

2011 Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame



Joseph "Iggy" Maines

A common theme in the life of all athletes is the participation in what is simply known as "tryouts". The tryout is held in an effort to make the team for whatever sport season it might be, or for whatever league, level, or school you might be involved with. The tryout, with its ridiculous amounts of running, drills, and pain, in a boot camp type of atmosphere, is always more difficult than any actual game.

And then there were the coaches. Those "Marine" mentality men and women with their whistles, clipboards, and short, tight coaches shorts who seemed to take pleasure in your pain, and who could almost never do the physical activity that they were demanding you should do, to prevent you from "getting cut" or that even made you want to quit. But you never would or could quit. You never gave any indication that you were in pain or what you really thought about this insane ritual or maniac coach. Why? Because you wanted to make this team, play on this team, contribute to and shine on this team.

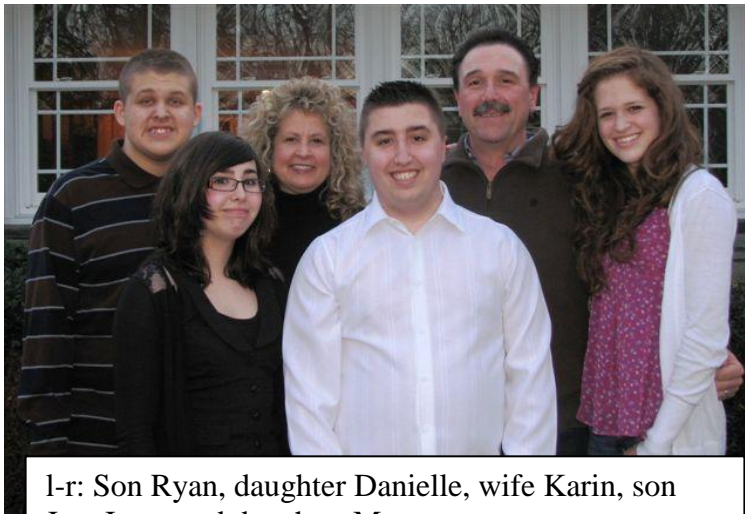
The team in this case is the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame. The coaches are the past and current members of the hall comprised of the best of the best. The elite sports all-stars of Saugerties sports illustrious history. The athlete "trying out", is none other than Joseph "Iggy" Maines. His "tryout", a lifelong storied athletic career in and around the Saugerties area filled with accolades and accomplishments equaled by very few. Although it has been rumored that he, like most athletes in the hall, may have broken a few training rules along the way during the tryouts, the coaches have spoken. The list has been put up on the locker room wall. Congratulations, Joe "Iggy" Maines, you have made the team. You are one of the newest members of the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame.

Iggy's story begins in Kingston where he is born to Joseph and Mary Ann Maines on March 13, 1959. He has been a lifelong resident of the Saugerties area where he grew up living with his parents and his sister Bonnie, who now lives in New Orleans. Iggy's dad, a fellow Hall of Famer, passed away in 1986, while his mom, a member of the Saugerties Women's Bowling Association

Hall of Fame, still resides in Lake Katrine. Iggy thanks and gives credit to his parents for exposing him to the world of sports as a child, affording him the opportunity to play youth sports and bringing him to all the local sports venues such as the gyms, bowling alleys, and baseball and softball fields where they were participants or spectators, as young Iggy fell in love with the sporting life. Iggy is thankful for and recognizes the importance of how his parents attended all of his games during his playing days. He comments with a smile “I think my mom has been to every game I’ve ever played”. Iggy would like to also thank his grandfather, Hank Cragan an original inductee in the Kingston Baseball Hall of Fame, as well as Uncles Willie and Tommy Cragan for introducing him to sports. ”My uncles would hit balls to me until they tired, then they would hit the ball to where I couldn’t find it, so I would leave them alone,” Iggy laughed.” All my aunts and uncles were very supportive of my athletics.”

