

Aaron **Welson**



Courtesy Reed Welson (son of Aaron - 2015)

While I have many memories of Shore Haven Beach Club from as early as the 1950's, the most vivid is of my father's, Aaron Welson's, love of handball.

As athletic director of this club from its inception to its closure in 1986, he was responsible for the overall athletic program for the 10,000 member club. While he enjoyed doing this to supplement our family income, the real reward was to be able to play handball daily for the entire summer. I remember his strapping on his back brace, the ritual needed for him to be able to endure the pain from his lifelong back

problems. After playing, he'd hang up his corset, drenched in perspiration, in order for it to dry and be reused later in the day or the next day.

Aaron was an accomplished physical education teacher in the high schools where he coached soccer (city championship), baseball (city championship), and handball. There was no doubt that, as he aged, HANDBALL was his life's blood. After Shore Haven closed he continued to play in the local schoolyard into his mid-80's before finally calling it quits.

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More importantly was Aaron's ability to attract the best handball players in the world to the club where they would play exhibitions, tournaments, and generally promote the sport of handball. The crowds were always huge as Oscar, Carl, and Ruby Obert faced off against Vic Hershkowitz, Steve Sandler, Joel Wisotsky, Lou Russo Jr., Marty Decatur, and so many more. The Oberts, in addition to playing the best of the best, also played with the club members. A lasting memory for me is Carl Obert taking on all comers with only one hand. I always wondered how he could make the ball hook so much and how Oscar was able to hit the ball so hard. Ruby, seen as the steady one, was the golden boy of the threesome.

After a time, Aaron delegated Billy Farber to bring the most talented handballers to play in regularly scheduled weekend tournaments at Shore Haven. Among them were Joe Durso, Albert Apuzzi, Dan Flickstein, Danny Maroney, Ken Ginty, Steve Lott, Mark Levine, Roger Casuso, Al Torres, Arty Reyer, Mike

Dikman, Graham Palmore, Richie Saffer, Jeff and Stu Kirzner, Al Serafino, Mark Goldberg, Joey Guzman, Danny Vera, Billy Archival, George Hargett, John Edwards, Steve Sandler, and many more. In addition Aaron formed a Shore Haven Handball Committee to help further promote the sport of handball. Because of him Shore Haven quickly became the hotbed for summer handball.

Aaron played handball until he couldn't any longer. The sport had sustained him throughout his life and into his elder years, and, more importantly, he was instrumental in bringing the sport to thousands of people for many years at Shore Haven Beach Club.