

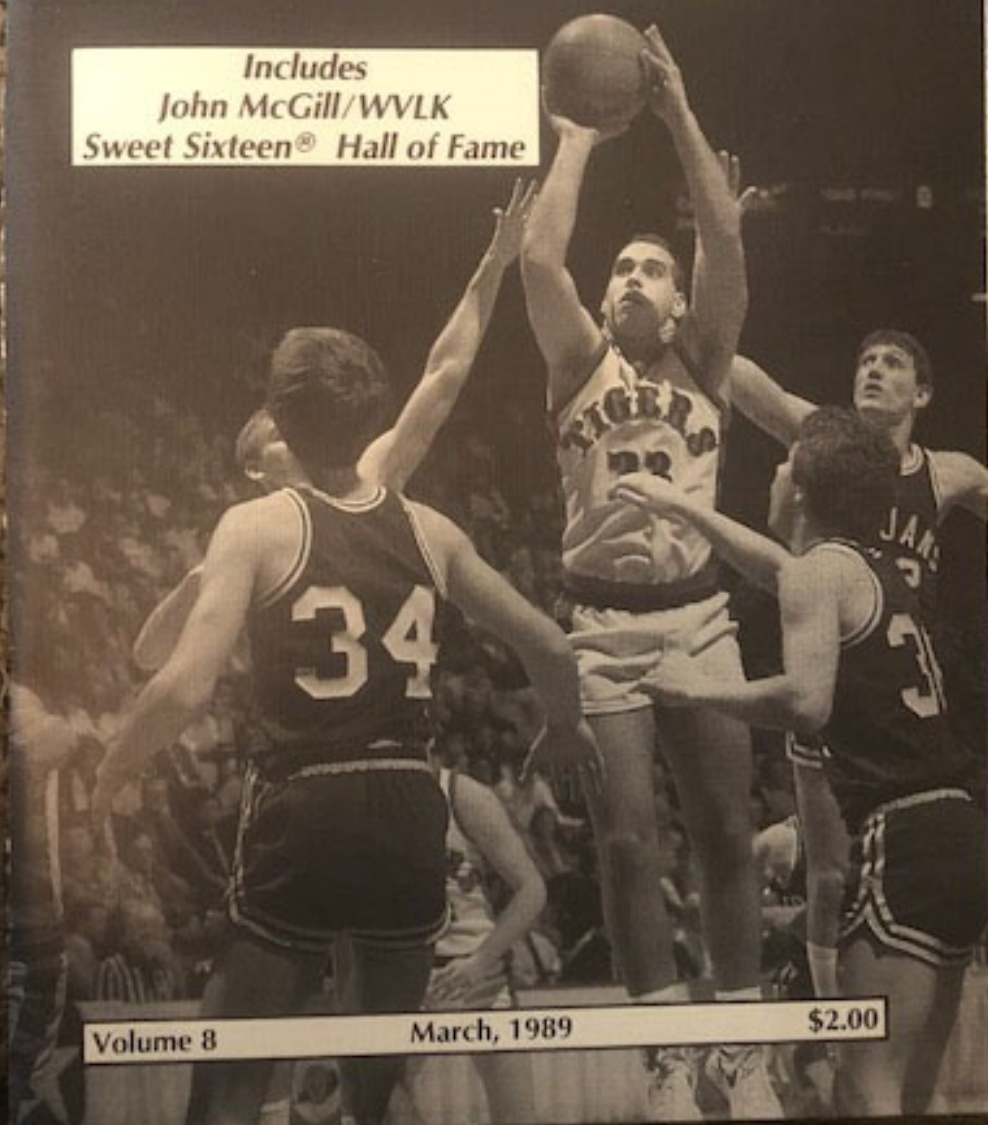
Kentucky High School Athletic Association



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Volume 8

March, 1989

\$2.00







*In LOVING  
Memory*



JOEL EMERY "JOEY" COUCH  
1968 - 2017



HOME OF THE  
RACELAND RAM BAND  
STATE CLASS A CHAMPIONS  
1978-79 1979-80



## Paintsville's Couch to attend UK

Herald-Leader staff report FEB 4, 1987.

