

TOMMY STARNES

23 Years Active Basketball Coaching

401 Wins * 269 Losses

Lexington Catholic * Lexington

Christian

BASKETBALL

City Coach of the Year - 1966 and 1977

~~JUNIOR HONORARY COACH - 1963~~

BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL CHAMPIONSHIP - 1968 RUNNER-UP - 1978

DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP - 1966, 1976, 1977, 1983, 1984, 1985

DISTRICT RUNNER-UP - 1978

11TH REGION CHAMPIONSHIP - 1966, 1977, 1985

STATE TOURNAMENT - 1966, 1977, 1985

CROSS COUNTRY

TRACK

Track and Cross Country Coaches - Hall of Fame - November 5, 1990

BOYS

REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1966, 1968, 1978

REGIONAL RUNNER-UP

1967, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975

GIRLS

REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1975, 1977, 1978

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

1972, 1975

STATE RUNNER-UP

1978

BOYS

REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1967, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1976

REGIONAL RUNNER-UP

1969, 1971, 1979

STATE RUNNER-UP

1967, 1968

GIRLS

REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978

REGIONAL RUNNER-UP

1970, 1971

ATTACHMENT # 1

Tommy was the Lexington Catholic High School basketball, track and cross country coach and Athletic Director from 1964 to 1979 and again from 1982 to 1985 after an extensive illness. During these years as basketball coach, Tommy provided an impressive record of 374 wins and 259 losses. His teams won six district championships and one runner up. His teams won three 11th regional championships, winning from the 43rd district in 1966 and from the 41st district in 1977 and from the 42nd district in 1985. Therefore, making three state tournament appearances in 1966, 1977, and 1985.

Tommy was selected as city coach of the year in 1971 and 1977 and he finished 2nd in the voting for the state coach of the year in 1985.

Seven of his players played college basketball on scholarship and one went on to play in the NBA after college. Three of his former players are now coaching high school basketball. **Danny Haney** at The North Broward Preparatory School in Florida, **Craig Pippin** at Danville High School, and our son **Mark Starns** the assistant coach of this year's state tournament champion, the **Mason County Royals**. Another of his former players, **Rodney Martin** is the head baseball coach at Lexington Catholic High School.

As the boy's and girls track coach from 1964 to 1979, he had an impressive career with five regional championships, four regional runner up and **one state championship (Girls)**.

Of his students, thirteen won individual state championships, and two students signed college scholarships for track.

His cross country boy's teams won two regional championships, six regional runner up. His **girls** cross country teams won three regional championships and **three state championships**.

During his tenure as **Athletic Director** at Lexington Catholic High School the following sport programs were added: Boys and Girls **Cross Country**, Girls **Track**, Boy's and Girls **Tennis**, Boy's and Girls **Swimming**, Girls **Basketball** and Boy's soccer.

ATTACHMENT # 2

Tommy returned to coaching from 1989-1991 when he was asked by the Headmaster of The Lexington Christian Academy to organize and implement the Athletic Program for this new school. Tommy coached basketball for two years with a coaching record of **26 wins and 18 losses** for an overall coaching record of **400 wins and 259 losses** in basketball at Lexington Catholic High School and The Lexington Christian Academy.

The two years that he served as Athletic Director at The Lexington Christian Academy the new school joined the **Kentucky High School Athletic Association**. The following sport programs were added during this two years: Boy's soccer, Boy's golf, Boy's and Girls Swimming.



May 7, 2003

KHSAA
Attn: Nomination
2280 Executive Drive
Lexington, KY 40505

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

I am, with great pleasure, submitting this letter of recommendation for Coach Tommy Starns in hopes he will be inducted into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. As a former player at Lexington Catholic High School under Coach Starns from 1972-1976, I was able to learn the game of basketball from a man who truly cared about kids and was highly respected by his peers.

Coach Starns was always willing to compete against the "toughest" competition in the state even if it meant a loss. He believed it built character and our stamina for post-season play. "Never be afraid to play the best," was his philosophy. Team practices were the highlight of my day- very organized and competitive providing a great mental and physical workout, something I would benefit from as the years went on. The team would leave practice everyday knowing that Coach Starns sincerely cared for and respected us as individuals. We all knew he would do anything for us.

