

Steven Wanamaker Sr.

Football, Baseball, Basketball, 1969-1973

Steve Wanamaker, a member of the Class of 1973, was an imposing figure who excelled at several sports. Standing at 6'3", 230 lbs, Wanamaker was one of the premier linebackers in the county, the state, and even the country. He was awarded numerous honors in recognition of his exploits on the football field. Steve also dominated on the baseball diamond and started on the varsity basketball team his junior year. Wanamaker later went on to enjoy a successful collegiate career at football powerhouse Penn State, and was inducted into the Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame in 1997.

Wanamaker was an impressive force behind some of the dominant Nyack football teams of the late '60s and early '70s. Head football coach Paul Lankau, who helped develop countless stars during his victory-laden tenure at Nyack, called Steve the best linebacker in Rockland County history. He made All-County three times as a defender: Honorable Mention as a sophomore, and first-team All-County his junior and senior years. In his junior year, in which he averaged 16 tackles per game and recorded six interceptions, he was named second-team All-State. As a senior, Wanamaker received even higher honors, being selected first team New York State, and then to All-American Teams by national magazines, Parade, Letterman, Coach and Athlete. Steve also made an impact on offense, starting at tight end for three years and being named second-team All-County as an offensive end his senior year. He also contributed on special teams as a punter, averaging over 40 yards per punt.

Wanamaker also had a fantastic baseball career at Nyack as an outfielder and pitcher. Teaming up with his brother Homer at catcher, Steve became a dominant pitcher, even throwing a no-hitter his sophomore year against Albert Magnus. Later that season, Steve helped lead Nyack to its first Rockland PSAL baseball title since his father Homer won with the 1949 team. After batting .396 and being named an All-Rockland outfielder as a sophomore, Wanamaker became an even more elite hitter his junior year. His 25 hits and .446 batting average were the best marks in the county that season, and he was selected to first-team All-County and to the New York Metropolitan All-Star Team for his efforts. He continued to excel as a pitcher, going 8-3 and striking out 17 batters in one game. Wanamaker's hitting skills terrified opposing pitchers, who elected to walk him 35 times his senior year, in which he was also named second-team All-County.

After completing his decorated high school athletic career, Wanamaker went on to play linebacker for legendary Penn State coach Joe Paterno. Part of a nationally-ranked squad,

Wanamaker played in all 12 games for the Nittany Lions his junior year. Steve played in the Sugar Bowl for number 5 Penn State against Alabama, but struggled to stay on the field because of knee injuries. Steve's athletic triumphs at Nyack were recognized once again when he was voted Nyack's greatest all-time male athlete in a Journal News poll in 1988.

Steve and his wife, Lia, raised three boys: Steven (Class of 2000), Michael (Class of 2005), and Andrew (Class of 2008). The Wanamakers currently reside in Upper Nyack and Steve has been involved in their community as neighbors, a volunteer firefighter for Empire Hook and Ladder #1, and coached for 16 years in the Nyack-Valley Cottage Little League.