Joey Couch, a four-year football letterman at Paintsville High School, said yesterday that he will sign a national letter of intent with Kentucky.

Couch, a 6-foot-3, 240-pound linebacker, led Paintsville in tackles as a freshman, junior and senior. He also played fullback and tight end at times.

Couch, who was also recruited by Louisville, Vanderbilt, Army and Navy, is expected to play linebacker at UK.

"I was impressed with all of

them," he said, "but everybody in Eastern Kentucky and, I guess, all over the state wants to be a Wildcat."

Couch started for four seasons at Paintsville, the school that produced former UK defensive back Tony Mayes.

"I expect to be redshirted as a freshman," Couch said. "I really want that for academic reasons. Plus, it'll give me a year to get stronger and faster and be ready to play as a redshirt freshman."

Couch's father, E.A. Couch, was a member of Carr Creek's state championship basketball team in 1956.



**Paintsville 35, Cumberland 8:**  
Paintsville's Joey Couch ran for four touchdowns last night to lead the Tigers to a rout of host Cumberland in the Class A Fourth Region.

Paintsville, 8-3, will advance to

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## **High school playoffs Nov. 15, 1985**

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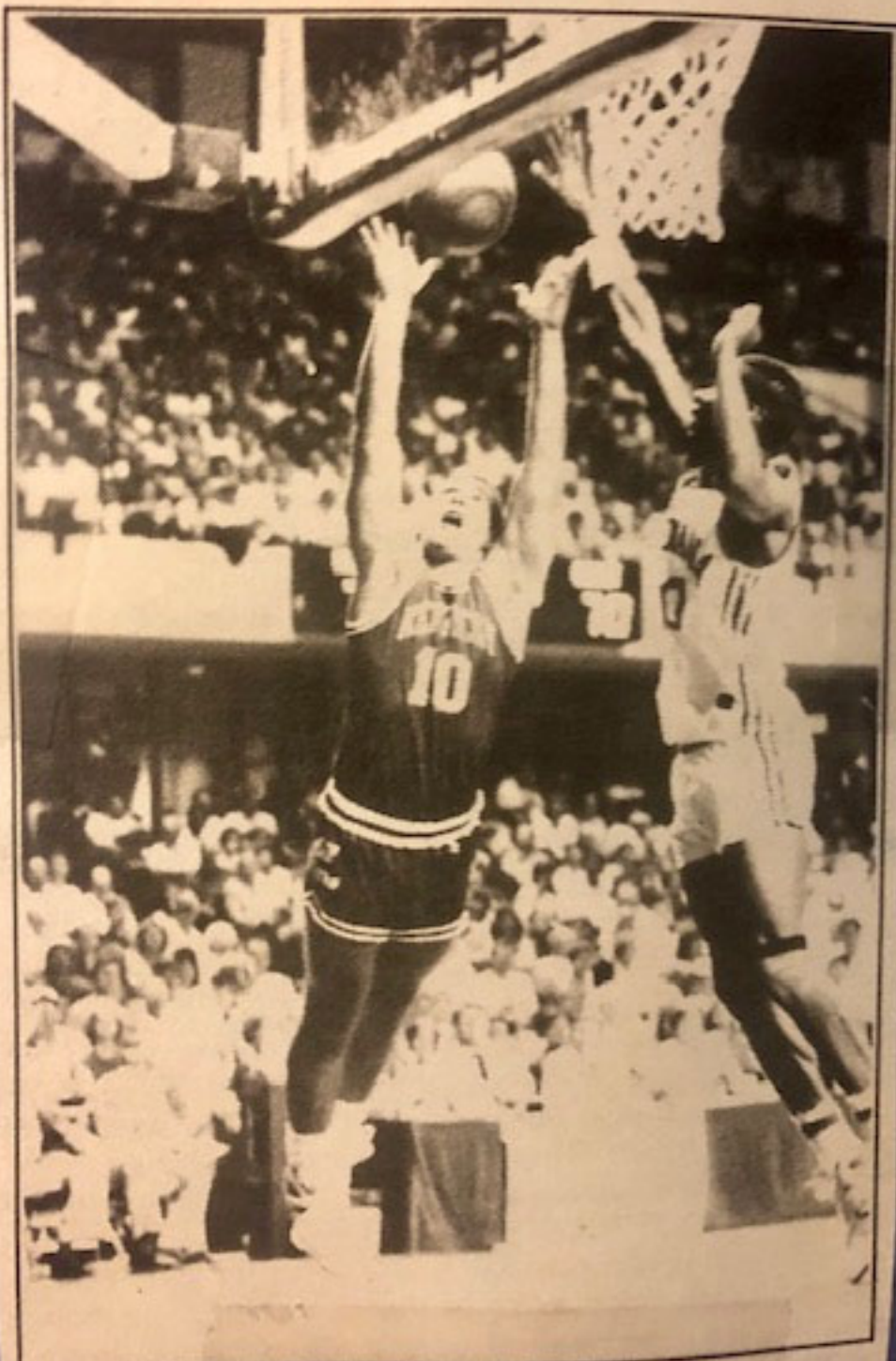
the Class A semifinals next week against Beechwood, a 6-0 winner over Bath County.

