

# Ralph Payne

Title: Student-Athlete; Football

Year: 1971



Ralph Payne was an outstanding running back for the Brewer Witches from 1968 to 1970. He is still known as one of the best running backs to ever play in the State of Maine. Ken Perrone, the legendary and highly successful football coach at Brewer, John Bapst, and Dixfield, Maine, as well as, Salem, Mass. emphatically stated that Ralph Payne is the greatest football player that he ever coached in his 38-year career. Payne's many achievements were accomplished playing in Class A against the largest schools in the State, such as: Portland, South Portland, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Edward Little of Auburn, and others.

Ralph was an outstanding running back. At times trying to tackle Payne was like attempting to tackle a ghost. He was extremely shifty. He could stop on a dime and change directions instantly. His moves were extremely deceptive. He could appear to be running slow and then accelerate instantly with a burst of speed. Ralph had a sixth sense in how to follow his blockers and take advantage of the defense. He was very strong, likely from years of work on his father's farm! He could run through a player, around them, as well as leap over them with great agility. He was also a very durable runner often carrying the football many times in a series of plays or the game as a whole. In addition, Ralph was often used very effectively as a decoy in the offense of Coach Perrone which capitalized on the art of misdirection.

Not only was Payne an outstanding running back for the offense, he saw a lot of playing time "playing both ways" as a great defensive end. His running ability contributed to his successes on the Brewer Track Team as well, as he was a star in the dashes and relay events.

As a sophomore in 1968, Ralph started on the Brewer Football Team that won the Class A State Championship with an 11-0 record. His running and elusive moves demonstrated that he would be a

future star and player to watch as he scored 9 touchdowns his sophomore year. During his junior year, in 1969 when the Witches went 8-2, he scored 19 touchdowns making him the second leading scorer in the state. His senior year, he served as one of the tri-captains for the Witches. He was selected as the MVP of the great 1970 Brewer Witches Football Team that won the Class A State Championship with an 11-0 record. This team was rated Number 1 in New England, Number 1 in the East and Number 5 in the United States. Ralph was leading scorer in 1970 in the Northern Division of Class A and he was the second leading scorer in the state in Class A overall scoring 17 touchdowns. In both his junior and senior years, he was selected to the Class A All-Conference Team and All State First Team. In the three years from 1968 to 1970, Ralph scored 45 touchdowns in Class A. He probably could have scored many more touchdowns, but he only played the first half in many games because the Witches were so far ahead.

Payne contributed *greatly* to Brewer Football whose record boasted 30-2 over three years. He played on the only two undefeated and untied Class A Brewer High School Football Teams in the history of the Witches. In addition, Payne played on teams that beat Bangor three years in a row, a feat that had only occurred one time prior in Brewer history. With all his success, Ralph Payne was a quiet leader and led by example. Extremely humble and modest, he was very unselfish...always quick to give his coaches, teammates and family the credit for his success.

Payne's outstanding athletic ability and talent was recognized not only throughout Maine but the nation as well. The August edition of the 1970 Letterman Magazine gave Ralph special mention as one of the 22 best running backs in the nation. The 1970 Kickoff Magazine listed him as the second best running back in the New England/Mid-Atlantic states among the top 100 backs in the nation. He was selected for the Honorable Mention All American Football Squad in the March edition of the 1970 Scholastic Coach Magazine as well as an Honorable Mention All American in their March 1971 edition. Also, the January 1971 Coach and Athlete Magazine listed Ralph as an Honorable Mention PREP All American.

During Payne's senior year, he received recruiting letters of interest from numerous colleges and universities: Georgia Tech, the University of Maryland, Notre Dame, the University of Arizona, the University of Minnesota, Penn State, the University of South Carolina, Tufts, Bates, Maine Maritime, and the University of Maine among others.

Ralph Payne, formerly associated with Payne gardens, has worked for UPS (United Parcel Service) for thirty-eight years. He and his wife Tina have lived in Orrington, Maine for a number of years. Ralph Payne has one son, David Payne, of Eddington. Ralph Payne was selected to the Maine Sports Hall of Fame in May of 2016.

