

MELROSE FREE-PRESS

Melrose native Chuck Tedeschi turns to high school coaching in Andover

Former Melrose football, wrestling star extends city's sports legacy beyond its borders

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Wicked Local

The Melrose Red Raiders sports history is rich in a successful legacy of championship teams and the extraordinary athletes who played on them, where their thirst for athletics was first nurtured. They eventually continued the cycle to become coaches themselves in order to teach the next generation what they had learned from their Melrose sports roots.



One of those former Red Raiders who's venturing into the world of high school sports this spring is Chuck Tedeschi, a 1993 Melrose graduate, who starred with distinction on the football and wrestling teams since his freshman year in 1989. He grew up on East Emerson Street.



Now living in Andover with his wife Anny and their two children – Charles Jr., who's nicknamed Chase (age 13), and daughter Emerson (age 12, named after the street Chuck grew up on in Melrose) – Chuck is helping out as an assistant coach for the Andover High School wrestling team. He's filling in for Ken Najem, who, because of the overlapping COVID-19 seasons this year, couldn't assist the school's legendary head coach Michael Bolduc as a result of his commitments as a soccer coach at Notre Dame High School in Tyngsboro this spring.



“I am still learning from coach Bolduc, who has had a legendary career, and I am honored to be his student even at my age,” said Chuck during an interview with the Melrose Free Press and Wicked Local Melrose last week.

The season is just beginning, and there’s still much work to be done, said Chuck. “We have had to crash course the new guys, while trying to facilitate growth in the more advanced group. We are just trying to get everyone match-ready in terms of their conditioning,” added the former Melrose wrestling star.

“On top of that, these guys are wearing masks, while they are wrestling. This has been an extremely big [adjustment] to ask of these young men, and I couldn’t be more proud of the effort.”

Andover has had three dual meets, as of May 14, and has one win to show for its efforts. They have lost to MVC [Merrimack Valley Conference] powerhouse Central Catholic, but competed hard against Lowell. They did beat Billerica rather convincingly to account for the lone win to date.

“[Billerica] has similar challenges to us with numbers and starters playing other sports, such as lacrosse and baseball,” said Tedeschi. “But our work ethic is strong, so I think we will end up looking back at this season as a success and with gratitude that we were able to get these kids on the mat and give them a season.”

After moving back home from California, where he met his wife Anny, a New Jersey native, and also where his two children were born, Chuck got involved in Andover wrestling. His background in the sport helped him quickly become established in his new community.

Tedeschi was initially introduced to Andover Youth Wrestling coordinator Neal Callahan by fellow Melrose graduate Jane Reardon Pimental (Class of 1994). Callahan has since become one of Tedeschi’s closest friends.

“I will eternally be grateful for the introduction. That was in 2015, and I started instructing alongside Neal that season. I would say about two-thirds of our varsity team came through that program, so my level of familiarity with the guys and their families was high.”



Tedeschi is also involved in the town’s newest wrestling organization, which is called the Dascomb Wrestling Club. It started up last year.

“The club began during COVID, and then we had to shut down for a bit,” he said. “It was started by a great Andover wrestling family – the McNeeley’s, actually related to the fighting McNeeley’s of Arlington,” said Chuck. “We had half-dozen guys in our youth program last summer. It was fantastic, and we will get it going again as soon as we can.”

Red Raider family

Tedeschi’s parents, Roger, a Salem native who moved to Melrose in 1983, and Lorraine Theriault, an East Boston native who became a Melrose resident in 1975, were two of the founding members of the Friends of Melrose Football and the Friends of Melrose Wrestling, back in the late 1980s. They now reside in Topsfield. Roger is a retired Brigham’s Ice Cream CEO.



Chuck’s sister, Amy Hauser, who now resides in Andover with her family, is also a MHS graduate (Class of 1989). She then attended Tufts, graduating from the Medford campus in 1993.

If the recent incarnation of Melrose football is considered a dynasty, Tedeschi’s teams 30 years earlier set the example led by legendary coach Bruce McPherson, whose

offensive coordinator was Tim Morris, the program's current head coach. Successful teams are usually built on tradition, and Melrose is no exception.

A special place to grow up

Chuck Tedeschi is one of those athletes, who starred as a Melrose football and wrestler, before graduating in 1993. He had a post-graduate year at Phillips Exeter Academy, where his outside linebacker coach was Tim Morris' brother, Rob, who also presided over the running backs.

But before high school, Chuck has great early memories of playing sports in Melrose. "I played organized sports and pickup games from the time I could walk around 1978 or so," he said.