After graduating from college, Coach Starns gave me an opportunity of a lifetime, to assist him on the sidelines for five years before taking over as the Head Basketball Coach and Athletic Director at Lexington Catholic High School. I attribute the success I have had in my own career to the knowledge Coach Starns provided me about life, playing the game and coaching the game! He has been an instrumental part of many people's lives. He belongs in the KHSAA Hall of Fame with all the other great coaches and leaders of the state. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Danny Haney

THE NORTH BROWARD PREPARATORY SCHOOLS

**COACHING STATISTICS OF TOMMY STARNES
LEXINGTON CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

BASKETBALL

374 - 241 Record

Six District Championships and one runner up

1966 - 43rd District
1976 - 41st District
1977 - 41st District
1978 - 41st District [runner up]
1983 - 42nd District
1984 - 42nd District
1985 - 42nd District

Three Regional Championships

1966 - 11th Region
1977 - 11th Region
1985 - 11th Region

Three State Tournament Appearances

1966
1977
1985

City Coach of the Year

1971
1977

State Coach of the Year

2nd - 1985

Scholarship Players

Mort Fraley - University of Kentucky
John Botkin - Transylvania University
Bobby Jobe - Transylvania University
Ted Thompson - Transylvania University
Danny Haney - Eastern Kentucky University
Danny Johnson - Centre College
Frank Kornet - Vanderbilt University

NBA PLAYERS

NBA PLAYERS

Frank Kornet - Milwaukee Bucks

BOYS TRACK

1965 - 1979

Five Regional Championships

Four Regional Runner Up

One State Runner Up

Thirteen Individual Regional Champions

1965 - Steve Keller - 880 Yard Run - 1:57.3 - **1966 - Steve Keller** - 880 Yard Run - 1:54.8 - **1967 - Steve Keller** - 880 Yard Run - 2:05 - **John Lockname** - 120 High Hurdles - 15.7 - **Steve Keller** - 440 Yard Run - 50.4 - **Nelson Leonard** - 2 Mile Run - 9:55.4 - **1968 - Steve Ryskiewicz** - 880 Yard Run - 2:03.2 - **1969 - Joe Bowsher** - 2 Mile Run - 10:09.7 - **1970 - Mike Webb** - 120 High Hurdles - 16.2 & 180 Yard Low Hurdles - 22.7 - **Carl Stoerzer** - 440 Yard Run - 52.0 - **1971 - Mike Webb** - 120 Yard High Hurdles - 15.5 & 180 Yard Low Hurdles - 21.0 - **Carl Stoerzer** - 440 Yard Run 51.2 - **1972 - John Feltman** - Mile Run - 4:46.7 - **1973 - Bill Rambicure** - 180 Yard Hurdles - 20.9 - **1974 - Joe Reckelhoff** - 220 Yard Dash - 22.8 - **Joe Shuman** - Mile Run - 4:47.1 - **1975 - Mark Thomas** - Shot Put & Discus - **1979 - Julian Gorham** - 440 Yard Run 53.4

Six Individual State Champions

1967 - Steve Keller-880 Yard Run-1:58.3-**Nelson Leonard**-Two Mile Run-9:55.1-**John Lockname**-120 Yard High Hurdles-15.4-**1968-Jim Ernest**-High Jump-6 feet-**1970-Carl Stoerzer**-440 Yard Run-51.3-**1971-Carl Stoerzer**- 440 Yard Run-51.7 - **1973 - Bill Rambicure** - 180 Yard Low Hurdles - 20.9

