

# Deschamps, Garone among Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame inductees

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In a way, being elected to the Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame in [Patchogue](#) was a homecoming for Buzz Deschamps. When he was playing for the [Long Island Ducks](#) in the early 1960s, the ebullient owner Al Baron lived in [Patchogue](#). What is more, when coach [John Muckler](#) ordered his players to stay out of Kelly's Irish House, a pub closer to Long Island Arena in [Commack](#), Deschamps and his teammates used to flee to Reese's 1900 in [Patchogue](#).

"We figured he'd never find us out here, but he did," Deschamps said this morning in the Hall, just down the street from Reese's.

What really made it feel like home was that Suffolk actually has been Deschamps' home for decades, even though he played only two seasons in [Commack](#) and even though he is such a proud son of Penetanguishene, Ontario that the little town recently named a street for him. Deschamps married a Long Island woman, Trudy, and happily settled here.

"Long Island has really treated me as one of its own," the [Bay Shore](#) resident said after having been announced among the 10 members of the Class of 2010, to be inducted May 6. "It's amazing. It's almost 50 years and I'll be in a shopping center and somebody will come up to me and say, 'You're not the guy who used to play for the Ducks are you?' "

He was standing in an attractive alcove set up with a permanent display honoring the old hockey Ducks and the current baseball Ducks. That was after being introduced in the Hall's neat 30-seat theater, which often hosts movie nights for senior citizens and educational films for students.

The inductees-to-be were impressed with the sharp, high-tech look of the place (a visitor can play Wii baseball or golf while he or she is looking at a historical exhibit). They also were moved about getting in.

"It's a fantastic thing just to hear it," said Nick Garone, a former all-America wrestler from Patchogue-Medford. "Then you walk in these doors and you really get a sense of how incredible this is. To see all the names and all the people I'm getting inducted with is just very humbling."

Tom Howard, the former Rutgers Trophy winning coach at Bay Shore High School, echoed that. Looking toward his father, Lou, the legendary former coach at Amityville High, Howard added, "Probably the most important person in my life, the person who actually taught me how to coach, that's my mom. She was unable to be here, so I had to bring my dad with me."

Jeff Schaefer, a former major league infielder who now runs a baseball academy in [North Carolina](#), said, "I'm very proud of being from New York. I've lived elsewhere longer than I lived in Patchogue, but we always say we're from Patchogue."

In terms of longevity, though, Deschamps is at the head of the class. "When I first came here the Expressway stopped at Deer Park Avenue," he said. "It was just a bunch of farms and little communities. But we used to pack the building. I don't think in the two years I was here I had to buy a meal. I was invited to someone's home every evening. They'd say come over and spend the evening with our family."

"After the game on a Sunday afternoon, we would go over to Kelly's Irish House with a handful of quarters to call [Canada](#) and tell them how we made out for the week: 'Got another hat trick, mom,' " he added that a hat trick used to earn a player a frozen duck. "We had a lot of duck dinners."

They had so much fun that he decided to stay. He met Trudy after her first husband died, when she had brought her son to a hockey school at the arena in [Commack](#). He has worked as a scout and representative for a hockey equipment company. Beyond that, he has been involved in youth hockey. Deschamps, 70, coached the St. John's University team and dreams of a day when the [Stony Brook University](#) club team, which he coaches, has its own arena and plays Division I hockey.

He takes personal pride in the way hockey has blossomed here, knowing that someday current NHL players such as [Mike Komisarek](#) of [Islip Terrace](#) and [Christopher Higgins](#) of [Smithtown](#) will join him in the Suffolk Hall.

"You go back to in the history of the game, there were about 350 Canadian hockey players who came to the United States and we actually pioneered hockey in this country. It's quite a legacy with all the kids from Long Island making the National Hockey League. The Long Island Ducks were really the first coaches to start youth hockey here."

Not to mention the fact the Ducks plowed the soil for a certain NHL franchise to flourish on Long Island. "There's no question," Deschamps said. "I don't think the [New York Islanders](#) give us the respect they should be giving, but that's another story."

If there's one thing an old Duck has, it is a trove of stories. Just wait until May 6. "I will," he said, "come up with a few."

Deschamps' fellow members of the Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2010:

Bill Batewell, baseball coach: Notched 450th win with Sachem in 2004, coached Empire State Games and won seven gold medals, [Stan Musial](#) and collegiate summer league teams. Now is head coach at [Bellport](#).

Will Brown, basketball player: Led Long Island with an average of 35 points per game as a senior at [Miller Place](#), had more than 1,000 points and 500 assists for Dowling, now coaches at University of Albany.

Nick Garone, wrestler: Suffolk champ and all-America at Patchogue-Medford, six-time gold medalist at Empire State Games, state college champ at [Syracuse](#) and Old Dominion. Now coaches Eastport-South Manor.

Tom Howard, football coach: Went 51-14-1 with two Suffolk Division II titles and two Rutgers Trophies as Bay Shore High coach from 1981 to 1987. Later an athletic director, now an adjunct professor at Stony Brook and Cablevision TV analyst.

Jim McGowan, softball coach: Best softball winning percentage in New York State history, .874, with 609 wins, 88 losses in 27 years at Bay Shore. Eleven county titles, nine Long Island titles, six state titles. Two-time state coach of the year. Long Island-record 55-game winning streak 1994-96.

Joe Patrovich, football and wrestling coach: After two [Nassau](#) football titles, two Rutgers Trophies and two undefeated seasons at Levittown Division, moved to Islip in 1986 and won seven league and two Suffolk championships. Now coaches Hauppauge. Started coaching wrestling at Islip in 1996 and has 144-41-1 record with six league, two county and two state titles.

Jeff Schaefer, baseball player: Went from Patchogue-Medford to University of [Maryland](#), batted better than .370 with seven home runs in his final season. Drafted by the Orioles, played pro ball for 14 seasons, including time in the majors with White Sox, Mariners, Athletics.

2010 Special Recognition Award: West Islip boys lacrosse program-six consecutive Suffolk titles, five Long Island championships, three state titles, one national title.

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