

VINNIE McGRATH

Vincent McGrath grew up on Hartford Street in Bedford Center, where he played “countless backyard Whiffleball games” and shot hoops with his Uncle Gerry, a Buccaneer starter alongside Hall of Famer Kelly Elias for Keith Adams’s mid-1970s basketball teams.

Page Field was a virtual extension of the yard, and Vinnie remembers a lot of neighborhood tackle football games, as well as the legendary men’s summer softball league.

As a Bedford High School student-athlete, Vinnie earned seven varsity letters: three in baseball and two each in football and basketball. Sophomore year he was a contributor to the baseball team’s Dual County League championship.

Vinnie set the standard for passing quarterbacks as a junior and senior, and he earned DCL all-star status both years. “He was the first quarterback who we had throw a lot,” recalled Coach Armand Sabourin, whose BHS career began in 1968. “Vinnie managed the game very well. He played at a high level and didn’t let anything get him down.” Assistant Coach Bob Petrillo added, “Vinnie was one of the smartest quarterbacks we had. He was aware of everything around him and never got rattled.”

Vinnie completed 99 passes over 10 games in 1996 for 1,342 yards. A couple of quarterbacks have come close, but that distance still stands a Bedford record. His favorite targets were Brad Chedister, Chris Harris and hall of Famer Ryan Friend. He was 9-for-11 for 206 yards vs. Westford, and in 1997 burned Lincoln-Sudbury for 240 aerial yards.

He was also a key part of the basketball team’s late-’90s success, coming off the bench as a consistent and dependable scorer, rebounder and defender. Vinnie scored more than 200 points as a senior, shooting over 55 percent. Top was an 11-for-14 performance for 24 points vs. Westford.

In the fall of 1997 Vinnie was a football captain, and in the spring he won prestigious recognition as a graduating senior student-athlete – twice. Vinnie received the Jay Porter Award and the Ned Spellman Award, both reflecting character as well as achievement. He also took home the DCL Sportsmanship Award for 1998.

Vinnie took his quarterback skills to Merrimack College in North Andover, where he was a Warrior for four years. He also saw some action as a wide receiver.

Since graduating from Merrimack, Vinnie has been shaping young lives in Bedford on and off the field. He has served as an assistant coach in both football and basketball for the past decade. “Coaching is extremely rewarding and I am forever indebted to the student-athletes who have allowed me to be a part of their journey at Bedford High School,” he said.

During the day, he is a sixth-grade math teacher at John Glenn Middle School.

When Vinnie enumerates the mentors and role models who helped him along the way, he starts with family – his parents and Uncle Gerry McGrath. Then he singles out Dr. Howard Rashba, a volunteer youth basketball coach whose dedication helped scores of young players develop.

Vinnie also credits Coach Sabourin and Assistant Football Coaches Frank Hirsch and Jimmy Sullivan and basketball Coach Jim Byrnes and Assistant Joe LeBlanc. “Special thanks to all my teammates,” he stressed.