

WILLIAM SANTORO



Connetquot coach Bill Santoro has been at the helm 34 years. He is #1 on the Suffolk County seniority list of varsity coaches running the same program for consecutive years. Counting a seven year stint as a junior high school coach, he has been a wrestling coach for 41 consecutive years. Over the last several decades, Connetquot has earned a reputation of a first class program that produces top notch wrestlers. Connetquot produces an award winning media guide each year and has received third place honors in a national contest run by *Wrestling USA* magazine.

The dual meet record for the past 33 years totals 277 wins and includes thirteen league titles. The team has had several top ten finishes in the county tournament including fourth place finishes in 1985 and 2011.

Individual stats are even more impressive. In the past 33 seasons "T-Bird" wrestling has produced 75 All-County wrestlers, 14 County Champions, 10 All-State wrestlers including a state champion, and 4 high school All-Americans. Three individual Connetquot wrestlers have won the "Suffolk Wrestler of the Year" award and fifteen of them have amassed 100 or more victories. However, if you ask Bill Santoro what he is most proud of,

it is none of the above. He is most pleased about the large number of graduates that are now coaching wrestling, giving back to the sport. Currently there are 17 former CHS wrestlers who are wrestling coaches, including 4 at the varsity level. Three of these are currently serving as assistant coaches for Connetquot. They are Anthony Melfi (Class of 1985), Connetquot's first County Champ, Scott With (class of 1991), and Bryan Meehan (class of 1995). Bill Santoro has nothing but the highest praise for each of these men. In addition to coaching, Scott With produces the media guide and Bryan Meehan works with the organization of the Alumni Association.

Back in 1971 Bill Santoro along with Rich Cestaro and Joe Grady organized the Connetquot Kid Wrestling Program, an organization that continues as feeder program to this day. Two other long-time friends have helped in the success of the Connetquot program. They are Dale McGar, who coached with Bill for 13 seasons and Hall of Fame member, Pete Venier. Besides coaching, Pete is an award winning photographer, and still covers "T-Bird" matches.

Bill Santoro served as secretary for the Suffolk County Coaches Association for 4 years and has been a league rep for the past 10 years. Bill was an Earth Science teacher for forty years at Oakdale Bohemia Junior High School before retiring from the classroom in June of 2011. During that time, he had perfect attendance for 32 of the 40 years. He has no immediate plans to retire from coaching. As he put it, "It will be difficult to walk away from the wrestling room when the time comes. However, when I do, it will be with a lot of great memories". Bill Santoro is a true Hall of Fame candidate.

A very intense Bill Santoro coaching his Connetquot "T-Bird" team to another victory.

