

To the KHSAA Hall of Fame Selection Committee:

It is my great pleasure to endorse Mr. Jason Booher, my friend and former coach, for your consideration for induction into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. Jason, or “Coach Booher” as I was lucky enough to call him, is a worthy nominee for this honor. His dedication to me and numerous other student athletes, on and off court, is second to none, and I am grateful for the impact he has had on my life.

From 2006 until 2010, I spent my afternoons and multiple evenings per week at practices, games, or traveling to one or the other with Coach Booher. During that time, Coach Booher led our Shelby Valley High School Basketball team to a 116-18 record. Those four seasons were capped off with back-to-back All “A” State Championships in 2009 and 2010, and the ultimate prize for every kid playing basketball in Kentucky, a KHSAA Sweet 16 Championship in 2010. I would love to say all those wins and championships were strictly a result of our basketball skills, but that would be far from the truth. We had a leader in Coach Booher, and he pushed us to achieve things many probably thought were impossible. Coach Booher followed his time at Shelby Valley with a stellar record of 104-27 at Covington Holmes High School. The common denominator there isn’t hard to figure out – Coach Jason Booher.

Perhaps more impressive than 200-plus wins with less than 50 losses are the values Coach Booher instilled in the lives of those he touched. Of the many values I learned from Coach Booher, the two I would like to touch on in this letter are preparation and humility.

Preparation: Despite our impressive record, our Shelby Valley teams did not always pass the “eye test.” We didn’t have a roster filled with tall guys across the board, our muscles weren’t bulging out of our jerseys, and our warmup passing, and layup drills weren’t exactly a display of elite skill that made the other teams shake in their sneakers. However, what we lacked in outward appearance or skill, we made up for in preparation. Whether it was watching game film or hitting an extra study session to ensure we were keeping up with our studies, Coach Booher established a system that stressed preparation as a means to success. As Coach Booher often said, “failing to prepare is preparing to fail.”

Humility: It’s probably no surprise to anyone on this committee that basketball is a big deal in Kentucky. Going further, it’s probably not a surprise that basketball is an even bigger deal in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. As a bunch of teenagers who probably tied too much of their identity into a successful small town basketball team, it’s no exaggeration to say we felt like celebrities. Without a check at the door, it would have been easy for egos to take over, but that didn’t happen. Coach Booher was there every step of the way to ensure my teammates and I stayed focus on the things that we’re truly important in life; basketball was a great vehicle for us to grow, but Coach Booher saw better than any of us that, regardless of our skill level, the ball stops bouncing at some point and life goes on without basketball.

These values, along with countless others, were instilled in me and many others by Coach Booher. His dedication to the student athletes and his continued involvement in the lives of those

he touched are unmatched. In fact, I still have a decorative plate in my living room that Coach Booher bought for my wife and I when he and his entire family came to our wedding in Indianapolis nearly 10 years after I graduated. Coach Booher always (and still does) took an interest in the players he coached, and that interest extended beyond the basketball court. His guidance and constant mentorship were an invaluable asset to me as a teen, and I continue to carry those lessons learned with me in my adult life.

There are so many opportunities in life to take the easy way out, or to simply avoid the hard stuff completely, but Coach Booher imparted in us unshakeable values that enabled his players to go on and achieve great success in the adult and professional world. Based on the above, and on his highly impactful role on my life, I enthusiastically recommend Jason Booher as an inductee into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

Mark Ashley Hatfield

Mark Ashley Hatfield, Esq.
Corporate Counsel, Telamon Corporation
Transylvania University c/o 2014
University of Kentucky College of Law c/o 2017

Dawahares KHSAA Hall of Fame Screening Committee

Dear Screening Committee:

I am honored to recommend Jason Booher for the Dawahares KHSAA Hall of Fame.

I retired as superintendent of Covington Independent Public Schools in July 2013. Prior to retirement, I worked with Jason for three years during which time he served as an advocate for students as Assistant Principal and Head Basketball Coach at Holmes High School.

I clearly remember the day that I interviewed and hired Jason to fulfill the role of assistant principal and head basketball coach. Holmes High School had a reputation of being a great basketball high school and for many athletes they saw basketball as an opportunity to attend college and get a degree. For others, basketball provided an outlet for many of the dire circumstances they grew up in and school was a stabilizing force.

I had numerous applications, some local, some internal and all had winning records. But as a sports fan, I was seeking someone to create an environment that fostered respect, leadership, teamwork, sportsmanship and a commitment to excellence. I wanted a coach that developed our student-athletes with the lifelong values of accountability, integrity, structure and discipline. My vision was to reinvent the urban school experience by providing opportunities for teaching, learning and growing in all student-athletes. I was a firm believer that athletics is an integral piece of a student's educational journey and that academics and athletics work together to develop the whole student. The basketball court is the classroom for the student-athlete. I knew the moment I interviewed Jason that he far exceeded any other applicants and possessed the same vision that I had for the Holmes basketball program.

Jason exceeded my expectations on and off the court as he turned around the program from just focusing on winning at all costs, to winning with grace and poise. He modeled for the players his expectations and the athletes no longer cursed on the court, drew intentional fouls, and participated in misconduct off the court. His style of coaching was a drastic change, but Jason proved that you can win and led Hiles to the Sweet 16 quarterfinals and had a winning record every year. Jason's coaching philosophy not only changed the players at Holmes, but also changed the other coaches' perspectives on how to deal with urban youth.

Through athletics and assistant principal role, Jason helped our students develop socially and emotionally, building the skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and responsible decision-making, all while building relationships with their teammates, opponents and community members.

Throughout my three years working with Jason, his commitment, integrity and strong determination to help students in Covington was the focal point of his efforts. As superintendent now in Mercer County, I know that he continues to be very goal-oriented and holds lofty expectations as he works daily to improve the educational environment for all students.

Over my 42 years in education, I have worked with thousands of adults committed to education. I can, without reservation, recommend Jason Booher for The Dawahares KHSAA Hall of Fame. Please contact me with any question you may have. I can be reached at 502-682-0323.

Sincerely,

Lynda Jackson

Kentucky Department of Education

Office of Career and Technical Education

Cell: 502-682-0323

Lynda.Jackson@education.ky.gov



July 7, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to recommend Mr. Jason Booher to you for the Hall of Fame. There have been very few individuals who have impacted the sport of basketball in Eastern Kentucky at the level Jason has impacted.

I am super proud to call Jason a friend, colleague, and someone I admire. His championships in boys' basketball is the pinnacle to a lot of his success, but it goes much higher. Jason is truly a transformational coach/teacher/administrator with a mindset of producing great people. He has proven that in the development of Elisha Justice, former Mr. Basketball.

We throw the word "WINNER" around a lot in the world of athletics, but there is no truer definition of a winner in my book. He is a true family man raising a wonderful family dedicated to serving the Lord and making a difference in the lives of those around him.

I recommend Jason Booher for the Hall of Fame without reservation.

Go Eagles,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Kelly Wells". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Wells, Director of Athletics