Scholarship Runners

Steve Keller - University of Florida
Mark Mitchell - University of Kentucky

BOY'S CROSS COUNTRY

1965 - 1976

Two Regional Championships

1966

1968

Six Regional Runner Up

1967
1969
1970
1972
1974
1976

State Cross Country Meets

1965 - 4th
1967 - 4th
1968 - 4th

Three Individual Regional Champions

1965 - Steve Keller - 10.05
1966 - Steve Keller - 9.47
1968 - Joe Bowsher - 9.59

GIRL'S TRACK

1969 - 1978

Ten Regional Championships

1970
1971
1972
1973
1974
1975
1976
1977
1978
1979

One State Championship

1971

Fifteen Individual Regional Winners

Terry Burry - 50-Yard Hurdles- 7.4 & 70 Yard Hurdles -10.3 - **Martha Shaw**-Discus - 83.7 - **Judy Fraser** - Long Jump - 15' 6/12 - **Darlene Sylvestri** - 50 Yard Dash - 6.6 - **Margaret Bausch** - 50 Yard Hurdles - 7.6 & 80 Yard Hurdles - 11.8 - **Denise Swintosky**

Martha Shaw - Shot Put - 34' 7 3/4 - **Mary Segnitz** - 50 Yard Hurdles - 7.6 - **Regina Schnely** - Mile Run - 6:09.2 - **Sharon Lynch** - 80 Yard Hurdles 12.4 - **Sharon Lynch** - 60 Yard Hurdles - 11.6 - **Patty Gallagher** - 880 Yard Run - 2:03.1- **Liz Daut** - Mile Run - 5:49.1 - **Cheryl Warren** - High Jump 5'2 - **Kathleen Warren** - 880 Yard Run - 2:41.3 - **Mary Besten** - 880 Yard Run

One Individual State Champion

1971 - **Terry Burry** - 50 yard Hurdles - :07.3 & 80 Yard Hurdles :11.3

Girl's Cross Country

Three Regional Championships

1975

1976

1977

Three State Championships

1975

1976

1977

Individual Cross Country Regional Champions

1975 - **Patty Gallagher** - 8:57

1976 - **Liz Daut** - 8:51

From 1989-1991 - Tommy returned to coaching at **The Lexington Christian Academy** to help them organize their Athletic Department and coached the basketball team during this time. Coaching record there was 26-18

***** Overall Basketball Coaching Record *****

Lexington Catholic High School and The Lexington Christian Academy

Catholic brings back healthy Starns as head coach

By John Clay
Of The Herald Staff

Although illness rather than preference cost Tommy Starns his job as a head basketball coach three years ago, few believed that he would return to that capacity.

Next season, though, Starns will once again be the head coach at Lexington Catholic.

The Rev. Paul Arbogast, principal of Lexington Catholic, confirmed yesterday that Starns will be the school's basketball coach next season, replacing Jim Lankster.

"He was the coach for 15 years and then became sick," Arbogast said

last night. "Now he is well again."

"I've been wanting to get back into coaching for a long time," Starns said. "I am healed up about as well as I'm ever going to be. I never thought it was coming. I'm ready to go."

Starns, 48, coached Lexington Catholic from the 1964-65 season through 1979. His teams won 315 games and lost 204, making state tournament appearances in 1966 and 1977. The Knights fell in the first round both years.

After the 1979 season, however, Starns was forced to vacate his position because of a serious illness. He was in various hospitals almost continuously from Sept. 5, 1979, until Feb-

ruary 1980. He returned to the hospital periodically during the summer and taught on a part-time basis at Catholic during the 1980-81 school year.

Tom Huston coached the team during the first year of Starns' absence. Lankster, who had been an assistant to Starns and then a volunteer coach at the University of Kentucky, was named head coach after the 1980 campaign.

Starns returned to Catholic on a full-time basis as teacher and athletic director this school year.

Lankster guided the Knights to a 30-26 record in his two years as coach. The team went 15-14 in 1980-81 and 15-12 last season.

Despite the presence of seniors Bryan Mitchell, who will attend the University of Pittsburgh next fall, and Mike Trigg, the Knights got off to a slow start last year. The team rebounded to rout eventual state champ Laurel County at London.

Catholic was beaten by Frankfort in the final of the 44th District tournament and lost to Henry Clay in the first round of the 11th Region tourney to end what most believed was a disappointing campaign.

Then, earlier this month, the Rev. Arbogast decided to return the job to Starns. "Coach Starns is well enough to coach again, and that's all there



to it," Arbogast said. "We certainly feel like coach Lankster did an excellent job. We've been very pleased. He did a fine job."

