

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter as my support for my nomination of John Fuqua to the KHSAA HOF. The application spells out appropriate statistics on John's accomplishments during the 1966 high school football season and the honors he received after the season. I was the QB and Co-Captain [John was the other Co-Captain] of that undefeated [13-0] 1966 State Championship team; thus I know John very, very well. Our team was ranked #1 in the state of KY following the season and #4 in the entire United States; John was the MVP of our team; how could a player of John's quality on a KY high school team that ranked #4 in the USA [has any KY high school football team ever ranked that high nationally?] not be in the KHSAA HOF? John is deserving of this honor and it is my mistake for not nominating him years ago. Our Coach, Fleming Thornton, is in the HOF and John deserves to be there alongside of him. Thank you to the panel that will be considering John's application. I hope and pray that appropriate recognition will be given to John for this deserved honor.

Thank you,
Dale Polley

To whom it may concern,

As a 120-pound 3rd string defensive back I can attest to the ferocious running of John Fuqua. Because of my size most of my teammates took it a little easy on "the small guy." Not John. ALL defenders were to be "punished" whether playing for the State Championship or a mid-season practice.

My recollection John was a starter from sophomore to senior on both offense and defense. Hopkinsville's 1965 and 1966 State Championship was powered by John's relentless desire to be the best running back on the field. You can ask Dale Polley, Hoptown's quarterback, "John wanted the ball in his hands."

Though 73 with some memory fading, I believe John may own an esoteric Kentucky H S football record. In Hopkinsville 82 -7 shellacking of Bath County, I believe John tackled 2 Bath Co. returners for safeties on kick returns. I will leave this up to you to confirm or is this my enhancement of John's legacy?

Thank you for your consideration.
Hopkinsville Tiger Class 1967
Howard Myers
howard.myers1949@gmail.com
282 Clay Ave
Lexington, Ky. 40502

1417 Redwood Court
Hopkinsville, KY 42240
August 8, 2022

RE: John Fuqua's nomination to the KHSAA Hall of Fame

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm a high school classmate of John Fuqua, who has been nominated by another classmate, Dale Polley, for the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

I was a football fanatic in those years, but realized following our sophomore season, I was better suited to be a sports writer rather than player.

Beginning in our junior year, during the football seasons, the Courier-Journal and Evansville Courier and Press, paid me to keep statistics for Hopkinsville High School football games. I would call the two publications following the games so they would be able to provide a re-cap of the Friday-night game in their Saturday morning editions. Hopkinsville football was a hot subject in those days, and I knew, first hand, of the substantial statistical contribution John made to those teams.

But, I believe his greatest assets, contributing as much if not more than his stats to our teams, were his work ethic, his focus, his willingness to do whatever it took to make the team better, and most importantly, his leadership.

When Coach Fleming Thornton (inducted into the KHSAA HOF in 1992) retired following the 1976 season, he made this quote: ". . . John Fuqua — he was a bulldozer. He was the hardest running back for his size I guess that we've ever had."

Permit me to add perspective to that comment.

Coach Thornton began his head coaching career in 1949 in South Carolina. While there, he led his teams to three state championships.

He began coaching in Hopkinsville in 1962 and by 1967, he had coached five state championship teams.

Fuqua, was a starting halfback on his final two champions, the undefeated Hopkinsville Tigers of 1965 and 1966.

When the coach made the comment about Fuqua, in December of 1976, he had coached hundreds of halfbacks. He had a wide choice of likely outstanding players from which to choose.

I was sports editor at Hopkinsville's Kentucky New Era at that time and was privileged to oversee the production of "The Thornton Years," a special section which showed a combination of love and respect for our retiring coach - Fleming Thornton.

In the story I wrote, I asked Coach who was the toughest running back he had coached in his 28 seasons. It was the ultimate compliment for John to receive that recognition.

I don't know the all the halfbacks who played for Coach Thornton during his years in South Carolina, but I do know a couple of great ones he had during his 15 seasons in Hopkinsville.

Herbert Covington (Class of '64), was second in the state in points scored during the 1962 season. He was first-team all-state and a high school All-American in 1963 who went on to play for Memphis State Univ. and the New Orleans Saints. Pete Moore (Class of 1966), also was first team all-state, a high school All-American and HIGHLY recruited halfback who chose to play for Bear Bryant at Alabama.

When John graduated, Hopkinsville High had set a record for the longest winning streak in Kentucky football history. He was the only underclass backfield starter in his junior year, playing alongside three backs who earned football scholarships to Division I schools: Fullback, Steve Koon received a scholarship from the Univ. of Ky.; Moore, as previously mentioned, earned a scholarship to the Univ. of Alabama, and quarterback Richard Graham received a scholarship to Memphis State Univ. Fuqua and Moore were the starting halfbacks on that team.

At the conclusion of the 1966 season, Fuqua completed the honors earned by the 1965 backfield as he was named to the all-state team, was selected as a high school All-American and received a scholarship to play for Vanderbilt. He became the third running back from the '65 team to receive a scholarship to an SEC school. The accolades he received speak to his success and intensity while playing the game.

Fuqua and Polley were co-captains/co-leaders of each team (other than their junior year) they played for in high school. These were the results of the teams they led: As freshman the team had a 3-0-1 record. The sophomore team (B Squad) not only was undefeated with a 7-0 record, but also unscored upon. As juniors and seniors, Hopkinsville was undefeated, winning back-to-back state championships. *John started on offense and defense for every one of those teams and completed his 4-year high school career, playing a total of 41 games, without any losses.*

In addition to the state championships, the National Sports News Service ranked Hopkinsville's 1965 team at No. 16 nationally, and in John's senior year, the 1966 team was ranked No. 4 nationally.

While the championships and rankings are not solely the result of Fuqua's play, those teams greatly benefited from his talent and leadership.

Off the field, John was selected by HHS teachers to the National Honor Society. Following college, he served as an officer with the Kentucky State Police, retiring after a distinguished career.

From a personal standpoint, having covered high school sports for 31 years, as night sports editor at the Paducah Sun Democrat (as it was known then); sports editor of the Hopkinsville Kentucky New Era, and owner/editor/reporter/sports writer for the Todd County Standard in Elkton. I covered high school football games every Friday night of every season from 1975 through 2006 seeing some exceptional teams from Heath and Paducah Tilghman high schools, and state championship teams from Fort Campbell High School in the late 1970s. I'm not a scout nor do I claim to be an exceptional judge of talent, but I can testify that I have not witnessed a running back who ran through, over or sometimes around defenders with more efficiency or regularity than did John Fuqua.

Joe Caldwell who was sports editor at the New Era through the 1960s before moving to the sports department of the Nashville Tennessean, contributed a column for the "Thornton Years" section. He wrote, "When I think back on my years of covering Hoptown High football, I think of the sheer poetry of Pete Moore running with the ball, the reckless abandon of Lawrence Brame making a tackle and the fire in John Fuqua's eyes as he dares a defender to get in his way."

It's my opinion John Fuqua should be in the KHSAA Hall of Fame. His accomplishments in the classroom, on the playing field and in his chosen career are exactly the type of qualifications that I believe the Hall of Fame desires when considering who would be an honorable member.

Respectfully,



Michael C. Finch
qualityweb@bellsouth.net