

Clarence “Larry” Hoeffner Cross Country / Track & Field Head Coach 1949-1951



Most of us are unfamiliar with his name. And he made a bigger mark at another area high school. Nevertheless, his story is worth sharing. Clarence “Larry” Hoeffner coached Power Memorial’s Cross Country and Track & Field teams from 1949 to 1951. Under his guidance Power continued its progress in the metro area track & field community and he helped lay a foundation for future success.

As a youngster, Larry enjoyed a variety of sports and activities. He even sang in the Paulist Choir for the Queen of England and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the opening of the 1939 World’s Fair. He helped his family run the Hoeffner Hotel

in Elmont, NY and spent time at the Belmont Racetrack as it was less than a mile from his home. A student at Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School in Brooklyn, NY, he was a talented middle-distance runner and hurdler.



After graduating from Loughlin in 1943, Larry attended Manhattan College on a track & field scholarship. Like many others of his “greatest” generation, war interrupted his plans. During World War II, Larry became a Sergeant in the 112th Army Air Forces Base Unit working as a firefighter on landing strips outside London prior to D-Day, and outside Paris after the successful invasion. Upon his return to the states, he was back at Manhattan and back on the track. For a time, he was teammates with fellow Loughlin alumnus and future Olympian Ed O’Toole. 1948 was a milestone year for Larry. He graduated from Manhattan with a Bachelor of Science Degree and got married.

In the fall of 1949, Hoeffner became a history teacher and track coach at Power Memorial Academy in New York City. Although his coaching career at Power was brief, under Coach Hoeffner’s guidance, several “firsts” occurred during his tenure. Among them:

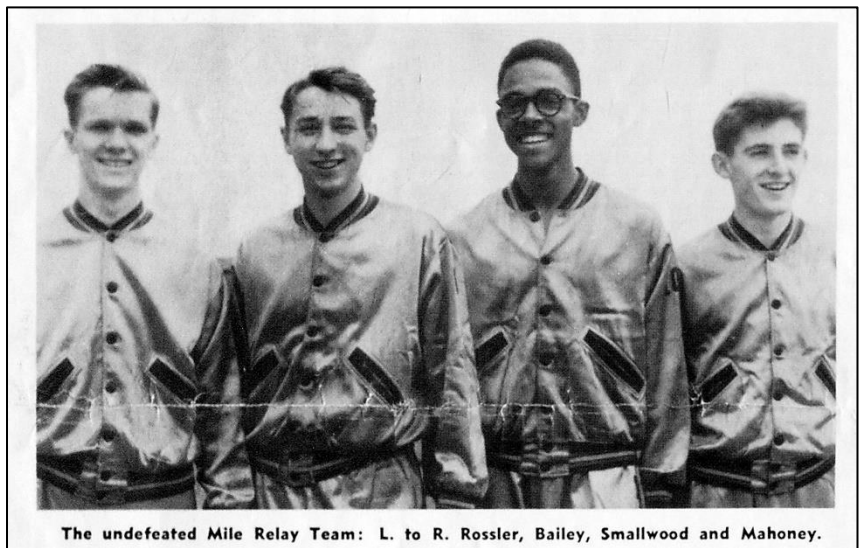
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- The 1950 Cross Country Freshman squad won the CHSAA New York Sectional Championship for the very first time. The team consisted of the individual champion Jim McDermott, Tom Lynch, Dick Martin, Tom Rynne, Ed Ryan, and Gene Cardy.
- In 1950, the fleet-footed Two-Mile Relay team of Jim Mahoney, Allan Rossler, Frank Bailey, and Dave Smallwood would become the Panther’s first gold medalists at an Outdoor CHSAA City Championship in an Open event. They did so in style setting a meet record time of 8:19.9.
- In 1951, Powermen earned their first ever Indoor CHSAA City Championship Open event gold medals, taking the 960-Yard Relay, running laps around Madison Square Garden’s 160-yard wooden track. Their winning time of 1:47.0 was also a meet record. Power stars of the era, Mike Twomey, Bob Buckridge, Jack Howley and Joe Hardy, teamed for the win.



Stulzinski

Freshman Cross Country Track Champs—Bronx, Manhattan, Westchester:
Standing: Bro. Matkovich, E. Carty, R. Martin, T. Rynne, Mr. Hoeffner, coach.
Kneeling: E. Mulligan, J. McDermott, T. Lynch.



The undefeated Mile Relay Team: L. to R. Rossler, Bailey, Smallwood and Mahoney.

Another highlight was that six of Hoeffner’s Power runners earned college scholarships. Two of the better known were Frank Bailey, who went on to run quarter miles at Seton Hall, and Jim Mahoney, who would star on and become captain of the Iona College Cross Country team.

