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Taking a Turn in the Spotlight

Administrator Looks Back on His Team Handball Days

Long before Chief Operating Officer Joseph Lamantia focused on the goal of improving patient safety, performance and operational efficiency at South Nassau, he had his sights set on a different goal: one that was on either end of a team handball court.

It was 1984 when Mr. Lamantia, then 15 and a sophomore at North Babylon High School, was first introduced in gym class to team handball, the Olympic sport that combines the elements of soccer and basketball. Unlike traditional handball that is played by hitting a small ball against a wall, team handball is akin to the game of water polo, but played on a court. The object of the game: score goals by hurling a cantaloupe-sized ball into the net.

Within a few months of playing the fast-moving game, which is popular in Europe, Mr. Lamantia was hooked.

He tried out for the handball team representing Long Island at the Empire State Games, an annual Olympic-style competition for amateur athletes from New York. Not only did he make the team but he also helped them win gold medals for two consecutive years.

The following year he joined the Garden City Team Handball Men's Club, then the only club of its kind on Long Island. The team's coach took an interest in the teen and helped hone his skills. Soon Mr. Lamantia began to make strides on the traveling team and grew more enamored of the sport.

The fast and agile team handball standout played "wing," a player who patrols the sides of the court and counters opposing wingers to create scoring opportunities. He also was a "circle runner" who was responsible for finding holes in the defense that would help his teammates score a goal.

He continued to train while in college at SUNY Cortland and in 1987 he quali-



"Team Handball was an exciting time in my life and provided me with an experience of a lifetime," said Joseph Lamantia.

fied to compete in the United States Olympic Sports Festival, the largest national Olympic-style event for U.S.

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Opening ceremonies of the Team Handball World Cup in Valencia, Spain. Mr. Lamantia is holding the American flag, second line from right.