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Suffolk Sportopics

By Joe Lee

Norton Makes Sports No. 1 at Huntington 'Y'

By JOE LEE

Every once in a while, a man with tremendous knowledge for team organization comes along on the sports horizon, but it's unusual when it happens twice in the same family in the same community.

The people of Huntington are fortunate in this respect, for they had an untiring worker at their YMCA in the late Edward Norton, the original Executive Director of the organization, and now his son Edward Michael, or Mickey, as he is known to his legion of friends, is following in his father's steps.



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The elder Norton came to the Huntington Y in 1946 with a tremendous sports background. Before very long, he had many teams organized, with neighbors and their kids involved in sports. And he didn't even have a building to house some of the games at the time. He passed away in 1956.

Now, Mickey is truly a man of all seasons. He has a 24-hour-a-day job as Program and Physical Education Director at the Huntington Y under Executive Director Ben Timmermann.

There are approximately 3,000 youth members in the Huntington "Y" and half are involved in leagues and teams throughout the year. Then there's a program for adults that's well supported by mom and dad to make the competition a family affair.

When Norton rears off the myriad participation programs that come under his wing, you wonder how one man can keep track of things like programming, equipment, coaching, and planning for future events.

"It keeps me busy," Mickey says modestly, then adds, "but it could not have been possible without the help of volunteers and the good wishes and co-operation of Mr. Timmermann."

Mickey Norton is 36 and lives in Huntington with his wife, Arline, and their three-year-old son, Eddie. Until he was felled by polio when he was 13 years old, Mickey was a pretty good basketball and football player in junior high school in Miami, Fla.

He learned to enjoy the people who did participate. He never lost interest or enthusiasm to encourage the other fellow on the field.

Mickey attended Princeton for two years and was graduated from Hofstra. He majored in journalism and was sports editor of a local paper from 1952 to 1960.

"I enjoyed writing, but I felt more comfortable when I was on the field as a coach or some other chore. I preferred doing, rather than writing," he explained.

He was doing full-time program work for the Y with his dad upon graduation. In Sept. 1957, Mickey left the Norton A.C., a Day Camp in Northport. It was a year-round school of sports activities.

Mickey's Day Camp was going well but when Ben Timmermann came from the Central Queens YMCA to direct the Huntington Y, he invited Mickey to return to his old post of play and sports programming.

"I returned in June of 1957," Norton recalled. "I saw the YMCA was better equipped to do things for more kids at one time. It was an organizational challenge at the time. But the volunteers helped and we have good representation right now," he said with a smile of gratitude and satisfaction.

Mickey's office is on the first floor

of the YMCA building on Main St. in Huntington. Before you get to see him, you have to go through an ante room which is stacked with uniforms, sports equipment, and everything but the liniment smell of a locker room. Mickey also is the property man.

"It would get too involved and out of hand if too many people were giving out the equipment," he explained.

Mickey's "representation" in his sports program is really something. Here's a list of the activities:

- 10 football teams.
- 49 baseball teams.
- 14 Girls softball teams.
- 14 summer basketball teams of high school age.
- 52 Boy's teams (winter) basketball.
- 12 Men's teams (winter) basketball.
- 6 Girl's teams (winter) basketball.
- Men's & Women's volleyball (20 players in each).
- Lacrosse program (70 boys participating).
- Men's slo pitch softball, six teams.
- Women's slo pitch softball, five teams.

Then there's the Mom and Dad Club, Women's Club which handles food stands at games, the cheer leaders and the junior leaders who help and coaches younger members and several other projects that combine to make the Huntington YMCA one great big ball of wax for the entire family.

When the elder Norton was running the show in 1948, his men's basketball team played in a tournament to represent the YMCA in the Olympic Games of that year. They lost to Flushing by four points in the Qualifying Round.

The Huntington YMCA football team traveled to Florida twice in the last four years to play in the National Junior Football Federation tourney.

The "Y" members use nine different school gyms in Huntington, South Huntington, South Huntington, Cold Spring Harbor and Northport School Districts to pursue their sports program.

The Women's slowpitch team won the New York-Large Island championship and qualified to play in the nationals in Tennessee over Labor Day. They finished 19th out of a field of 47.

Mickey never tires of projecting sports with his committee. They are currently working on a fund program for a new gymnasium, a three-phase model for the heavy sports traffic.

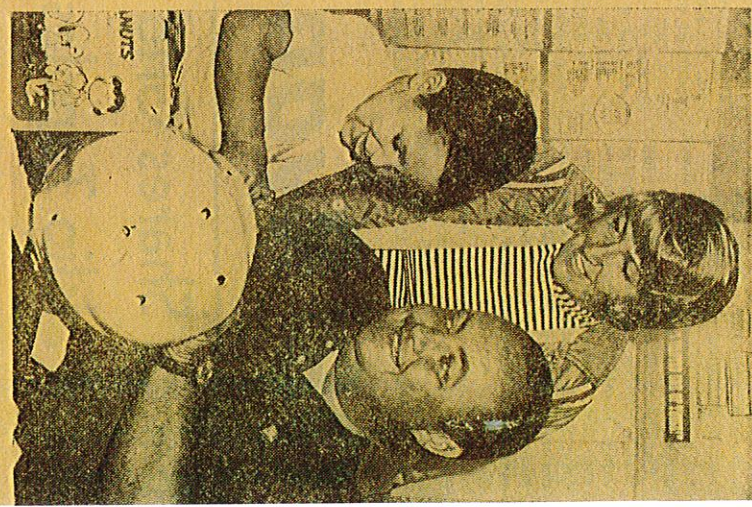
"It was a dream of my dad's," Mickey said. "I hope it will be a reality in the winter of 1971-72."

Norton pointed to a picture of a young football team on the wall.

"That was the team that went to Florida to play in 1967. All but two of the boys are now playing football on various high school teams.

"You know, some people may think I'm a bit of a jerk in pointing with pride to those kids. It's truly a feeling of satisfaction maybe. I'm old fashioned, but I'm proud of this feeling. Because you see, it was brought about by some wonderful people who volunteered to help the kids in this program.

"The whole thing is too vast for one man. The efforts of the volunteers and the cooperation of the YMCA board of managers and the kids themselves, make this organization a wonderful continuous adventure," Mickey concluded.



FAMILY VISIT — Mickey Norton engages in some fun with 3-year-old son, Eddie, over football helmet as Mrs. Arline Norton looks on in his office at the Huntington YMCA.