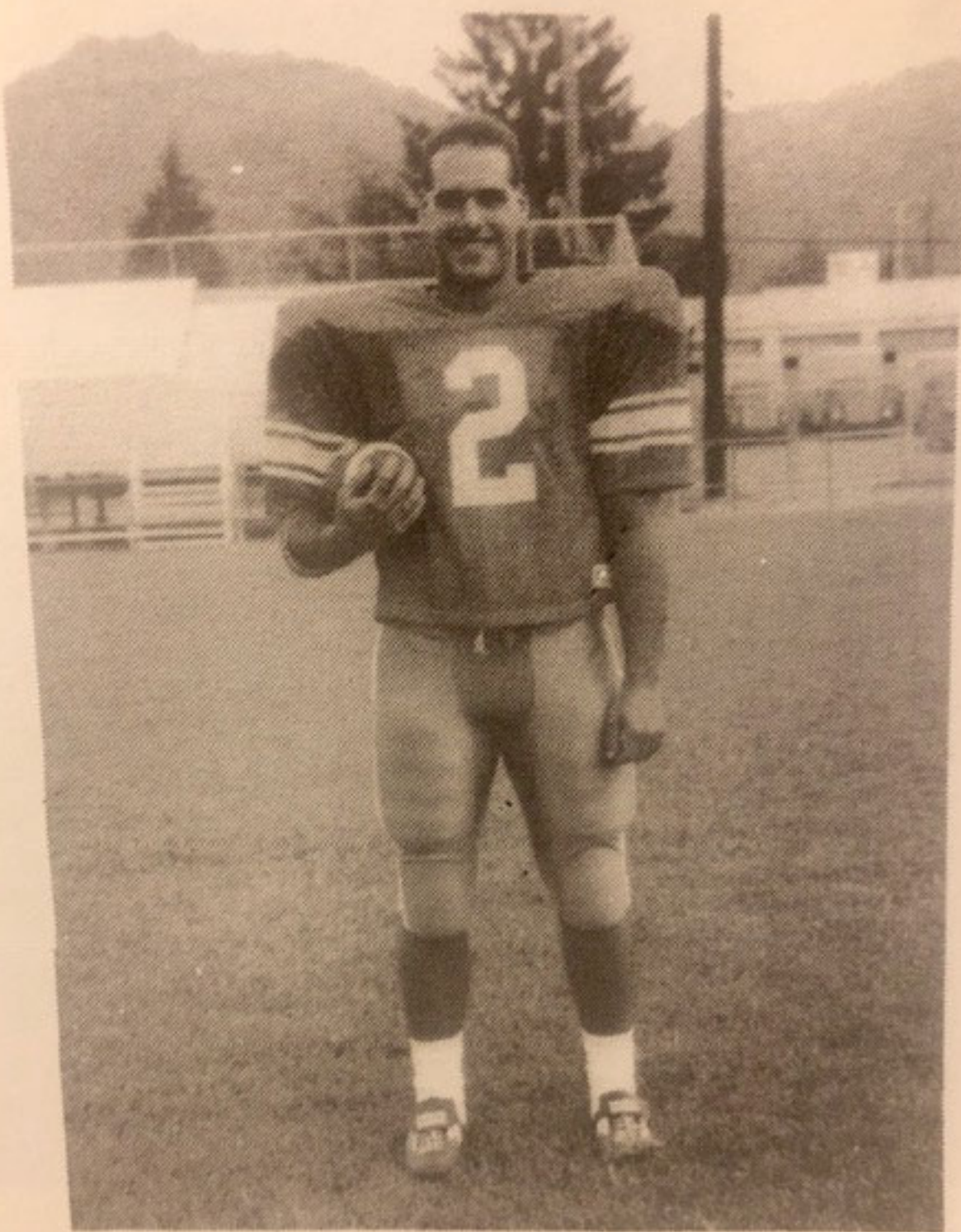
Cumberland finished its season at 5-6. **Regional Championship game**



