



Mike Rienzo was an outstanding three-sport athlete who attended Kingston High School from 1945-1949. While at KHS, Mike earned 10 letters playing in the “Big Three” of Football, Basketball, and Baseball. During those years, Mike helped the “Fighting Maroons” to capture a remarkable eight DUSO, (Dutchess, Ulster, Sullivan, Orange Counties) league championships as well as three section nine titles and one intersectional crown.

He was a four-year starter in baseball, where he was a power hitting third baseman, twice batting over .400. With Mike holding down the hot corner, the Maroon and White won consecutive DUSO League Baseball titles in 1947 and 1948 under Coach Willard Burke. In those two years, KHS dominated the DUSO competition going 5-1 in 1947 and 6-0 in 1948. Mike had the privilege of participating in the first High School night baseball game ever played at the Municipal Stadium (1946) as well as playing in the first perfect game (1948) ever thrown in KHS baseball history, both wins over rival Newburgh Free Academy.

On the basketball court, Mike was a superb, ball handling guard and dangerous scoring threat on 4 straight DUSO Basketball Championship teams that went 14-5 in 45-46, 20-2 in 46-47, 20-0 in 47-48, and 17-2 in 48-49. He was selected All-DUSO for three of those years. During that span, under legendary Coach G. Warren Kias, Kingston set the school’s all-time consecutive game win streak, chalking up 43 contests without a loss, a record which still stands today. The 1947-48 Maroon basketball team is often referred to as one of the greatest ever to take to the hardcourt for Kingston High School and was the last team to finish a season undefeated. In all, he helped lead his teams to a four-year record of 71-9, which included the school’s first ever 20-win seasons in 1946-47 and 1947-48.

As a 15-year-old in 1946, he helped KHS win its first outright DUSO Football title since 1936. Mike was a unanimous selection for All-DUSO honors at the end position on both offense and defense. In 1948, Coach Burke’s high scoring Maroon eleven, again won the DUSO Football Crown with a record of 7-1. Due to a leg injury that occurred in practice, he did not play in their only loss to Port Jervis. Mike was selected once more for the All-DUSO team, this time as a running back and defensive back. Coach Burke often referred to the 1948 club as his most powerful.

During the summer, he played in the competitive Kingston City Men’s Baseball League. Mike was one of its top performers, batting .400 in 1948 and winning the batting title in 1949 with the same average. He was elected to the Kingston Old Timers Baseball Hall of Fame in 1987. Mike also competed in the many local area Basketball League Tournaments with Dawkin’s Favorites and Sickler’s.

After graduation, Mike attended St. Lawrence University where he played football, basketball, and baseball. In 1950, he played defensive back on the undefeated varsity football team. That team still holds the distinction of being the only undefeated eleven in school history, going 8-0-0, extending the program’s win streak to 14 games. Mike proudly served in the United States Marines Corps as a Reconnaissance Scout Observer during the Korean War from 1952-54. He then returned to St. Lawrence and graduated in 1956 with a B.S.E. degree in Physical Education. He finished out his athletic career by playing varsity baseball.

Mike was a Physical Education teacher in the Kingston City School District from 1958-1986. During that time, he coached JV Basketball for six years from 1964-69, guiding the Little Maroons to a 72-25 record. From 1962-64, Mike coached the JV Baseball teams, losing only 3 games. After the untimely death of Varsity Baseball coach Al Gruner in the spring of 1965, Mike took over the reins from 1965-69. His Maroon nine captured the DUSO Championship in 1966 with a 13-1-1 record, including a perfect league record of 6-0. He was selected as the DUSO Coach of the Year for that effort. His Fighting Maroon squads of 1965 and 1967, finished tied for first place with both Newburgh and Poughkeepsie (1965) and Newburgh (1967) but lost both times in the playoffs. In 1969, he took over as the boys' Varsity Basketball Coach and led the team to two consecutive DCSL (Dutchess County Scholastic League) Basketball League Titles in 1975 (19-3) and 1976 (16-4), winning 19 straight home contests. The 1975 team reached the Section One Class AA Championship game, losing a tough 60-58 decision to Lincoln of Yonkers down at the Westchester County Civic Center. Mike was voted Freeman Coach of the Year in 1975 and 1976 as well as gathering in the DCSL's 1975 Coach of the Year honors. He was also considered one of the area's outstanding bowlers.