

# Dennis Schermerhorn to join Bristol Sports Hall of Fame

By MICHAEL LETENDRE  
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, Nov. 19, the Bristol Sports Hall of Fame – now in its 14th year – will hold its annual induction ceremony at the Clarion Hotel.

The Sports Hall of Fame has been growing by leaps and bounds and will be adding eight new members to its ranks.

This year, Diane Connolly, Dennis Schermerhorn, Porky Santorso, Butch Paradis, Roland Dumont, Birdie Monico, Tom Moylan and Gene LeBlanc will make up the 2010 class.

Over the following

months, the Bristol Observer will be taking a closer look at each one of these athletes, starting this week with former Bristol Eastern quarterback, Dennis Schermerhorn.

While Bristol Eastern football records are sometimes hard to come by, the one thing to be sure is Dennis Schermerhorn is one of the greatest QBs in Lancers' scholastic history, and, one of the best to come out of the city of Bristol.

And before Steve Mills came on the scene in the late 1980s and led the Lancers to its first and only state title in 1988, Schermerhorn was the best

## Hall of Fame

quarterback in the Eastern program ever.

Sure, he certainly could throw the football – as 2,757 yards over the 1968-1970 seasons will testify to – but Schermerhorn also brought another element Eastern had gained early but lost: Consecutive Thanksgiving Day victories.

And that's where Schermerhorn did the most damage.

Eastern was 3-0 on Thanksgiving when Schermerhorn was at QB and he really packed a punch during those games.

The Lancers beat Central 20-13 in 1968, 27-6 in 1969 and 32-22 in 1970 on Thanksgiving.

He holds the Thanksgiving Day record for most yards passing in a game (308 in 1970), touchdown passes in a game (three in both 1969 and 1970) while also earning the career mark for most TDs thrown in Thanksgiving history with six.

As a junior, Schermerhorn fired three touchdowns and 227 yards to help Eastern win by 21 points on Thanksgiving as the Lancers finished the campaign with a 5-5 ledger.

And Schermerhorn's

senior season at Eastern was even more impressive.

For the season, he completed 99-of-217 pass attempts for 1,272 yards with 11 touchdowns while rushing for 390 yards and six touchdowns.

With nearly 2,100 yards to his name over his final campaign, Central Connecticut State University took notice.

With the Blue Devils, he started at quarterback early as a freshman and ended up leading Central through four very solid campaigns from 1971-1974.

Central had an overall record of 25-14-1 during those four seasons and

Schermerhorn connected on 132 passes for 2,484 yards and connected on 16 touchdowns.

Overall, he was 132-of-317 in the passing department (.416) and certainly was a major cog in the Blue Devils' 1973 campaign when the squad when 9-1.

In all, Schermerhorn racked up 5,241 passing yards during his time on the gridiron at both Eastern and Central Connecticut.

Schermerhorn also played baseball at Bristol Eastern while was successful in the wrestling program as well.

# Hartford Public drops soccer. What's next for CCC sports?

By MICHAEL LETENDRE  
STAFF WRITER

You always hear about high schools having to drop sports programs over the years, around the country, because of cutbacks, oversized budgets, lack of participation, etc.

But, when it cuts close to home, it makes you think how lucky we are at the schools Bristol that offers a boatload of scholastic sports to choose from.

But not so at Hartford Public this coming season.

## Commentary

The Owls, a member of the Central Connecticut Conference Eastern Division, decided at the beginning of August to drop both its boys and girls soccer programs for the 2010 season.

Officially, Hartford Public "cancelled" both its soccer seasons citing momentary issues and participation numbers as the key factors to shutting down its boys and girls programs.

Soccer has long been a part of the Hartford Public sport's program but it's understandable, from their part of view, why the seasons were cancelled.

On the boys side, the Owls were winless in 2009 and have an overall record of 2-58-3 over its last four

campaigns, including a conference ledger of 1-38-1 during that same span.

A downed economy, lack of players and a losing period for Hartford Public doomed the upcoming soccer season.

"The Hartford schools are tough to gauge," said Bristol Eastern assistant soccer coach Bunty Ray. "In certain sports, they have more participation. Obviously, certain sports don't draw numbers and from what I can gather, a lot of those (athletes) kind of move around from school to school. You just never know where you're numbers are."

The girls haven't fared any better with a 4-55-3 record over the past four seasons overall and a 1-38-1 in CCC East play.

On the CIAC website, the Hartford boys soccer schedule simply lists home games and away games with Tolland and RHAM with a time and result of "cancelled."

It's almost unheard of that a high school program doesn't offer soccer as an option in the fall.

The cancellation has been a shock to many but it wasn't an overall surprise to some.

A big problem now in the Hartford area is the magnet schools who, quite frankly, have been bleeding

the number of athletes away from the public school system.

In Hartford, Weaver is really feeling the pinch as well with reduced numbers in its football program.

Those magnet schools have even taken a couple Bristol athletes away as well.