Iggy is married to the love of his life, the lovely Karin (Lezette) Maines and combined they have four bright, beautiful children, Joe, Danielle, Ryan and Megan. This was a match made in heaven, or at least on the hardwood of the Sawyer gymnasium. You see, when Iggy was a Varsity basketball player and Karin was a Varsity cheerleader they were destined to end up together. Why you ask? That’s right, you guessed it... Karin “had Iggy’s name” in the lineup

introduction cheer. Isn’t love grand?



l-r: Son Ryan, daughter Danielle, wife Karin, son Joe, Iggy, and daughter Megan

Speaking of love, Iggy commented on how one of his greatest loves has always been and continues to be watching his children in their athletic competitions. He took great pleasure and pride in coaching along with former Kingston High standout Kevin Jordan, his son Joe in the Town of Ulster Little League. The father-son combo led the team all the way to the District All-Star and

League Championships. Iggy also enjoyed coaching and watching his daughter Danielle play Little League softball. He has fond memories of her just jumping up and down in place with a huge smile on her face until he would yell “Danielle, ready position!” You can currently find Iggy at Sawyer J.V. Softball games proudly and nervously pacing the sidelines watching daughter and windmill sensation Megan throwing strikes and shutouts for the little Sawyers. In true Iggy fashion he will occasionally still shake or scratch his head due to questionable ball and strike calls, or poor execution of play by the teams. Iggy says his son Ryan, although not involved in any organized sports, provided him the single best workout experience ever, following him around Disney World.

Iggy holds a special place in his heart and his Saugerties sports memory for the man, the myth, the legend, Mr. Jack Keeley. Iggy considered Jack a father figure and later in life a brother. He fondly remembers Jack’s big belly laugh while sitting at the scorer’s table in the Donlon gym yelling at a young Zack Swart “Hold the ball!” He recalls how Jack referred to little kids as “goobers” and how he started the “Goober League” for youth softball. ”I mentioned to Jack one day, that kids didn’t have a softball league and the next year Jack started the Goober League.” Iggy respected Jack’s baseball knowledge and sports writing, in which Jack always spoke highly of him. “Jack took me to Yankee games and high school games and taught me not only the importance of participating in sports but also volunteering my time in the sports community.” Every week Iggy would wait for the Post Star to arrive so he could read his favorite

columns Jack's, Keeley's Korner and Jimmy Gage's, Sports Huddle. As is true for all Saugerties Sports Hall of Famer's, Iggy loved and misses Jack Keeley very much.

In addition to his family, Iggy has had a number of influential people that have had an effect on his life. He would like to thank all of them and the list reads like a virtual "who's who" of Saugerties legendary Sports Hall of Fame Stars. Of course, there was the aforementioned Jack Keeley. Next, from the "old guard", a trio of men that makes up an athletic trifecta nothing short of the "Three Wise Men". The threesome is none other than Billy Hanna, Mouse Wolven and Jack Naccarato. Iggy credits these three Sawyer sports legends for teaching him all that is right, and maybe even a little that is wrong, with sports. Billy taught Iggy all aspects of sportsmanship, respect and fair play. From the Mouse, Iggy learned the importance of trickery, being multi talented and to be a fierce competitor. Finally from Jack Nac, Iggy picked up the desire to just keep playing when everyone else was ready to stop. No excuses, no complaining, just keep playing. Jack's sage advice, "whenever possible keep score and in the heat of the moment add a point or two to the team you're on".

As for the "new young guard" (who are not so new or young anymore) some of the guys who had a great influence on Iggy were Hall of Famers, Rich Koegel, Tom Whitaker, Larry Panella and John Speirs. As Iggy says, "Kog was the guy that everyone aspired to be like. Iggy honestly admitted "I was both afraid of him and in awe of him." As for Whit, Iggy says "He was just Whit. You always wanted to be on his team, never wanted to be against him." As for John, "We became friends going to Mets games in the late 70's and early 80's and continue our friendship to this day. We played on both basketball and softball teams together for years. There was no one you would rather have on your team than John." Another Hall of Famer, who left us way too early in life, was Larry Panella. Iggy says that Larry taught him a great deal about coaching, handling players and game situations, and how to play even when hurt. Larry is always thought of and missed.

