Frank Jones is not simply a former Kentucky high school football standout. He is one of the most historically significant running backs ever to play high school football in the Commonwealth. His extraordinary performance at Bath County High School, the remarkable longevity of his state rushing record, and his subsequent success at Morehead State University make a compelling case for his induction into the Dawahares/KHSAA Sports Hall of Fame.

The strongest argument is that Jones achieved something the Hall of Fame was created to preserve: an extraordinary accomplishment in Kentucky interscholastic athletics that became a lasting part of the state's sports history.

1. A state record that stood for 54 years

3,361 yards

Single-season rushing record, set in 1969

54 years

Length of time the record stood

Jones established Kentucky's single-season high school rushing record in 1969 with 3,361 yards. That mark remained the state standard until Bell County's Daniel Thomas surpassed it in November 2023.

Kentucky Living+1

This is the centerpiece of Jones' candidacy.

- Exceptional individual achievement: Accumulating more than 3,300 rushing yards in a single high school season demands outstanding talent, durability, consistency, and the ability to perform week after week.
- Historical longevity: His record survived more than five decades of Kentucky high school football, including generations of outstanding running backs and changes in the game.
- Statewide significance: Jones' achievement was not merely a school record or a regional accomplishment. It became a benchmark for every high school running back in Kentucky.

The fact that another extraordinary player eventually broke the record does not diminish Jones' achievement. Rather, the 54-year interval demonstrates just how exceptional the original performance was.

A record need not stand forever to establish greatness. When it stands for 54 years, it becomes part of the history of the sport.

2. His accomplishments extended beyond high school

Jones did not simply peak as a high school athlete. He continued to demonstrate his abilities at Morehead State University, competing in the Ohio Valley Conference from 1971 through 1974.

Morehead State's own athletics department documents a collegiate career that reinforces the significance of his high school accomplishments.

Morehead State University Athletics

Frank Jones: Collegiate achievements

First-Team All-Ohio Valley Conference — 1974

Earned conference-wide recognition following an outstanding senior season.

1,066 rushing yards in 1974

Scored nine touchdowns and averaged 96.9 rushing yards per game.

Second-Team All-OVC — 1973

Rushed for 922 yards and six touchdowns.

2,477 career rushing yards

Morehead State reported in 2021 that Jones still ranked third in program history after more than 40 seasons.

Source: Morehead State University Athletics.

Morehead State University Athletics

His collegiate achievements are not the primary basis for KHSAA induction, since the Hall of Fame evaluates athlete candidates on their Kentucky high school accomplishments. They do, however, reinforce the credibility of Jones' athletic legacy and demonstrate that his high school dominance was part of a sustained career of excellence.

3. His story represents determination and opportunity

Jones' background makes his achievement particularly meaningful.

According to Kentucky Living, Jones grew up in a large family of 16 children whose livelihood depended on sharecropping. His Bath County coach, Bill Baldridge, helped him attend football practices while balancing the demands of farm work. Baldridge's support helped Jones pursue his athletic potential despite significant obstacles.

Kentucky Living

That story adds a human dimension to his record.

Jones represents a young athlete whose circumstances could have limited his opportunities, but whose talent, work ethic, and determination enabled him to make Kentucky sports history.

His candidacy offers the Hall of Fame an opportunity to celebrate not only athletic achievement, but also the perseverance and community support that help young athletes realize their potential.

4. His induction would preserve an important part of Kentucky sports history

The Dawahares/KHSAA Sports Hall of Fame exists to recognize and preserve Kentucky's interscholastic athletic heritage. Its athlete category calls for extraordinary high school accomplishments that merit statewide recognition. Its nomination guidelines also emphasize sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and moral character.

Kentucky High School Athletic Association+1

Jones' case aligns directly with the extraordinary-achievement standard:

- He set a statewide rushing record in 1969.
- His 3,361-yard record remained intact for 54 years.
- His performance became a reference point for generations of Kentucky football players.
- His journey from Bath County to collegiate football demonstrates the lasting impact of high school athletics.
- His story adds an important perspective to the history of African-American achievement in Kentucky sports.

Jones should be evaluated on the merits of his accomplishments, supported by reliable records, contemporary accounts, and testimonials from people who knew his high school career.

5. Why induction is justified now

A Hall of Fame should do more than celebrate familiar names. It should ensure that exceptional accomplishments remain connected to the people who achieved them.

When Jones' record fell in 2023, the accomplishment received statewide attention precisely because the previous mark had endured for 54 years. The Lexington Herald-Leader explicitly identified Jones as the former record holder.

Lexington Herald Leader

That moment renewed the opportunity to recognize the man behind the historic number.

Inducting Jones would not be a consolation for losing the record. It would be recognition that he set a standard so extraordinary that it took more than half a century for another Kentucky high school player to surpass it.

The KHSAA's own nomination policy calls for attention to underrepresented populations, including African-American participants, as part of its objective for appropriate representation.

Kentucky High School Athletic Association
Jones' candidacy offers a well-supported opportunity to recognize an African-American athlete whose accomplishments are already part of the state's documented athletic history.

A formal statement of support for Frank Jones' nomination

RECOMMENDATION FOR INDUCTION INTO THE DAWAHARES/KHSAA SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Nominee: Frank Jones — Bath County High School, Owingsville, Kentucky

I strongly recommend Frank Jones for induction into the Dawahares/KHSAA Sports Hall of Fame in recognition of his extraordinary accomplishments as a Kentucky high school football player and his enduring place in the athletic history of the Commonwealth.

In 1969, while representing Bath County High School, Frank Jones rushed for 3,361 yards in a single season, establishing Kentucky's high school football rushing record. That record stood for 54 years before it was surpassed in 2023. Few individual accomplishments better illustrate sustained excellence, exceptional athletic ability, and historical significance.

Jones' achievement deserves recognition not simply because of the number of yards accumulated, but because of the remarkable standard he established for future generations. For more than five decades, Kentucky high school running backs pursued a mark that Jones had set. His name became part of the state's football history, and his accomplishment remained a point of reference for coaches, athletes, and sports historians.

His athletic excellence continued at Morehead State University, where he earned Second-Team All-Ohio Valley Conference honors in 1973 and First-Team All-Ohio Valley Conference honors in 1974. He rushed for 1,066 yards and nine touchdowns during his 1974 season, and Morehead

State later reported that he ranked third in career rushing yards in program history. These achievements further demonstrate the caliber of athlete who emerged from Kentucky's high school football ranks.

Equally important is the story behind the statistics. Jones grew up in a large sharecropping family in eastern Kentucky. His journey reflects the determination required to pursue excellence while facing substantial responsibilities and limited opportunities. With talent, discipline, and support from those who believed in him, he became one of the most memorable high school football players in Kentucky history.

The Dawahares/KHSAA Sports Hall of Fame was established to preserve the legacy of extraordinary achievements in Kentucky interscholastic athletics. Frank Jones' accomplishments merit serious consideration under that mission. His record, its extraordinary longevity, and his lasting impact on the state's football history make a compelling case for statewide recognition.

Frank Jones did more than establish a record. He established a legacy. His induction would honor an exceptional athlete, preserve an important chapter of Kentucky sports history, and ensure that future generations understand the magnitude of his accomplishment.

I respectfully urge the Dawahares/KHSAA Sports Hall of Fame Screening and Selection Committees to give Frank Jones' nomination the consideration his remarkable high school career deserves.