the goal

John Crowley set the standard for scoring

By JOHN GORALSKI
SPORTS WRITER

What was the most memorable goal of your career? The question was tossed casually across the table at a local restaurant. John Crowley never hesitated.

"It was against EO Smith, and we won 1-0," he said. "That was a big rivalry for us, and we knew that it was a benchmark for us. That was a game that we really wanted to win."

Athlete

Crowley remembers being marked by three defenders (Even though the newspaper clipping credits five opposing players). The goal sparked the team's hopes, and seemed like a big turning point in Southington soccer. Oh yeah, the goal was scored by Fran Russo.

The favorite goal of Crowley's career was a game-winner scored by a teammate in a rare contest where Crowley was held scoreless. For those that know him, it isn't so surprising.

"He was a great leader, a great team player, and obviously the greatest scorer that Southington High School ever had," said former Blue Knight coach Dan Murawski. "Even beyond that, he was the type of athlete that I loved to have. He

*Southington Sports
Hall of Fame*

Inside the Numbers

- Holds school record for single season scoring in soccer (26 goals in 1983)
- Scored 46 career goals (1981-83)
- Collected 50 points as a senior (1983)
- Selected All-Conference (1982, 1983)
 - Selected All-State (1983)
 - Selected All-New England (1983)
 - Earned scholarship to CCRI
- Named All-American by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (1983)

was the epitome of my perfect soccer player in his attitude and everything else."

Crowley never welcomed the spotlight in 1983 when cameras swung away from the football field to focus on the prolific scorer. Even now, he shifts in his seat and stares at the recorder as he's forced to talk about his own accomplishments during his varsity days.

His favorite photo? An old, tattered newspaper clipping that shows Russo celebrating the score. Crowley's back is to the camera as he hugs his teammate by the goal.

He evades questions about his scoring and credits his classmates Todd McMillan, Nello Picone, and midfielder Kevin Scanlon—a player that Crowley ranks at the top of any he's seen.

Then, he falls silent as he runs through the roster in his head. "I don't want to miss anybody," he said. "I was just one of the guys. I didn't like to get all that recognition when it was because some other guy passed me the ball."

In fact, Crowley would have been content to pass through local athletics without ever being



SUBMITTED

John Crowley, right, poses alongside his son, Jamie, at the start of a preseason alumni scrimmage in 1983.

noticed, and that would have happened had he stuck to hockey. Southington didn't have a varsity

team at the time, but he was intro-

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JOHN GORALSKI

Alison Rahn and Mike Rahn battle in a championship doubles match of the 2010 Kenny Hill Jr Memorial Tennis Tournament at Southington High School.

Kenny Hill Tournament

Greater numbers, better competition than ever

By JOHN GORALSKI
SPORTS WRITER

Ken and Laurie Hill were scrambling across the high school tennis courts, shuffling through last-minute details and wrestling with signs and canopies when a sharp hiss broke the stillness of the morning air. Suddenly, the sky broke into a kaleidoscope of colors as hot air balloons began to drift over the high school parking lot.

When athletes trickled into the 2010 Kenny Hill Jr. Memorial Tennis Tournament, they were greeted with an unexpected surprise. An impromptu balloon landing set the stage for a colorful opening ceremony.

Tennis

"That was a lot of fun," said tournament director Ken Hill Sr. "I had known about [Plainville Fire Company's annual hot-air balloon festival], but all of a sudden I heard the balloons firing up the gas. I looked over my shoulder and saw about a dozen balloons coming our way. It was kind of cool,

and one of them landed right here. It was great, a lot of fun."

The annual tennis tournament has grown significantly as it approaches the end of its first decade of competition. Held in honor of the late Kenny Hill Jr, a former Blue Knight tennis captain who passed away suddenly at the end of his senior year, the annual tournament has grown into a two-day local event that attracts players from throughout the state.

It started as a way for friends and family to grieve the senseless loss and has grown into one of the biggest annual sporting events in town. The tournament is the primary fundraiser for a scholarship fund that benefits two graduating students each year from Southington High School. In its ninth season, the scholarship fund has already become self-sustain-

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“
We have people playing from Hamden, North Haven, Harwinton, and Bristol, so it's gotten around. It's a good tournament, and it's a fun tournament.
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Ken Hill, Sr,
Tennis tournament director