Some other great friends, teammates, mentors and coaches that played a significant role in Iggy's sports life were family friends and youth coaches Vince Hackett and Fritz Beckert. From his Dutchmen years, there were owners Roy and Greg Helmoortel, manager Dennis Sheehan, as well as teammates and founders Nick and Jerry Malgieri and Karl Lezette. Two of Iggy's legendary baseball coaches who affected him greatly both on and off the diamond were high school coach Tony Vizzie and college coach Joe McCrudden. "There wasn't anybody I had more respect for than coach McCrudden."

Finally, two more Hall of Famers who apparently had a profound effect on Iggy that he never saw coming. Iggy credits brothers John and Gordon Freligh for the influence they had on him becoming a sports official. That's strange though, since they were known to occasionally go nose to nose "debating" a call or decision. Who knew, they were actually discussing Iggy's future as an umpire. Said Iggy, "I'm not sure if all of their calls were correct, but they were always in the right position." I was thrown out of three games in my life and two of them were by Gordie," Iggy laughed.



1977 Saugerties High School Baseball Team

Iggy Maines' early years of sports participation were a great mix of organized leagues and neighborhood fun. Iggy says both were equally important. Iggy played little league baseball and biddy league basketball from 1966-1972. He was always a leader and All-Star on these teams, and fondly remembers being District Champs in baseball, a feat rarely accomplished back then. Iggy credits Little League coach Tom Wilsey with giving him his strong baseball foundation. "Tom made us practice for hours", said Iggy, "But he made me understand the importance of the hard work it took to be successful in sports."

Iggy also starred on his C.Y.O. basketball team and in the S.A.A. "Goober" softball leagues. During these years Iggy has a fond memory of playing in a prelim game before the New York Jets fundraiser basketball game in the High School gym, where he was coached by future father-in-law and Hall of Famer Karl Lezette and Herb Cole. As important as these youth sports were to Iggy, he comments that of equal importance was his participation in what he affectionately calls "neighborhood sports". These were the games he played with his childhood buddies Billy "Fred" Freer, Steve "Mole" Wilson, Jim "Lenny" Hackett, Robbie "D-Boy" Freer, fellow Hall of Fame inductee Clark Hackett, and later Steven "Cheezer" Freer. "We played for hours and just when we were ready to quit, Clark would make us play two more hours." They played hockey, basketball, whiffle ball, and football in driveways, backyards, the field next to the old Empire food store and the parking lot of Bill Freer's funeral parlor. This is how real friendships began and continue to this day.

Of course as Iggy became a teenager and the sports took a more serious turn, he continued to be an integral part of all the teams he played on. Always a starter and usually a captain, Iggy played American Legion baseball reaching the New York State semi-finals under coaches Boo Schaffer and Earl Benjamin. He played Babe Ruth baseball where he was an all-star on the team that played in the New York State Championships in Vestal, NY in 1974.