"When I think of my childhood, I think of pickup games on the School Street / East Emerson block or over on the Winthrop School playground or the Common. It seemed like the grownups were always at work, and we had the neighborhood to ourselves during the day. I remember thinking it was actually being weird to see a grown up at home during the day, because our parents let us play from dawn to dusk, as they were out there trying to achieve the American dream."



Ironically, Chuck's first chance of being on a championship team was at Phillips Exeter. "Even though I ended up being OK in sports, I was never on a championship team until prep school," he said. "I might have to go back to town hockey in 1985 or so, when Coach Ed Kirby led his Pipers to the championship.

"I also played town soccer and Little League, as well as Pop Warner, but we always seemed to come up a bit short. But I had some of the best times of my childhood playing all-stars at Lewis Monk Field during the summer, then later on Morelli. It seemed like we'd play baseball from March until August 31 back then."

And when it came to choosing a high school, there was no way he was going any place else but Melrose. He played baseball until his junior year, but was a four-year participant on the wrestling team, and also played varsity football for three years after suiting up on the freshman team.

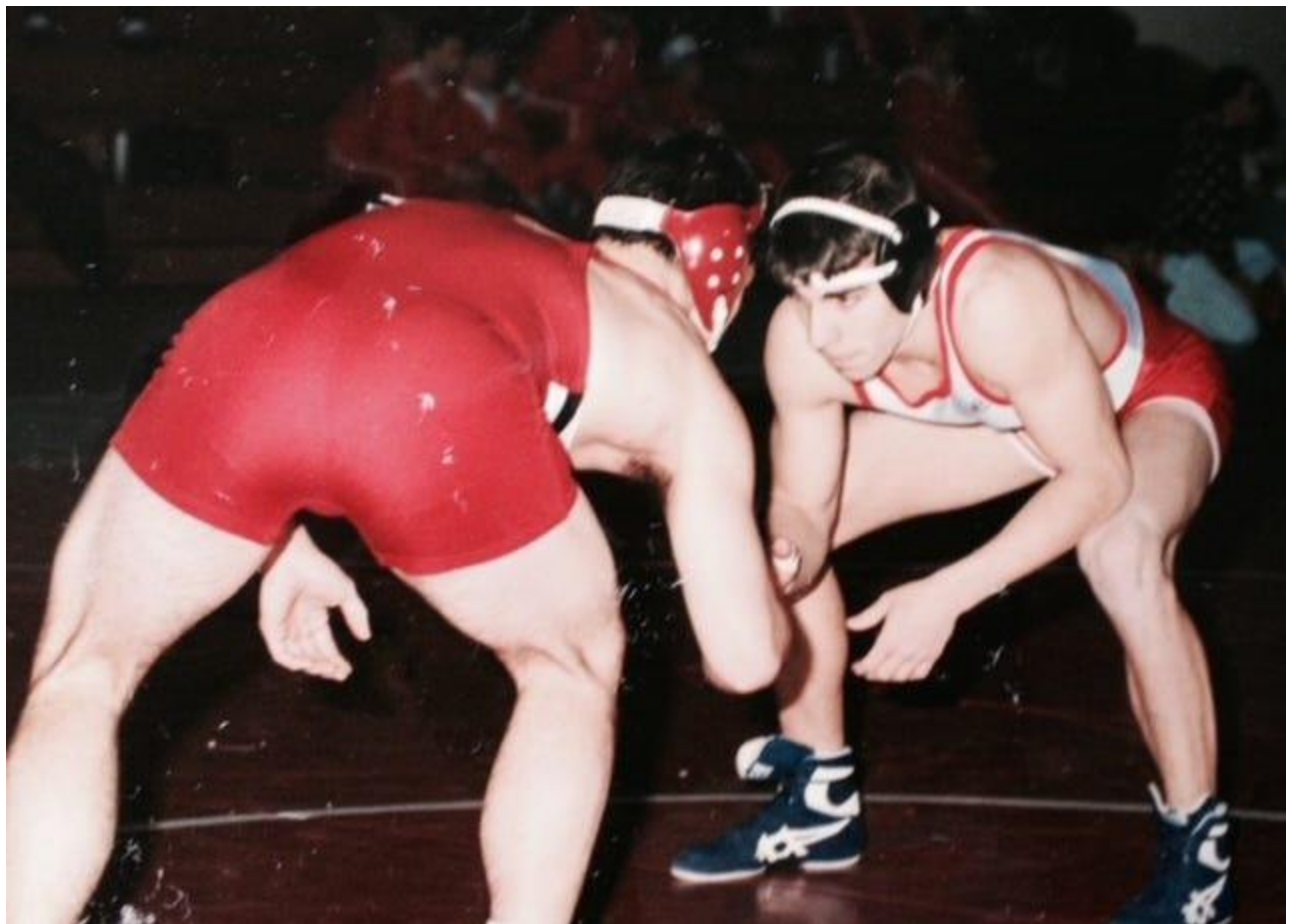


Tedeschi experienced some down years athletically during his time as a Red Raider. “MHS sports teams had some down years during my time there,” he said. “From the 1990 season until my senior year in 1993, we had no championship football or wrestling teams. The wrestling seasons could get pretty lonely, when we got into the postseason. We would have to go to other teams wrestling rooms to get in a full practice. We did not have a state champion or a place winner in my four years on the team.”

