

Rudy Carastro



Rudy Carastro was born August 7, 1943 in Jamaica, N.Y. His parents were both Italian immigrants. The family moved to Merrick, N.Y. in 1949. He entered Calhoun High School the first year it opened, 1958. His older sister graduated from Mephram High School. He lettered in cross country and track and he always stated, that his one regret in life was not wrestling in high school for Hall of Fame coach, Bob Bury. Most of his high school friends were wrestlers.

Rudy's first year out of high school was spent working with his father's business, driving trucks and bull dozers. One of his close friends, who was a wrestler, was attending Morehead State University in Kentucky. He convinced him to apply there because they were just starting a wrestling team and they had a great Industrial Arts program. He was sold on the idea. He applied and was accepted.

In September of 1962 he got on a train and after 18 hours, arrived in Morehead, Kentucky. As a walk-on on the wrestling team, with little high school experience, he was essentially a work out partner on the team for two seasons. He learned a little more about the sport he was always very interested in.

During the summer of 1964 he got married to Bernice after a one year engagement. She was also a Calhoun graduate. At that point Rudy was now forced to put wrestling on the back burner so he could work and concentrate on his studies. They have now been married for 54 years. Their daughter Deborah was born in his senior year on December 2, 1965. Their son Greg was born on August 7, 1970.

He graduated in 1966 with a BS degree in Industrial education. A few months prior to graduation he interviewed for a teaching

job at Babylon Jr. Sr. High School. During that interview he was asked by the Athletic Director, Martie Albert (chairman of Suffolk Cnty. Wrestling) if he would be interested in coaching JV wrestling. He jumped at the opportunity. He learned quite a bit those first three years under head coach Russ DeStito. He was an excellent coach who after three years at BHS decided to move on to coaching in Florida.

The following year, BHS hired Bill DeSario as a new PE teacher and Varsity Wrestling coach. For the next 20 years he put little BHS on the map as a small school power, creating a great tradition that a good portion of the community followed.

In a league, full of high schools with great traditions, such as Amittyville, Islip, John Glenn, Harbor Fields, Bayport, and others, Babylon was very successful. Always looking for good competition, Bill would often schedule non-league matches with well known wrestling powers like Massapequa, Patchogue-Medford, Freeport and many others.

In 1970 Rudy helped Bill start a kid wrestling program, that is still going strong today. During Rudy's 20 years with Bill and three years prior, he was part of over 250 dual meet wins and numerous tournament wins.

Bill DeSario has written, " Rudy Carastro was my assistant coach at Babylon H.S. during the entire 20 years I was a head coach; 1969 - 1989. He was one of the best, a disciplinarian with a great sense of humor. Having been in the program for three years before I came aboard, he was instrumental in helping the team transition to a new head coach. The continuity we had over my 20 years was the main reason for the success the wrestlers at Babylon H.S. had. It was only fitting that Rudy take over after my "first retirement" from coaching to become an Athletic Director after the 1988-89 season. The success of the Babylon program continued under Rudy's tutelage for the next 12 years, 1989-2001. His teams won the league dual championship twice and the league tournament title twice during the twelve years. He had numerous league champions and county place finishers, all when there was one section 11 tournament. Rudy deserves much of the credit when Jeff Haise became

Babylon's first and still only N.Y. State championship in 1987. It is with great honor that I recommend Rudy Carastro to receive the Hall of Fame recognition for lifetime service to the sport.

Rudy stated he was very fortunate to coach with Bill DeSario who he considers one of the best coaches on L.I. He was a great technician, organizer, disciplinarian and role model with a tremendous rapport with all his team members and parents. Ninety percent of all Rudy's coaching he learned from him. He used his coaching methods every day of each season. He taught Rudy the best way to get the most out of every kid. Rudy was privileged and grateful to have coached with Bill. When he became the head coach he was very well prepared to keep the BHS wrestling program going strong.

During his twelve years as Varsity coach, his record was; 106 - 46-3, a member of the Century Club; 107 total league place finishes with 29 champions and 26 runner ups; 11 section XI place finishes with one champion and one state place finisher; two time dual meet champions and 6 runner up finishes ; two time league tournament champions and two runner up finishes; varsity league coach of the year two times; 1993 Suffolk Wrestling Officials Coach of the year award; a member of the BHS Wall of Fame and Suffolk County Wrestling Coaches Grand Master award winner in 2001.

During the last three years he was asked by Tom Riccio to be his Varsity assistant at Riverhead High School. He accepted the challenge and his love for wrestling and the kids was revitalized. It was fun to be part of High School wrestling once again. He is still thanking coach Riccio for that opportunity. He also helped Tom restart the kid wrestling program in Riverhead.

I would like to thank all the coaches, officials, team members and parents for their support and friendship over almost forty years of coaching. It has been an honor and privilege to be a part of Suffolk County Wrestling.