Walt Marek was a true three-sport athlete during his reign in the late 1950s.

Marek was a freshman watching him play all three sports," said Art Secondo, a former Southington sports reporter. "I’ve always considered Walt the greatest ever in the history of Southington athletics.

Call him Mr. Competitive

Walt Marek was known for his hard work on the field

To put it in perspective, it’s important to realize that Marek earned all-state honors for two seasons despite an ankle injury that haunt- ed him throughout his career. He was the primary running back, the place kicker, and the punter. "Coach Oreane used to tape my ankles every day because I tore ligaments when I was a freshman," he said. "It hurt, but I wanted to be in the game. It was bad enough to have somebody help me off the field. Then the doctor gave me a few shots. When it was good, I went back in there." Marek carried the Thanksgiving momentum into the winter season where he led the basketball team to the postseason with a 16-5 record. In the spring, he anchored a baseball team that went 19-0 in the regular season to give Coach Jay Fontana his first undefeated season in 20 years.

Marek is considered one of the greatest athletes to ever come out of Southington, a city that has been blessed with many great athletes over the years. He was a dominant force on the field, and his three-sport childhood, his memories of sandlot baseball games and his three-sport childhood, but Marek carefully side-stepped questions about personal triumphs and his dominance on the field in the late 1950s.

"I just liked to play sports," he said about making the varsity team in every high school season. "We had some good players," Marek said about a touch-down that ended Plainville’s bid for a perfect season in 1958.

Athlete

Walt Marek was a true three-sport athlete during his reign in the late 1950s.

"I was a switch hitter, and I could see the ball well. Also, going back to that time, you met up with a lot of pitchers that weren’t particularly fast. They threw a lot of junk balls, and that gave us the opportunity to hit a little better." After graduation, Marek packed his bags and headed to Nebraska to spend the summer in the rookie leagues. He bounced between the Cleveland and Baltimore organizations before shouldering soreness forced him from the mound. "I started out in Lincoln Florida and got transferred to Selma Alabama. I had four home runs down there, and all they used to do is bunt the pitchers," he said. “That’s why in hindsight, I think I should have stayed with Baltimore. I was a good hitter." On Wednesday, Nov. 10, Marek will be honored in an induction ceremony at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville.

To comment on this story or to contact sports writer John Goralski, email him at jgoralski@southingtonobserver.com.