

The following are the KHSAA Hall of Fame recommendations for Joey Couch from:

- (1) Joey's high school head basketball coach and assistant football coach, Bill Mike Runyon
- (2) Joey's KY vs TN high school all-star coach, Phillip Haywood of Belfry
- (3) Joey's high school basketball teammate, John Pelphrey
- (4) Joey high school football opponent and college teammate, Freddie Maggard
- (5) Former Paintsville basketball player, JR Vanhooose
- (6) Joey's mom, Jane Calhoun Couch

From: Bill Mike Runyon <mayor.runyon@cityofpaintsville.net>

Sent: Wed 10/24/2018, 6:47 PM

Subject: Joey Couch Hall of Fame recommendation

To KHSAA Hall of Fame Committee,

I'm recommending Joey Couch for induction into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. I was Joey's head basketball coach and assistant football coach during his 4 years at Paintsville High School.

Joey's individual stats in basketball and football are certainly very impressive and KHSAA Hall of Fame worthy by themselves however it's Joey's willingness to sacrifice his individual recognition for the overall betterment of the team is what makes him so special and what made the teams he was on so very successful.

In basketball, Joey scored over 2000 points, grabbed close to 1000 rebounds and gave out over 300 assists. In football, Joey rushed over to 2000 yards, had close to 40 TDs and over 300 solo tackles. He was the 1st player to ever play in both the Kentucky vs Indiana All-Star basketball game and Kentucky vs Tennessee All-Star football game; And to my knowledge he's still the only player to ever do both. By the way, was also a heck of a baseball player.

The thing that most folks don't know about Joey is he was our team's leading scorer as a freshman, averaging 22 points, even though he was playing alongside a future KY Mr Basketball (i.e., John Pelphrey). Joey had a silky smooth accurate outside jump shot from any place on the floor as well as incredible body control, ball handling and passing skills. In fact, I've never coached a better and more complete freshman in basketball or football. However in order to help position us to compete with the top teams in the state and nation, beginning his sophomore year, Joey willingly transitioned from being primarily a perimeter player to a physical inside player that took many less outside shots and scored fewer points per game but focused more on strengthening our interior defense & offense, rebounding and passing to others on the team that could score as defenses collapsed on Joey. That change made us an immediate legitimate contender for district, regional and state championships. His sophomore, junior and senior years we won 24, 29 and 32 games respectively with three straight district and regional championships

in basketball. He also won a district and regional championship in football and scored a TD in the state football championship game.

His senior year, we were the #1 ranked team in the state in basketball, winning the Begley's Hillbrook tournament in Lexington over #4 Henry Clay. We then defeated the nation's #1 ranked team (DeMatha, MD) and top 10 team (Binghamton, NY) in the Beach Ball Classic in South Carolina. Joey outplayed, outmaneuvered and frustrated a future NBA 1st round player, 6" 10" Jarrod Mustaf in the DeMatha game. While we defeated the eventual state champion (i.e., Clay County) in the regular season, we didn't get to play them again in the state championship game after our loss to Louisville Ballard and future NBA all-star Allen Houston in the state semi-finals. However Joey deservedly made the KHSAA All-State Tournament team for his outstanding play throughout the tournament.

It's worth mentioning Joey's incredible durability, reliability and leadership in physically and mentally demanding roles for our basketball and football teams. Joey started every high school basketball and football game he played in for 4 years. He was our team captain in both sports. Joey would later go on to play in 44 straight college football games at UK, including 33 straight starts from his sophomore through his senior year. He also became UK's team captain in football and an All-SEC football team member his senior year.

Joey was a fierce tough competitor but at the same time was able to be beloved and respected by everyone that played with him and against him for not only his athletic skills and how hard he played on every play but the appropriate and fun loving way that he played while in the heat of battle. This balance won us many games and him multiple Sportsmanship awards (e.g., ST Roach award) during our tournaments.

Last, but just as important, Joey was also an outstanding student in the classroom. He had a 3.5 GPA in high school and then at UK became a Dean's List student and regular member of the All-SEC academic team.

Joey Couch is definitely one of best all-around student-athletes that KY has ever had....or ever will have.

Sincerely,

Bill Mike Runyon

From: "Haywood, Philip" <philip.haywood@pike.kyschools.us>

Date: 2018-10-23 10:36

Subject: rec letter

KHSAA Hall of Fame Committee:

I am writing in support of the nomination for Joey Couch. Though I had seen Joey on film I had not met him until I had the chance to coach him in the Kentucky- Tennessee All-star football game in 1987. He quickly won everyone over with his tremendous work ethic, strong character, and upbeat personality. Joey was the Defensive MVP of the game.