The decision was a surprise. "That's the principal's decision," Starns said. "I work there, so I have to abide by that."

Arbogast indicated that Lankster will remain at the school. However,

Lankster, who also coaches soccer at Catholic, said last night that he is unsure of his future plans.

"I'll just have to wait and see," he said. "There's just not a whole lot to say."

Starns said he was looking forward to his coaching return.

"Oh yeah, I've been excited for the past month," he said. "I'm looking forward to it. I'm ready to go back."

"I put up a tryout sign on Sept. 5 three years ago, the day I went into the hospital," Starns said. "And I'm just now getting around to it."

March 1985

This comeback involves more than basketball

He sees the final game coming, the final walk onto the court, the final pre-game huddle, the final basket, the final victory or the final defeat. It will all be over sometime this week for Lexington Catholic coach Tommy Starns. No wonder his emotions are a jumbled mess.

One minute he's cackling like a kid as he sends his Knights through practice in preparation for the Sweet Sixteen.

The next minute he's sitting in his office, fighting back tears as he talks about how much he'll miss coaching when he calls it quits after this week's Boys' State Basketball Tournament.

Saying good-bye to basketball is tough for the 51-year-old coach. That's only natural after 20 years and 371 victories at Catholic. But Starns isn't just another coach who's had enough and wants out.

This is a man who came close to death five years ago and who credits his recovery to his family and to basketball.

He doesn't want to quit now, but he has no choice. The year-long illness in 1979-80 has taken its toll, and Starns simply isn't physically up to teaching biology all day, putting in long hours at the gym, then going home at night and working on scouting reports.

"It's a young man's game," he said, "and I just can't do it anymore."

That point could be argued. Starns has done a superb job this year, keeping a free-spirited, talent-

Mike Fields Herald-Leader Staff writer	
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ed team on course to the Sweet Sixteen. This season has been one of Catholic's finest, a 27-5 record and the 11th Region championship. Starns has applied himself to all the details, doing his best to give his Knights an edge against the basketball-rich public schools.

But along the way Starns has been reminded of his physical condition. He caught the flu in January and couldn't shake it. For the first time in his career he missed a game because he was sick.

"I think that scared him," said Starns' wife Phyllis. "He was afraid he wouldn't be able to finish the year. He just got so tired and worn down by all the work. I think he realized he made the right decision to get out at the end of the season."

"But when you look back on what he went through a few years ago, it's amazing to think he was able to come back and do all this before he did decide to quit."

Starns' brush with death began in September 1979 when he went into the hospital to have a polyp removed from his colon.

"It wasn't any big deal," he said. "The polyp might never have caused a problem, but it might have developed into colon cancer. So it came out."

Starns went home the next day and figured he'd be fit in time for the basketball season. But two days later he was back in the hospital. His colon had been perforated and he had gas gangrene. He was unconscious and in critical condition.

"I didn't know what was going on," Starns said. "I was in and out of consciousness so much. But I think I realized I was in trouble and that death was a possibility."

Starns was transferred to Duke University's hospital, where doctors operated on his abdominal wall.

"They didn't know if he'd make it through that surgery or not," his wife said. "I had to drive to Durham, N.C., with my sister-in-law, and she wanted to know if I wanted to stop along the way to call ahead and see how he was. I said no because I didn't want to know if he didn't make it."

Starns did make it, but he was at Duke for two more months fighting for his life.

"I don't remember much about it at all," he said, "except that the whole time there seemed like something out of that old TV show, 'Dark Shadows,' where everything was dark and depressing."

(Turn to COMEBACK, C7)

Comeback involves more than basketball

From Page C1

Starns finally was transferred back to a hospital in Lexington in mid-November, right before Catholic's opening game. But he was still in serious condition and wasn't close to being able to go home, much less attend a basketball game.

An interim coach had been named at Catholic and Starns still had months of recovery ahead.

Once his recovery looked good, Starns still had to battle depression. His youngest son, Mark, was a senior at Catholic and on the basketball team. It had been Mark's dream to play for his father, but it wasn't to be.

"My doctor finally agreed to let me out for one day to see Mark's last game, but then the game got snowed out," Starns said. "That kind of thing didn't help my depression."