Before he settled on football as a career, Couch, here playing in the Kentucky-Indiana All-Star game, says his first love was basketball.

photo by Gary Cromwell





**Joey Couch**  
Senior



# 3.5 GPA student

The following students of Paintsville High School and Middle School made a 3.5 or better average during the second six-week marking period. This average is based on four quality points for an A, three points for a B, two points for a C, and one point for a D. Students with five subjects earned at least 18 quality points and students with six subjects earned at least 21 points to qualify for the honor roll. An asterix beside a name denotes all A's.

Sixth grade - Holly Best

Twelfth grade - Raedonna Shirley Blevins, Joey Couch, Daniels, Bront Davis, Kellie Stacy Hackworth, Tim H Clara Horn\*, Leenata Madd Pam Marsh\*, Mike Minix, Mink, John Pelphrey, Anita Rick Roe\*, Kellie Slone, and Stricklin.

# Maggard, Couch a distinguished p

Joey Couch and Freddie Maggard have a lot in common.

They're both from the mountains of eastern Kentucky. They've been roommates for five years. Their fathers played basketball for the 1956 state basketball champion Carr Creek High School team. And this week, they will both make their final appearance at Commonwealth Stadium as Kentucky football players.

The one thing that has separated the buddies this season is that while Couch has enjoyed another solid season at nose guard, Maggard has watched the action from UK's bench.

It wasn't supposed to happen like this for Maggard. When the Wildcats opened camp in August, Maggard was the starting quarterback. That soon changed when it was discovered that his right shoulder had not fully healed from offseason surgery.

Since that time, Brad Smith, Pookie Jones and Ryan Hockman have divided time as UK's starting quarterback. Maggard, despite being the seventh-leading passer in school history, became the forgotten man.

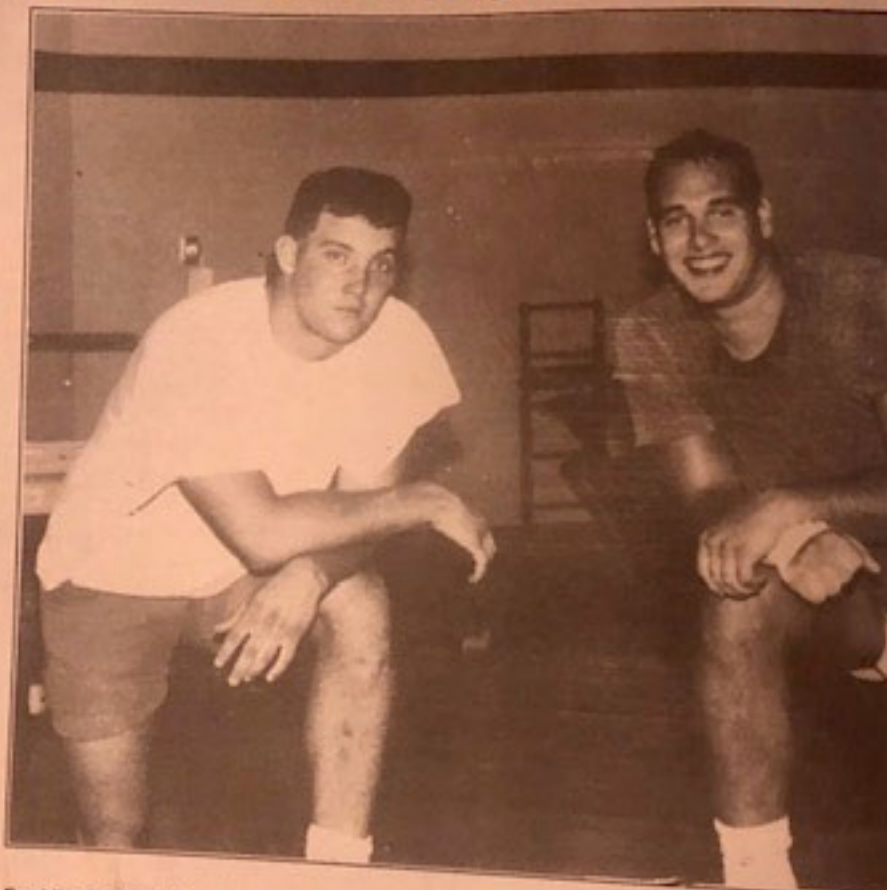
In fact, when asked for an interview last week, Maggard asked "Why?" with a confused look on his face.