Tedeschi jokingly said he was the only one to come close, when he ended up fourth overall in the states. But he’ll never forget his coaches.

“I loved football, and wanted to play for Penn State as a kid,” he said. “You know that 11-year-old dream kind of thing all kids have. But football was my key to meeting two of the most influential coaches I have ever had. When I stepped on the goose poop-littered field across from the high school in my lumpy fitting football gear, I met coach Cliff

Somerville for the first time. I was way too young to understand his legacy or the impact he had on so many lives at the time, but coach Somerville talked to us like adults. He held us accountable for everything. He made us pay attention to the little things. I got a double dose of coach Somerville as a gym teacher like so many of us did. He kept his eye on me, and made me start to believe in myself a little bit, because it doesn't matter how much your parents tell you that you're great we still need to believe in ourselves and our abilities as athletes before we can make progress. Coach Somerville was that catalyst to my confidence. He introduced me to coach John L. Sullivan, who at the time was the MHS offensive coordinator, and also the assistant wrestling coach."



And that coaching tandem ended up changing his direction in sports.

"I had fully intended on trying out for basketball that winter, but the two of them had other plans. Coach Sullivan grabbed a few of Somerville's freshman football squad players, and took them down to wrestling room. Out of about the 10 of us, Matt Murphy

and I were two of the guys who stuck it out. The team was very successful the previous year after crowning captain Jimmy McSweeney a state champion the year before. We really only had a few juniors, and the rest of the team was made up of sophomores and us freshmen. It was definitely a rebuilding period,” said Tedeschi.

“During that time, I leaned on guys like Dan Schumaker, Jimmy Bleiler, Tony Babcock, Corey Thomas and Michael Grover, who now coaches the sport in Wakefield. Those guys showed me the ropes, while my Hall of Fame coaches Frank Smith and John Puleo helped me hone my craft. Smith and Puleo had already had full playing and coaching careers, before joining Melrose. The pace in that room was fast, and it was like drinking from a fire hose, but I loved it. The guys who came back to help us like the Gautreau brothers John and Don, Phil Aylward and McSweeney were the best. They came back to give back to us what was given to them, and I never forgot that. I made sure I worked hard with the guys behind me like Pat Greeley and Jeff Iudice. Both of these guys would go on to be two of Melrose’s most accomplished wrestlers. I’ve always been very proud of those two guys.”



College days

After Phillips Exeter, Tedeschi chose to stay close to home for his college choice, and so he attended Boston University.

“Before going to Boston University, I was at Phillips Exeter Academy, where I played football and wrestled. As a football player, I was named All-Conference, and as a wrestler I was a Class A and also a New England champion in the New England Independent School League, plus a national place winner All-American. We as a team were also Class A and New England champions,” he said.

Heading west to invest in the future

After Tedeschi received his degree in Sociology, he ended up taking a different path to begin a career in the financial world.

“Since college and while getting my MBA from Pepperdine University in California, I have been working in and around the private equity and banking industry,” he said. “I have had the great pleasure and experience of living and working on both the east and west coast for significant periods of time.

“For the past five years, I have worked for a publicly traded institution called Pacific Western Bank. I had been working for a smaller technology-focused bank on its private equity banking team when we were acquired by Pacific Western. I’m a managing director in its fund finance group. We are a commercial bank that provides debt and banking services to privately backed companies and their investors for the benefit of those companies. We help fund some of the coolest technology and life science companies in the Boston and New York City areas. I really like what I do.”

Teaching kids

In terms of his future coaching plans, Tedeschi is honored to be a part of a team again, and the experience he’s getting this year will keep him involved in and around Andover wrestling for as long as they will have him.

“Being a head coach is not really in my DNA or desire,” Tedeschi said, “because I still dig my day job, too. I have volumes to learn from coach Bolduc. After watching him and the community rallying together these past few weeks to make this season happen, I have gained a new appreciation for the dedication and commitment that so many of us parents and coaches have for our kids. It’s been beautiful to watch. I’m lucky to be surrounded by amazing and inspirational people every day. I’m human, I still make mistakes, but I know I’m coachable.”