It wasn't until mid-summer that Starns' digestive tracts were reconnected and he was able to eat food again, for the first time in a year. His first meal?

"I headed for Ponderosa," Starns remembered with a laugh.

It wasn't until two years later, though, that he was ready to coach again. But until then the thought of returning to the court kept his recovery progressing.

"I always wanted to get back in it," he said. "It was so depressing to go to a game and watch the kids and realize how much I missed coaching."

Once he returned, Starns was rejuvenated.

"It was just what I needed," he said.

And Starns wasn't just talking about basketball. In his years at Catholic, he coached the girls' cross-country team to three state championships, the girls' track team to 13 straight regional titles and a state crown, and the boys' track team to seven regional titles and a runner-up finish in the state.

In basketball, Starns has guided Catholic to the state tournament in 1986, 1977 and now 1995.



Herald-Leader/Charles Bertram

Tommy Starns, 51, is getting out of coaching after this season. "It's a young man's game," he said.

and athletic director after he's through coaching.

"I've had chances to go to other schools," he said. "I even agreed to take the job at Bryan Station once, I think it was back in 1967, but the kids at Catholic got so upset that they talked me out of it. They had me out on my front lawn until 3 o'clock in the morning trying to convince me to stay."

"Yes, Catholic has been something special to me and my family."

Oh, yes. Starns' family. When Catholic takes on Mason County tonight in Rupp Arena, the coach won't be the only Starns working for the Knights. His son Mark will be at his side on the bench as a volunteer coach. His son Rick will be the team's scorekeeper. His daughter Susan, who takes home the check at Catholic's

course, Starns' wife of 32 years will be there to lend her vocal support, too.

"When I was sick and in the hospital for that long of a time, I finally realized that for so many years I had dedicated most of my time to other people's children," Starns said, "and that I had let my own children grow up right in front of me without watching them like I should."

"Since then I've tried to make up for that. I've tried to cram their lives into mine and I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed it."

And the family has shared fully in Starns' final, most successful season.

When Catholic came from behind to beat Bates Creek for the regional title, the tears flowed freely as the coach, his wife and their sons and daughters celebrated more than just a

Starns is back, and Christian school's got him

You can take the man out of coaching but you can't take coaching out of the man.

Meet Tommy Starns, the new head basketball coach at Lexington Christian High School.

Yes, the same Tommy Starns who won 372 games and three 11th Region titles in 20 years at Lexington Catholic.

"Ever since I got out of coaching four years ago, I've felt something pulling at me," the 55-year-old Starns said earlier this week. "Maybe this is where I've been headed. Now that I'm involved again and trying to build something, I feel perfectly satisfied."

Starns will be athletic director and basketball coach at Lexington Christian, which he says is in the process of merging with The Academy. Just last week officials of the two schools voted to have the new high school join the Kentucky High School Athletic Association.

It will be up to Starns to usher Lexington Christian's basketball team, nicknamed the Lions, into KHSAA-sanctioned competition next season.

The team will play its home games in a church gym, either at Broadway Christian or Southland Christian.

Starns has already started getting a schedule together and came up with 18 games in a matter of days. Lexington Christian will start its season Nov. 17 in the Augusta Invitational.

New schools that are formed out of existing school systems, such as Madison Southern, are eligible to play in KHSAA post-season tournaments immediately. But new schools such as Lexington Christian must play two years before being allowed in district competition.

"I would've preferred to go on and play in the district the first year and go from there," Starns said. "But we'll just have to build toward that and try to get our feet wet the next couple of sea-

Mike Fields

Herald-Leader
staff writer



Starns, who overcame serious health problems a few years ago, is accustomed to taking on big challenges. He realizes the task ahead is formidable. Lexington Christian, with fewer than 100 students in the upper four grades, will be one of the smallest high schools in the KHSAA.

"This school has the same goals as we had at Lexington Catholic," Starns said. "We want the students to grow spiritually as well as academically. In sports, we want to learn how to improve and compete."

"I know it's going to take a while. But what we're looking at is six or seven years down the line when we'll have an established program. That's an exciting challenge for me and I'm going to enjoy it."



Tommy Starns