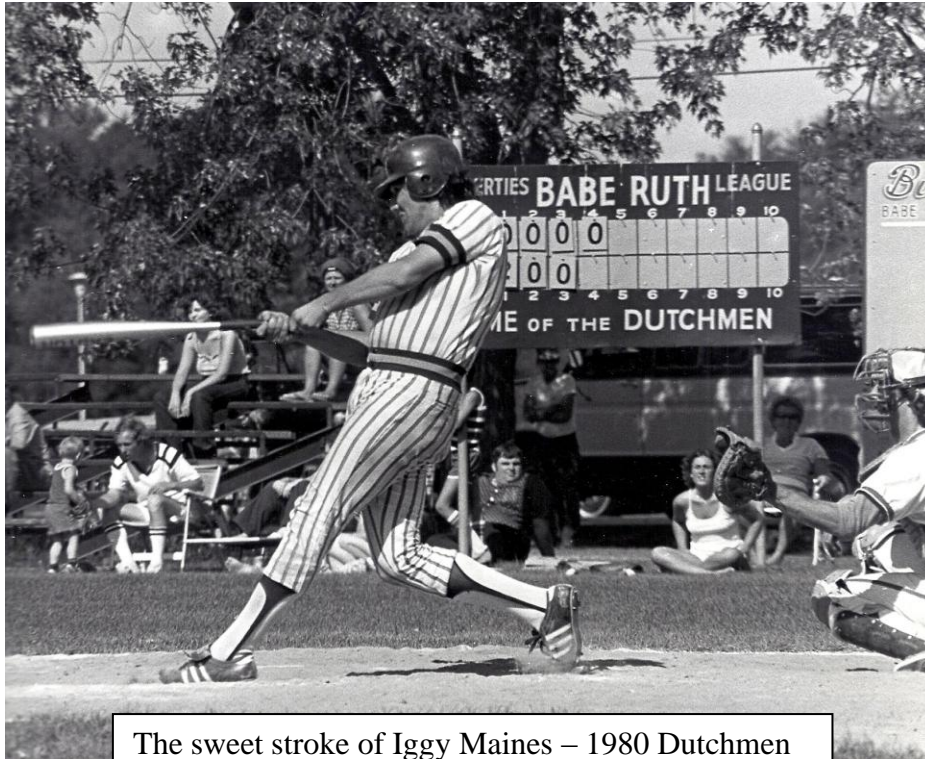


drills during his high school career. "Most of my teammates during this time, were the same people I had played with through little league and biddy league, such as Steve Martin, Marc Becker, Steve Schaffer and Jimmy Hackett", Iggy commented.

Iggy played a major role on his extremely successful high school baseball team. He was starting first baseman on the Sawyers, League and Section One and Nine Championship teams in 1976. Iggy has fond memories of playing alongside good friend and fellow inductee Tim Cole. Iggy jokes that it was his stellar defense at first base that often protected Tim's shut outs and no-hitters. Most friends and teammates wonder what he was defending since it was rare for an opponent to get their bat on the ball when Tim pitched. Iggy also played Varsity basketball in 1977. Iggy realizes how playing in the tough D.C.S.L. league made him and his teammates better players and he smiles remembering rare victories over powerhouses like Poughkeepsie and Beacon and an even more impressive sectional win over Harrison High. Iggy also smiles as he recalls the night he scored his 1000th point, but then he remarks on how he reached this plateau - he kept track and counted all the baskets he scored in pre-game and half-time layup

As Iggy moved on to college his concentration shifted solely to baseball and concentrate he did. During his four year Varsity career split between Columbia-Greene Community College and

Division I Utica College where he received his B.A. degree in Business Administration, Iggy amassed some amazing accomplishments. He was captain and team M.V.P. at both schools. Upon leaving Columbia Greene he was the career leader in home runs, RBI, runs scored and batting average.



As Iggy moved out of the dorms and the school ball arenas and into the world of adult league competition he really came into his own. He was a key member of the reborn Saugerties Dutchmen Baseball club in 1980. Iggy brought home the playoff co-MVP that year with good friend Jim “Lenny” Hackett and Iggy couldn’t help but comment on how his favorite part of the Dutchmen years was the community camaraderie it fostered

and the relationships it created that are strong to this day. Iggy has called the 1980 Dutchmen season and championship one of his most memorable sports moments. “To win the MVP award with Lenny Hackett was really gratifying, for we had played so much ball together, and it was very likely the last time we would play organized sports with each other.” In his five years with the Dutchmen Iggy won two home run titles, a batting title, plus two league championships.