Because of Joey's strong academics, leadership, and athletic ability he received an offer from the U.S. Naval Academy, but instead chose a scholarship at the University of Kentucky. His success at the University of Kentucky came as no surprise to me. Though I had only worked with him for one week, it was obvious that he was the kind of person that would become highly successful. I followed Joey's career, his successful business practice, and occasionally spoke with him. He was always the same. Genuine. I highly recommend him for induction to the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Philip Haywood
Head Football Coach/Athletic Director
Belfry High School

From: jpelphrey1791@gmail.com [mailto:jpelphrey1791@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, November 03, 2018 3:00 PM
Subject: Joey Couch's Letter to the KHSAA HOF

To Whom It May Concern:

I wrote this letter when my dear friend passed away. This is also why I think he should be considered and inducted into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. Joey Couch was as good of a High School player as I have ever played against; thank goodness he was on our team!

R. I. P. Big Joe

When my high school coach, friend and mentor called me late Friday night, I eagerly answered the phone to speak with the man who has meant so much to so many of us. He told me he had bad news...since then there has been nothing but sadness, heartache and pain. Tragic loss will do that to Human Beings. It will also bring about great reflection, and here's some of what's gone on in my head since losing my teammate and friend.

Growing up in Paintsville, my whole life/our whole lives revolved around ATHLETICS and Competition. Before Joey Couch came to us, we ALL had heard of him...this Mythical character from "The County". He was 6-2 and 220 pounds as an 8th grader...and there was nothing he could not do better than us...run faster, jump higher, throw a baseball harder, shoot the basketball from farther out; and Hell...he was even better looking than we were! Dark hair, skin that always seemed to be tan and a smile that never met a stranger. When Joey decided to join the Tigers his Freshman year of High School, we were already good and poised to be great; but with him, we would change lives and community! That all happened because of the Winning...and boy did we win! District and Regional championships, Regular season titles, Holiday tournament wins and championships; and yes, 3 trips to the "Sweet 16"; which we all knew was his birth right because of his dad's state championship at Carr Creek. Stuff like that has a profound effect on a community; its people, citizens, parents, families and friends all get to join the ride in a SMALL town...no one is left

behind. But more than the winning, the points, the rebounds, the tackles and yards gained...there was a brotherhood and a bond that was created; and for me it was the first time in my life I had felt a deep connection with a group or a TEAM...I loved it! It changed me! I believe it changed all of us. No one had more of a relationship with everybody than JOEY. Everybody loved him and he loved everybody. When he saw you, "Hey buddy" was probably the first thing out of his mouth and then a big smile; followed by a hug. He truly was a big ole, fun loving teddy bear, but also a ferocious competitor. He would knock you down or out to get the job done; but then he would also pick you back up. And he was the same every day.

Sincerely,

John Pelphrey

KHSAA HOF Member 2015



From: Maggard, Freddie Freddie.Maggard@uky.edu

Date: Wed 10/3/2018, 8:40 AM

Subject: HOF

Letter of Recommendation for Joey from Freddie Maggard

KHSAA Hall of Fame Committee:

There are few Kentucky high school athletes that stand the test of time. Joey Couch's accomplishments and lore do just that. as He personifies the term "legend". Joey starred in football and basketball at Paintsville High School while catapulting the Tiger's basketball and football programs onto the state-wide stage. Individual statistics and accolades support this claim. However, Couch remained the consummate teammate and program-first competitor.

Therefore, I'm honored to endorse my friend, opponent, teammate, and roommate Joey Couch to be inducted into the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Joey was simply the best athlete I had the privilege to compete against at the high school level. Virtually unstoppable as a defender and ball carrier, he led Paintsville to the state championship game on the gridiron and helped lead the Tigers to multiple trips to the Sweet 16.

Joey Couch was the first KHSAA athlete to be selected to the Kentucky-Indiana basketball all-star game and the Kentucky-Tennessee football all-star series. He was eventually named as the

defensive MVP vs. Tennessee. He was a four-year, two-way starter for legendary coach Walter Brugh while being named team captain by a vote of his peers.

Couch was equally as impressive and impactful on the basketball court. He was a critical building block for Coach Bill Mike Runyon's legendary run in the 80's as his teams won three consecutive regional titles. Scoring over 2,000 points, Joey was also one of the Commonwealth's leading rebounders and defenders.

Coach Jerry Claiborne offered Couch a scholarship at the University of Kentucky which turned out to be a beneficial decision. He diligently worked to become a three-year starter, All SEC defensive lineman, preseason All American, six-time All SEC Academic Team, and finished his career ranked 2nd in tackles for a nose guard.

