

John Conover

Athlete: Football and Baseball

Class of 1968

John Conover attended Santa Ana High School from fall 1965 through spring 1968. He was extremely fortunate to play for and be guided by five Hall of Fame members: Early Engman, Manny Penaflor, and Tom Baldwin in football, Bill Ross in baseball, and Larry Arason as Athletic Director.

His junior year he started at strong tackle on a football team that went to the CIF playoffs and he was in the starting rotation on the baseball squad.

1967 was perhaps Santa Ana's greatest team, rated #1 in California. John started at tight end and defensive end. The first game against Mater Dei was a 7-6 victory with John being named Orange County player of the week that week. By season's end he was named Sunset League Lineman of the Year, selected to the All-Orange County team, and was named All-CIF. John was chosen to play in the North South Shrine Game, which was played at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

In baseball, John played every game and was outstanding at first base when he was not pitching. As a pitcher, he was named the Sunset League Player of the Year, he was again selected to the All-Orange County team, and was named All-CIF. He was the winning pitcher in the first annual North South Orange County All Star Game.

The Atlanta Braves drafted him in the 25th round of the 1968 draft, but he chose to attend the University of Arizona, where he pitched for one season before transferring to Humboldt State. At Humboldt he pitched for two seasons before signing with the Cleveland Indians organization, where he pitched in AA ball for three years before an arm injury ended his career.

Despite his outstanding athletic accomplishments, John is most proud of the volunteer work he has done for the Surfrider Foundation. He started the first local chapter in San Diego, and there are now over 70 chapters nationwide with 60,000 + members doing coastal conservation, clean water testing, and promoting beach access.