Iggy Maines, of course played in every men’s sports league in and around the Saugerties area. He played on a number of SAA softball teams in the top A and B divisions winning many pennants and league championships, garnering numerous batting and RBI titles. He also played on four Labor Day Tournament Championship teams facing the toughest of competition from all over the Hudson Valley. Two of Iggy’s favorite teammates throughout his softball days were Jay and Barry Mower. “When you played for Mouse you became a part of the Mouse family, I never had a better time playing softball then with Mouse, Jay, Barry and Billy Hannah. Iggy recalls a great moment in his softball career when he may have been the only man ever to hit 5 home runs in one game. Although he admits an asterisk may have to be placed by one of them since it was an “inside the parker” and his opponents were playing shorthanded with only two outfielders.

Iggy played in both SAA full court and half court basketball leagues and was even a player-coach in the prestigious Sawyer and Premier leagues. It was not uncommon for Iggy to win both scoring and rebound titles in these leagues. It was however, often wondered by both teammates and opponents alike if Iggy was always missing those put back layups over and over again just to pad his rebound stats. One of Iggy’s best men’s league basketball years came in 1985 when he won both the Ken Haggins MVP for half court and the Bill Straub MVP for full court. In addition to all this baseball, hoop, and softball Iggy managed to find time to become a well respected bowler in the Friday Night Classic bowling league, a trait he clearly picked up from his parents.



1983 Saugerties American Legion Skipper Iggy Maines

The two remaining areas left to discuss about Iggy Maines’ sporting life both feature him in non-playing roles. First is Iggy’s coaching career, which is very diverse and quite successful. But more importantly he loved it. Especially if it involved coaching his children as he did in the Town of Ulster T-ball, minors, and little league baseball and softball. Iggy reports that one of his most memorable sports moments was coaching his son in All-Stars. He also notched many victories coaching SAA biddy, junior, and senior league

basketball teams. Iggy also lead winning teams for the Kingston Babe Ruth and Saugerties American Legion baseball programs assisted by friend and pitching coach Robbie Freer and Larry Panella. A footnote to Iggy’s coaching career was as a “spring break” assistant coach for Saugerties High and Tony Vizzie. Tony claims Iggy was a great asset to himself and the team when they headed for Florida, but wonders if those “sunburn blisters” on his shoulders have healed yet.

Finally there is Iggy’s sports officiating career which as Iggy puts it, gives him great

satisfaction and lets him remain part of the game, keeping him in contact with players, coaches, and of course fans who occasionally want to “discuss” one of his calls. Iggy takes it in stride and handles it with the utmost professionalism. Perhaps even remembering days gone by when he had a few choice words for the umpire or ref... It is no surprise that Iggy got his start officiating in the SAA doing all sports at all levels, instantly gaining the respect of both players and peers. He was a scorekeeper and timer during these SAA days, no doubt influenced by mentor Jack Keeley. Then about ten years ago Iggy got serious and became a member of the Kingston Baseball Umpires Association. In this short ten year stint, Iggy Maines has risen to the top of the ranks, having been rewarded with the opportunity to umpire the Mid-Hudson Athletic League Championship Game as well as Sectional games and the New York State Babe Ruth Finals. It goes without saying; Iggy’s officiating star will continue to rise.



Kingston Baseball Umpires Association vet- Iggy Maines 2011

So there you have it Saugerties sports fans, the “tryouts” were successful. The teams have been made, and the games have been played, coached, and officiated by one of Saugerties finest, Joseph “Iggy” Maines. Throughout all of the milestones and all of the accolades, Iggy remains humble and comments that far more important than all the wins, trophies, kudos, handshakes and pats on the back are the friendships and relationships that have been, and continue to be created, all with one common theme, Saugerties sports. Well, there is one more award to be received Joe “Iggy Maines, and it is the most coveted, most sought after, most prestigious award in all of Saugerties storied sports history. Congratulations Iggy, you have been chosen as one of the newest and most deserving members of the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame.