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To: KHSAA Hall of Fame Committee
From: Bill Beasley
KHSAA Board of Control Member
1994 - 2000

I am nominating Mel Purcell to the Dawhars' KHSAA Hall of Fame as a Athlete. Mel excelled as a high school tennis player and his achievements were extraordinary and merit statewide recognition. KHSAA Double State Champion 1972 & 1973; Singles Champion 1977.

Mel has continued to distinguish himself in Kentucky, United States and internationally; playing tennis in college, as a ranked professional player and now as the Murray State University Tennis Coach.

I am proud to nominate Mel Purcell!

Bill Beasley
12-5-06

77

Mel Purcell put together a stellar high school career that began when he was in the fifth grade...Purcell advanced to the state tournament as a fifth and sixth grader after finishing as the regional runner-up in singles...He teamed with his brother, Del, to win back-to-back regional and state championships in 1972-73...Purcell captured the 1977 state title in singles after finishing as a runner-up in 1975 and 1976...He went on to capture the 1979 NCAA Indoor Singles National Championship, as well as an Outdoor Doubles National Championship at Tennessee...Purcell joined the professional tour in 1982 where he was named the Rookie of the Year...He would climb as high as No. 17 in the rankings.



Mel Purcell's Career Highlights

High School

Played on College High School Team in 3rd Grade
1970 - High School Regional Runner-up – Singles – 5th Grade
1971 - High School Regional Runner-up – Singles - 6th Grade
1972 - High School Regional Winner – Doubles with brother Del – 7th Grade
1973 – High School Regional Winner – Doubles with brother Del – 8th Grade

1970 – 1971 – Played in State Tournament Singles as a 5th & 6th Grader
1972 – 1973 – State Doubles Winner with brother Del as a 7th & 8th Grader
1975 – 1976 - High School Singles Runner-up – Sophomore & Junior years
1977 – High School Singles Winner – Senior year

Juniors

Number 1 in 10-under – Kentucky South
Winner of 12-under Singles – Sugar Bowl Championship
Ranked #3 in the Nation – Boys – 12-under Singles
Winner of 12-under Doubles – Orange Bowl
Winner 12-under Singles & 16-under Singles – Sugar Bowl
Winner Boys 16-under – Clay Court
National Doubles with Chip Hooper
Winner Boys 18-under Singles – National Grass Court
1976 - Ranked #3 in the Nation – Boys 18-under Singles
1978-1979 – Winner National 21-under Doubles & Singles
1979 – Winner Two Gold Medals – Pan American Games – San Juan
Metro Conference Number One – Winner Singles/Doubles with Chip Hooper
SEC Champion – Number One Singles/Doubles with Rodney Harmon
1979 - NCAA – Indoor National Champion – Singles
NCAA Outdoor National Champion with Rodney Harmon

Pro

1980 – First Pro Winner Marlboro Open – Paradise Resort, Bahamas – Defeated Buster Montrom
1980 – Ranked 28 in the World at Years End and Gained Rookie of the Year and Newcomer of the Year Award from the Tennis Magazine and the A.T.P.
1980 – Finals – U.S. Clay Court Championships

Pro Wins

1981 – Tampa – Winner of Robinsons Open
1981 – Atlanta
1981 - Tel Aviv

Doubles Wins

1982 – Munich with Chip Hooper
1982 – Del Ray Beach with Eliot Teltshere
1983 – Vienna with Stan Smith
1987 – Vienna with Tim Wilkison

Runner Up Singles

1980 – Indy – U.S. Clay Courts
1982 – Boston
1982 – Los Angeles
1983 – Vienna
1983 - Monte Carlo

Senior Tour – Singles

3 finals including the 1997 Nuveen Masters losing to Jimmy Connors
11 doubles titles including a win with Bjorn Borg – Japan – 1997

Best Wins on ATP Tour

Grand Slam Highlights

U.S. Open played 13 times – 3rd round

7 times French Open – Round of 16 in 1981 & 1982

8 times Wimbledon – Quarter Finals – 1983

In 2 Hall of Fames – Kentucky Tennis and Intercollegiate Tennis Hall of Fame at Athens, GA

Murray State University Men's Tennis Head Coach – 1997 to present

OVC Champions – 2001 – 2002

OVC Coach of the Year – 2001 - 2002

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From: billbeasley@insightbb.com

To: bcope@khsaa.org

Subject: PurcellEs skills showed as youth

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Mel Purcell

This (http://www.paducahsun.com) story has been sent from billbeasley@insightbb.com.

Thursday, June 25, 2009

Purcell's skills showed as youth
[http://www.paducahsun.com/articles/stories/members_only/200906/25/0aZ8_sports.html]

By Dusty Luthy Shull

Bennie Purcell knew early that his son had the ability to be a tennis prodigy. Mel Purcell's exceptional hand-eye coordination was noticed at about age 5, and after playing enough junior tennis and being coached by his Hall of Fame father, Purcell played in his first Kentucky High School Athletic Association state tennis tournament as a fifth grader. He won two state doubles titles with his brother before he was in high school, and a singles title his senior year. Add in a more-than successful college career, professional career and now coaching career, and one can see why Purcell was named to the 2010 KHSAA Hall of Fame. "I'm psyched about it," Purcell said. "I always loved high school tennis. I was playing from third grade on. I'm pretty passionate about this game and appreciate them giving me this award before I turn 70." At 49, Purcell is one of the younger members inducted into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. But that seems to be part of his style, according to father Bennie, who was coaching tennis at Murray State during Mel's youth. "When he was 14 or 15 he could beat most of my players," Bennie Purcell said. "By the time he was 16, he could beat all of them." As a seventh and eighth grader, Mel won the state doubles title both years with his brother, Del, who was then a junior and senior. "I was the little guy running around and Del supplied the power," Mel Purcell said. "He joked he would beat me up if I missed the return." Purcell played tennis at Memphis State University and then transferred to Tennessee, where he won a Southeastern Conference title in both singles and doubles and the NCAA doubles championship in 1980. He played professionally through the 1980s and was ranked in the top 30 for the first five years of his career, earning the 1981 Rookie of the Year. Purcell's shining moment came in 1983 where he reached the quarterfinals at Wimbledon. Purcell currently coaches tennis at Murray State, and has won two Ohio Valley Conference team titles. While Purcell's later achievements have given him enough conversation matter for years, he remembers his high school exploits, and failures, just as vividly. He remembers exact

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scores of matches and opponents, especially the name of his arch nemesis, St. Xavier's Mark Buechler, who beat Purcell his sophomore and junior years for the singles title. But after Buechler had graduated and Purcell spent time in California improving his game, Purcell won the elusive singles title his senior year.

"If I had lost that, that's just something hollow," Purcell said. "You had three runners up. Then that wouldn't be worth an induction."

Even though Purcell is now in two halls of fame (he's also in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Hall of Fame) with success coming out of his ears, his daddy is proud of something else.

"The thing I like about him was that he was able to accomplish what he did and he didn't get the big head with what he accomplished," Bennie Purcell said.

Contact Dusty Luthy Shull, a Paducah Sun sports writer, at 270-575-8662.

Mel Purcell and Craynor Slone were among the 12 athletes named to the Kentucky High School Athletic Association's Dawahare's Hall of Fame. The Sun features Craynor Slone Friday.

-<http://www.paducahsun.com>