Joey Couch was and remains a KHSAA legend; a description that is infrequent. It is without hesitation that I endorse Joey Couch to be inducted into the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Infinitely deserving; he's simply one of the Commonwealth of Kentucky's very best to compete on the high school stage.

Freddie W. Maggard II

KHSAA Hall of Fame Class of 2015

From: Vanhooose, Jonathan [mailto:jonathan.vanhooose@johnson.kyschools.us]
Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 3:04 PM
Subject: Rec. Letter

Letter of Recommendation for Joey from JR Vanhooose

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the recommendation for Joey Couch for the Dawahares/Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Joey had a tremendous impact in the community of Paintsville and Eastern Kentucky, and I even consider him "Mr. Paintsville." A four-time All-57th District selection, a three-time All-15th Region selection and a four-time Honorable Mention All-State selection in basketball, Joey helped lead Paintsville High School to three 15th Region basketball championships and the school's first ever trip to the KHSAA "Sweet 16" Final Four in 1987 where he was named to the "Sweet 16" All-Tournament team. Also an All-State football player, Joey helped lead Paintsville to a Class A runner-up finish in football in 1985. To

show you the type of athlete that Joey Couch was, at the end of his senior season he was selected to both the Kentucky-Tennessee All-Star football game and the Kentucky-Indiana All-Star basketball game! After high school, he went on to have a great football career at the University of Kentucky, lettering in 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991, where he was an All-SEC selection. I know him so well because of his basketball accomplishments and know that his name is still spread across many of the records at Paintsville High School. In his basketball career Joey scored 2,034 career points (6th all-time), grabbed 1024 career rebounds (3rd all-time), ranks 4th all-time in FG attempts (1,659) and FGs made (764). He saved some of his best performances for the "Sweet 16." In 1985, as a sophomore, he had back-to-back games of 14 points and 12 rebounds (vs. Washington County) and 18 points and 12 rebounds (vs. Hopkinsville). Two years later, as a senior, in 1987, he scored 23 points and grabbed 12 rebounds in a first round victory over Monticello. I remember seeing a quote from his (and later mine) high school coach Bill Mike Runyon when asked about Joey's basketball career, "As far as I'm concerned, Joey was probably the best football/basketball freshman athlete I ever coached. As a freshman, he had every attribute. He could shoot it. He could handle it. He could pass it. He could play defense. He could rebound. He did a lot of things you just don't see out of a freshman. The thing people don't realize about Joey wasn't afraid to give up some of his scoring to make damn sure we won. He was more concerned about playing defense and rebounding." Now that's the type of player you want to see be recognized in the Hall of Fame!

Joey had a tremendous impact on my athletic career as well. After winning the 15th Region Tournament in 1987, Joey, John Pelphrey, Jeith Adkins and Mike Minix made a trip to Paintsville Elementary School to sign autographs and interact with the students. At the time I was in the 1st Grade and I recall Joey being very friendly and fun to be around. After that, watching the police escort the bus out of town for their trip to Rupp Arena, I just knew that I wanted to be like those guys, especially Joey. It helped put a "drive" in me to work hard, play hard and make Paintsville proud, like they had all done. Before we made our run a a state basketball title (in 1996), Joey's former coach and the one I played for, Bill Mike Runyon, brought Joey in to speak to the team about what it took to get to the Final Four and what it meant to represent our area down at the "Sweet 16." I never forgot that and what it meant to us to know that Joey was cheering us on.

Joey was a great athlete but more importantly, he was also a great person. He never hesitated to offer help to those in need and that is one of the lasting things I will remember about him. I will forever have a special place in my heart for Joey Couch and I hope that he will be inducted into the Dawahares/Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,
J. R. VanHoose
Dawahares/Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame (class of 2011)

From: Jane Couch janecalhouncouch@hotmail.com

Date: 2 Nov 2018

Subject: Joey

To Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

Unselfishness and kindness were traits that defined Joey's life. He was willing to put the needs of others before his own. His unselfishness defined him on the basketball court, on the football field, or with family and friends. Although a gifted athlete, his overriding goal was a team win. Joey's kind nature was evident in sports. Although gifted physically, Joey held back. He used just enough of his great strength to get a rebound or to achieve a tackle. With family and friends, Joey was always ready to aid a stricken family member or help a disabled classmate with wheelchair or physical needs. Joey volunteered in special Olympic events throughout elementary school and high school. Animals that were homeless and hungry could count on Joey as a friend. Before football practice, Joey would bring dog food for stray animals and feed them. As a well-known high school sports figure, these character traits made Joey a valuable role model.

Jane Calhoun Couch