



The year was 1971 and Charles Mike and Mary Fletcher were bursting with pride as their oldest son Mike was graduating from High school. He was to be the first of the six Fletcher brothers to earn a diploma from Christian Brothers Academy. The Fletchers were strong believers in Catholic education and although willing to give their children a choice as to where they would go to high school, were pleased that they chose to make the 30 minute bus ride from the west side to attend the best school in town. With such a large family, each of the children contributed to the high cost of their education by paying half of the tuition. So as Tom joined his brother Jim on Randall Road, he knew that his part of the 525 dollar annual tuition would be money well spent.

Tom had always been involved in athletics. His two favorite sports were baseball and basketball and he enjoyed both. As with most players at the time, Tom spent his first two years honing his skills at the JV level patiently waiting for his turn to move up. The basketball team led by seniors Jay Sferra and his own brother Jim, dominated league play and won its first city league championship in nearly a decade in 1973. So the Bob Felasco coached Brothers had high expectations for following season despite having to replace four starters. That year Tom immediately moved into the starting lineup. Alongside tri captains Ed Leone, John Niland and Jon Law the Brothers quietly rolled moved up to the top of the CNYCL standings. Tom improved as the season went on. His 8.6 points per game average was not indicative of his contributions to the team. So when the Brothers lost to rival Bishop Ludden in the City league championship game, Tom vowed that the following year he would lead the Brothers back to the top of the CNYCL. And that is what they did. Although he was 6'5, Tom was guard in a forwards body. He had the ballhandling skills of a point guard but could go inside and rebound when necessary. This versatility helped the Brothers not only to their second league championship in 3 years, but with a 79 -53 victory over Central Tech at the War Memorial, led them to the schools' first ever Sectional Championship. That year Fletch averaged nearly 12 points a game which was enough to land him a berth on the CNYCL all star team.

On the baseball field things were a little different. The baseball team was coming off a pair of mediocre years after dominating the loop the in 1970 and 1971. So Tom Petroff was hired to help change the fortunes of the baseball program. The team had been hit hard by graduation with only senior Dan Rachella and junior Rich Yestrumski returning from a .500 1973 team. The Brothers again struggled through no fault of Tom. Injuries beset the team and in the end the 8 – 8 record was all the team could salvage.....



But Tom saved his best performances for his last season for CBA. The 75 edition of the team was a team on a mission. Tabbed as contenders early on in the season with perennial powers Auburn and Corcoran, Tom helped lead his teammates to a story book season. He was sparkling in an early season wins over Auburn. Then after giving up three runs in the first inning, shut down Corcoran for a 10 inning, 5 - 3 win, witnessed by nearly 1000 people. That put CBA in the drivers seat. Although the most impressive win (from my standpoint) was a 3 -2 home win over Henninger on the day of our senior ball. See that was before games were moved to accommodate such things so we started at 3:30 and Fletch threw a four hitter and we were done by 4:30. That year the team won all sixteen league games and became the first team in school history to go undefeated. Tom certainly did his part.... He finished the season with a perfect 9 – 0 record and his ERA was a sparkling 1.05! During the season he walked only 11 batters in 70 innings and was chosen the City Leagues top pitcher. Not a bad way to finish his CBA Career.

Because of his accomplishments at CBA, he was awarded a basketball scholarship to LeMoyne College where he would join his brother Jim and become a Dolphin. As at CBA, Tom hoped to be able to continue his athletic career in both sports, an uncommon feat at the time. On the basketball court, he averaged nearly 10 points and four rebounds a game for his four year career as a Dolphin. But where he really made his mark

was on the baseball diamond. Tom had an outstanding career finishing with a 29 – 4 record with a 1.95 era. As with his CBA career he saved his best year for last. During the 1979, Dick Rockwell's team advanced to the Division II World Series for the second straight year. Led by Tom's 12 – 2 record and just over 1.50 era LeMoyne finished in third place, a school record. That year Tom pitched 11 complete games and for his efforts he repeated as a Division II First team All American.

Tom was inducted into the LeMoyne College Athletic Hall of Fame in 1992 and now we can proudly say that he is now a member of CBA's LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame.