In 1989 and 1990, he frequently interacted with the media and was perhaps Kentucky's most well-known player. That came with the territory in being a starting quarterback for a Southeastern Conference school.

"This year has been a challenge for me personally in a lot of ways," Maggard said. "It's been a huge disappointment that I've not been able to get out and play, because that's what you work for all your life. It's been tough."

Maggard, a former Cumberland High School star, will leave UK with 2,566 passing yards to his credit. Before the 1991 season, he needed only 434 more yards to become only the fifth quarterback in UK history to top the 3,000-yard mark.

BRETT HAIT



Freddie Maggard, left, and Joey Couch, roommates for five years while playing football at Kentucky,

will appear at Commonwealth Stadium this week against Tennessee.

on the team. He goes out there every day and works hard." Unable to join Couch on the playing field, Maggard has become a player-coach of sorts. His helmet has been replaced with a UK baseball cap, and he has constantly roamed the sidelines this season offering encouragement.

week.

That's why it's so difficult for Couch to win a winning team.

"It's hard to imagine going through this without..."



# Pelphrey, Couch boost Paintsville past Southern; PRP tops NewCath

By BOB WHITE  
Staff Writer

John Pelphrey did his customary thing last night, but the state's No. 1 high school basketball player from Paintsville got some help, too, in the person of Joey Couch.

Pelphrey, the 6-foot-7 senior who can hit 18-foot jump shots as well as score from in close to the basket, tossed in 21 points to spark Paintsville past Southern 70-57 in a battle between unbeaten teams in the Panther Classic high school basketball tournament at Pleasure Ridge Park.

Pelphrey entered the game with a 20.7-point average, so he was expected to score.

Couch, a husky 6-2 senior, probably had his best game of the young season. He scored 20 points, mostly from around the basket, as Paintsville extended its unbeaten streak to six games.

"We always look inside to Joey," said Pelphrey. "He's a big part of our offense inside. If we get the ball to him, one of three things will happen. He'll score, get fouled or make a three-point play."

"He hangs real well in the air," Pelphrey added of Couch. "He had a super game tonight. He deserves his MVP (Most Valuable Player award) more than I do."

Couch, who has trimmed his weight from 240 to 219 pounds since the football season ended, had two three-point plays in the third quarter. He also missed 5 of 7 free

throws during that period, but he wound up hitting 6 of 12.

"I was posting up pretty good," said Couch. "My legs felt good. I was giving them a little head fake, then going up for the shot."

It was a good time for Couch to play well because his father, ex-Carr Creek High School star E. A. Couch, who now works in Fort Knox, was among those watching the game.

"I feel my game is coming around," Couch said. "I've lost a lot of weight. I'm in good basketball shape now. I'm running the floor well and my shot is starting to fall."

Paintsville, fresh from winning the 12-team Begley's Hillbrook tournament at Lexington last week, broke open a tight game with a 12-0 streak in the second quarter. That put the Tigers from the 15th Region ahead 28-14.

Southern, which got 14 points from 6-5 senior Bill Farley and 12 points from 6-2 senior Kevin Sullivan, closed within 36-30 and 53-47 in the second half when Paintsville made only 10 of 17 free throws.