"You have to look at (magnet schools) two ways, if you're looking at it from an athletic standpoint, it really dilutes the talent," said Ray. "If you're looking at it from an academic standpoint in terms of opportunity for kids, you have to weigh that in as well. A lot of times in the sports world, we just look at athletics for what it is and how players dictate how successful your season is going to be."

"But you have to really weigh in the academics, as well with smaller class sizes, that give a kid an opportunity to do better in school."

It's certainly a two-sided coin when dealing with magnet schools and the talent they draw.

With the magnet schools taking talent and the shape of the economy, it makes you wonder when more sport programs will be eliminated from the public schools in the capital city.

But how do economics come into play at in the Bristol school system when

it comes to athletics?

Budgets are growing out of control by the year and over the next five, 10 or 20 years, what state will the soccer, cross country and track programs at Bristol Central and Eastern be at?

The CCC is the strongest sport's conference in the state with thirty-two teams and to see two soccer programs fall by the wayside, especially during mid-summer, is certainly alarming.

Going back to the cancellation of the Hartford Public soccer seasons, it's more and more looking like a mess not only for the Owls, but for its opponents as well.

Now, schools in the East – along with others who had Hartford Public on its scholastic soccer schedule – are frantically looking for another school (schools) to play.

Many will be forced to play without picking up an extra couple of games and it will sting when needing qualifying games to participate in the post-season tournament.

Where will schools like Fermi and E.O. Smith pick up those lost games?

It's just one school canceling games but what will happen if more follow suit?

There are no easy answers for such a situation

but cutting programs certainly isn't the answer.

So how are some high schools combating such problems and keeping sport programs alive and out of the red?

Plainville has an answer.

Plainville Observer writer Elio Gugliotti last week wrote about how Plainville athletes are now paying for the right to play sports.

Each athlete pays \$75 per sport while multi-sport athletes pay a maximum of \$150 to play for the 2010-11 scholastic season.

It's an extreme measure but to keep the programs in place – especially some of the programs that have been dealing with dwindling numbers – and it will ensure athletes a chance of participation.

Would that be necessary in the coming years for Bristol?

"I'm not sure how far we'd have to go below the red line for that to happen," said Ray about paying to play. "I hope that it wouldn't because we've been fully funded and obviously, our sports have been important in this town. I think Bristol for the most part will find a way to keep athletics funded."

"But once again, academics are the priority and

athletics is second."

While the high school programs in Bristol are faring relatively well, paying to participate in athletics might be something the town will have to look into down the road if times remain tough.

Hopefully, Hartford Public can somehow get its program back together and be ready for varsity action in a year or so.

But if Hartford Public is the first of many schools to use such drastic measures, the CCC will have to get a plan ready to combat such devastating losses.

Kids should not be paying – whether out of pocket or not – at this stage of their life.

Soon enough, these young men and women will know the "joys" of paying a mortgage, taxes and insurance.

"Extra-curricular activities are given as an importance by the administration," in Bristol said Ray. "They are very supportive of it."

If you can't go outside can kick a ball around and enjoy a sport you love but have to pay a substantial fee to do it, then times are certainly changing for the worse for us all.

# Hernandez: Patriots

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starters in preseason action.

**Season Statistics:** Hernandez has caught seven passes for 72 yards and a touchdown in preseason action. He also has rushed once for six yards.

**Key statistic:** New England is now 0-1 when Aaron does not play.

**Additional News and Notes:**

Last week on Mohegan Sun's "Sport's Tonight" with

hosts Gary Tanguay and Andy Gresh, Boston Herald's Steve Buckley was a guest on the show and was asked about his pick for Patriots "Rookie of the Year."

"It's Aaron Hernandez. When's the last time we've talked about a tight end on this team? He's not going to be Ben Coates. He's not going to be Russ Francis. (But) they're talking about a tight end being part of the offense again...I think he's someone to keep an eye on

this season."

Gresh also picked Hernandez:

"I think Hernandez is going to be awesome. I think he's going to end up with well over fifty catches. For the first time at the tight end spot, since they tried to do it with Ben Coates, they have a tight end they can put in the slot or out wide."

Comments? Email [mletendre@BristolObserver.com](mailto:mletendre@BristolObserver.com)

# Openings on Eliminators' softball teams

The Connecticut Eliminators girls' fast pitch travel softball program has openings at the 10U and 12U levels (birth years 1998 and later).

Learn more about the CT Eliminator program on at [www.cteliminators.com](http://www.cteliminators.com). Arrange a tryout by email at [cteliminators@aol.com](mailto:cteliminators@aol.com), or by calling (860) 563-6554.

Please provide player's name, date of birth, softball experience, positions played, and contact information.

**HIGH SCHOOL COACHES**  
Bristol high school coaches are encouraged to send in their team results.  
Email them to [mletendre@BristolObserver.com](mailto:mletendre@BristolObserver.com)