



Assistants give Ferrainolo a special present

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Memorial assistant coach Jack Nagurka said that Memorial head coach Anthony Ferrainolo is the face of the school's baseball team.

As one of Ferrainolo's former players and now his assistant coach, Nagurka has gotten very close to his former coach over the years. So for him and assistant coach Dan Marroquin, another former player, it was particularly special to win yesterday's game against Marist High School at Veterans Stadium in Bayonne and give Ferrainolo his 753rd career win.

It broke the state record of 752 set by Harry Shatel of Morristown High School, who passed away on May 1.

With Ferrainolo at the hospital battling lymphoma, the Tigers (13-7) beat the Royal Knights 6-5 in extra innings, making Ferrainolo the winningest high school baseball coach in New Jersey history. Even though Ferrainolo wasn't at the game, the win is credited to him because he's the head coach.

"When you go to Memorial Stadium and you don't see coach Ferrainolo coaching at third base, you know something is wrong," Nagurka said.

"He's become a good friend of mine and this is very special for him. I'm sure he's extremely proud of this accomplishment. He's proud of the school, he is orange and black and he's proud of putting that Memorial hat on - and that's what he's all about."

Marroquin called Ferrainolo after the win to tell him the good news.

"He was thrilled to know we won, and he was also surprised it went to eight innings," Marroquin said. "He said he wished he could have been there, but he's happy for the team, the coaches and he says he can celebrate now. It's been a lot of high's and low's emotionally but we stayed positive. We said we could possibly do this and now we have, so that's our gift to him."

It appeared as though Memorial was cruising along to the win behind the pitching arm of Brian Vizcaino. After center fielder Jose Francisco sent the game's first pitch over the fence and an RBI groundout by catcher Alvaro Suazo in the top of the third, Memorial held a 2-0 lead after five innings.

But in the sixth, the Royal Knights broke through. An RBI single by relief pitcher Ruben Rivera and a two-out RBI double by left fielder Mike Martinez tied the game at 2-2.



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