

Timothy Lange Coach



Mr. Timothy Lange coached football (1982-1989); softball (1982); golf (1992-1994); baseball (1982-1992); and boys' basketball (1982-1996). In addition to his long career as an educator and administrator, he has also served as the Master of Ceremonies for the Columbia High School Athletic Hall of Fame gala since its inception.

Timothy "Tim" Lange is the son of Mary ("Dot") Lange and the late Edward Lange, a legendary basketball player at Siena College who was the second student-athlete to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. Tim grew up with several siblings in the Capital District; given that his father took him to games everywhere, Tim became an ardent sports fan at an early age. A two-sport athlete (football and baseball) and graduate of Christian Brothers Academy in 1977, Tim attended Siena College, where he captained the 1980 football team and set several receiving records for the school; following his graduation, he earned an M. A. from the State University at Albany in 1987.

From 1982-1995, Tim taught Spanish and coached a variety of sports in the East Greenbush Central School District. Initially, he coached freshman and junior varsity teams in football, basketball and baseball. Later, he was the head coach for varsity golf (four years), baseball (three years), and boys' basketball (four years). He also coached summer basketball camps. From 1989-1991, Tim served as an assistant varsity basketball coach for his mentor, the legendary Bob Smith, who took the 1991-92 squad to the title game against Shaker. Coach Smith, after that season, stepped down to concentrate on his athletic director's duties and offered Tim, age 33, the varsity coaching job. It was an offer Tim could not refuse.

In varsity basketball, Coach Lange's attention to detail and unwavering belief in his players resulted in the program's best season since 1951-52, outscoring their opponents by an average of **65 to 57**. Tim had attended many coaching clinics and read often about preparation and strategies. "I decided to set some goals for my team to give them some direction," Coach Lange recalled to the *Albany Times Union* in 1995. His hard work and ambition paid off. After a 4-2 start, the 1994-95 Blue Devils won 16 of their next 17 games, en route to an overall **20-4** record, which included a first-ever win against an out of state opponent, and the Suburban Council Gold Division Championship. Yet that was not all.

Dedicating the March 7th game to Bob Smith, Lange's Blue Devils captured their first-ever Section 2 Class A Sectional title, too, beating rival Shenendehowa **59-58** in front of 3,205 fans at the Glens Falls Civic Center and becoming the first Columbia boys team to go on to play in a regional contest. Seniors Louis Case (Class A MVP) and Paul Bigness (Section 2 All Star) scored 19 apiece, breaking down the Plainsmen's 1-3-1 zone to bring the team back from an eleven-point deficit. Interviewed moments after the game, Coach Lange summed up the victory against Shenendehowa: "It was an emotional night for everybody. "Columbia played Henninger, a much taller team, in the regional round the following Saturday at LeMoyne College. Late in the game, when the opponent was mounting a rally, Coach Lange huddled up his team and said, "No matter how this game turns out, I just want you to know that this coaching staff loves you guys." Henninger went on win, 75-65, but as the late Bob Smith's daughter, Kathleen Russell, observed recently, "Tim still speaks to many of his former players, which is very rare. It just shows what type of person Tim remains to his former student-athletes." Accolades in 1995 came pouring in: Section 2 Coach of the Year; News Channel 13 Coach of the Year; *Times Union* and *Troy Record* Coach of the Year honors ; and a Special Recognition by the State of New York Legislature. At the 13th annual Columbia boys' basketball awards dinner, Coach Lange and his team were honored to meet Coach Harry Rapenske and seven members of the 1952 Columbia team that had won the Class C championship.

Following his coaching and teaching career, Tim earned a Master's in Educational Administration in 1996 from SUNYA and began his administrative career, first as the Athletic Director at Mohonasen. He later worked as an assistant principal at Columbia for several years, followed by a year-long stint as the Assistant Superintendent in East Greenbush. From 2008-2014, Tim was the Superintendent of the Waterford-Halfmoon Union Free School District, earning numerous awards along the way. Since his retirement in 2014, Tim has been seen on Channel 13 as a contributing scout, offering his expertise about notable players during the high school basketball season. He also has perhaps the perfect post-retirement gig, working at the Saratoga National Golf Course. To this day, Tim roots for his three favorites: the Boston Red Sox, the North Carolina Tar Heels, and the Pittsburgh Steelers. He and his wife, Dawn, enjoy the opportunity to travel whenever they can.

Tonight, we are honored to pay tribute to this humble, dedicated and enthusiastic teacher, coach, administrator, master of ceremonies and mentor to so many. Welcome to the Hall of Fame, Coach Lange!