In 1951, Larry earned a master’s degree from Columbia University. That September he found work closer to home in the suburbs of Long Island. At Copiague High School, Mr. Hoeffner worked as a Physical Education teacher, Health teacher, Athletic Director, Track and Field Coach, Cross Country Coach and Bowling Coach for more than 35 years. A colleague said Hoeffner’s Copiague track teams were powerhouses and described Larry as a quiet, unassuming man. It is reported Hoeffner was instrumental in founding the New York State Track and Cross-Country Coaches’ Association and the

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Suffolk County Coaches Association. The latter group named their annual Cross Country Invitational Varsity Girls "A" Race in his honor.

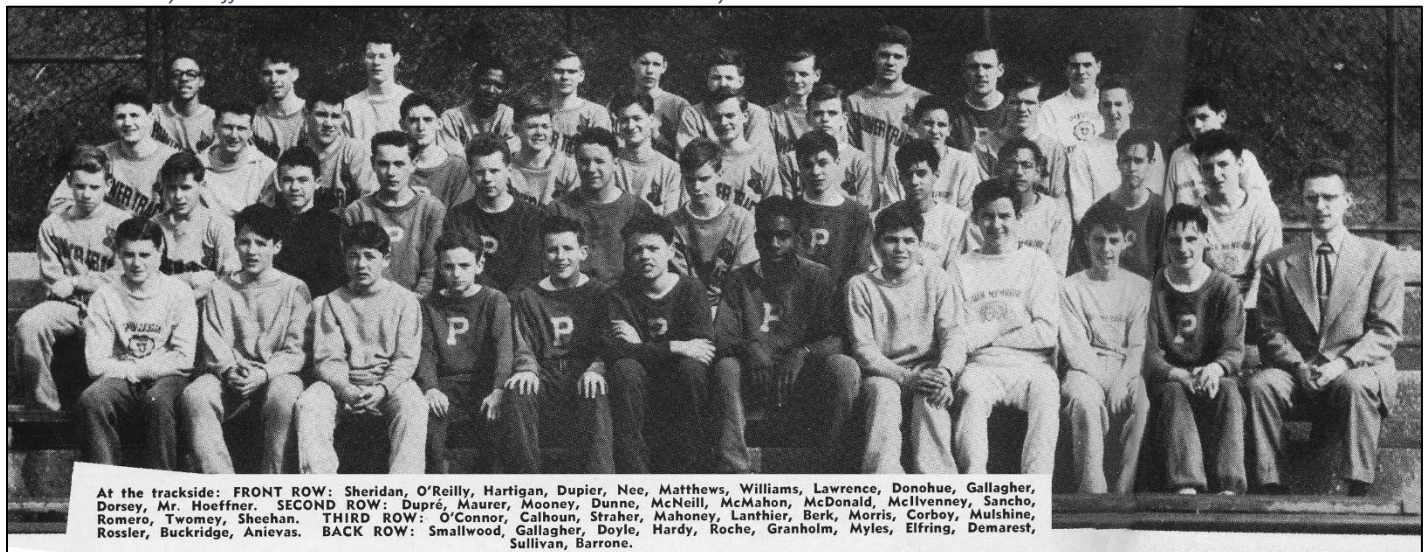
Larry Hoeffner and his wife retired to Florida in 1988. They lived there until moving to Oklahoma in 2011. Larry enjoyed fishing, golf, basketball, gardening, and bowling. He loved to share childhood stories of the New York Yankees; those stories included Ruth, Gehrig, DiMaggio, and Mantle. He also spoke often to his grandchildren and great grandchildren of what it was like to grow up in The Great Depression and what it was like to serve during the

war in England and France.

Larry Hoeffner was married to the love of his life, his wife Virginia, for 68 years until his passing in 2016.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COACHES ASSOCIATION CROSS COUNTRY INVITATIONAL SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2021 SUNKEN MEADOW STATE PARK KINGS PARK, NEW YORK			
RACE SCHEDULE: (MEET DIRECTOR CAN ADD OR ELIMINATE RACES BASED ON ENTRIES)			
9:00	BILL GERHARDT	BOYS VARSITY "B" RACE	5000M
9:25	PAUL KORETZKI	GIRLS VARSITY "B" RACE	5000M
9:55	FRANK LA BIANCA	BOYS VARSITY "A" RACE	5000M
10:20	LARRY HOFFNER	GIRLS VARSITY "A" RACE	5000M
10:50	HARRY SCHNEIDER	BOYS SOPHOMORE RACE	5000M
11:15	KURT PASLER	BOYS JUNIOR VARSITY RACE	5000M
11:40	CYNTHIA QUINN	GIRLS JUNIOR VARSITY RACE	5000M
12:10	VINNY ABRAMS	BOYS FROSH "A" RACE	1.5 MILES
12:25	TOM PUTNAM	BOYS FROSH "B" RACE	1.5 MILES
12:40	JIM GILHOOLEY	GIRLS FROSH "A" RACE	1.5 MILES
12:55	BILL SHELLEY	GIRLS FROSH "B" RACE	1.5 MILES

Head Coach Larry Hoeffner with the 1949-1950 Power Memorial Academy Track Team



Note: much of the text in this post comes from Mr. Hoeffner's obituary.