Paintsville didn't fold, however, and two goals by Keith Adkins and one by Couch, pushed the Tigers ahead 59-47. Later, a fast-break layup by Mike Minix and a three-point play by Pelphrey gave Paintsville a 68-53 lead, and coach Bill Mike Runyon sent in his reserves.

Pleasure Ridge Park 69, Newport Catholic 55 — With Desmond

Porter picking up three early fouls and sitting out the entire third quarter, point guard Mark Woods came to the rescue for the Panthers, who won for the fourth time in as many games.

Woods, voted the MVP on his team, scored 13 points, grabbed seven rebounds and handed out 12 assists with his passing.

"That's the greatest thing that's happened to me," the 6-1 Woods said about the MVP award. "If we keep playing like this, we'll be back in Rupp (Arena) again."

NewCath (2-2) played without starting guard Terry Sandford, who sustained a bruised thigh in the state Class AA football final on Nov. 28 and has played sparingly in basketball so far.

However, NewCath — the Ninth Region favorite — got a game-high 23 points from 6-4 senior Brinn Robinson. He made 9 of 10 field-goal attempts and scored nine points in the fourth quarter.

PAINTSVILLE	12	24	17	17	70
SOUTHERN	12	18	21	34	85

Paintsville — Couch 20, Minix 12, Jo. Pelphrey 21, Gray 4, Adkins 5, Burchell 2, Daniels 5, Adams 1, Cooley 0, Jo. Pelphrey 0, Trimble 2.

Southern — Farley 14, Campbell 2, Wells 4, Downs 10, Sullivan 12, Kennedy 2, F. Maddox 5, Geddes 5, W. Maddox 0, Thornton 0.

NEWPORT CATHOLIC	14	16	8	17	55
PRP	22	12	9	26	69

Newport Catholic — Pangalis 12, Zimmerman 10, Gabbard 15, Robinson 23, Glasser 6, Garlick 2, Albrik 4, Jacobs 1, McDonald 0.

PRP — Porter 14, Jarrett 8, Dorsey 12, Woods 12, Pennick 8, Taylor 7, Ashby 2, Emory 0, Lewis 2, Ricketts 0, Hammons 0.



# SPORTS

## Paintsville is thriving on classy competition

By BOB WHITE

Staff Writer

When Bill Mike Runyon, the boys' basketball coach at Paintsville High School, was making out his December schedule, he was actually thinking about what effect it would have on his team in March.

"I wanted to play the best teams early in the year and we've done that," Runyon said yesterday. "The first two years we went to the State Tournament we played a schedule that didn't prepare us. I wanted to make sure we were prepared this year."

So far, Runyon's team is holding well against tough competition.

Having conquered Lexington by winning the 12-team Begley's Hillbrook tournament last weekend, Paintsville travels to Louisville Sat-

urday to compete in the Panther Classic at Pleasure Ridge Park. Then the Tigers will return here Wednesday to play Doss in the first round of the 16-team King of the Bluegrass tourney, which starts Monday at Fairdale.

Paintsville, favored to win a third straight 15th Region title and ranked No. 2 in The Courier-Journal's preseason poll of coaches, beat Jessamine County 70-54, Lafayette 54-52, Tates Creek 65-50 and Henry Clay 68-63 to win the Begley tourney.

Returning home, Paintsville edged its top regional rival, Johnson Central, 56-52 Tuesday.

"The kids were real happy to win at Lexington," Runyon said. "They wanted it so badly. What made it even sweeter is that we're a small school stuck in the mountains. We



Joey Couch



John Pelphrey



Mike Mix

don't get much recognition and to beat three big Lexington schools within a period of 24 hours is pretty sweet. We had a tough game Tuesday, too. Johnson Central has an excellent team."

Paintsville, now 5-0, will play Sixth Region favorite Southern (3-0) at 7 p.m. Saturday in the third of four games of the Panther Classic.

Male (1-2) will take on Washington County (3-1) in the opener at 2,

then Doss (3-0) will play Owsley (3-1) at 4. PRP (3-0) will play Region favorite Newport Catholic (1-1) at 9.

"We'll also be going to Louisville over Christmas for the Ball Classic at Myrtle Beach," Runyon said. "We play DeMatha, a perennial national power (1-1) at 9 p.m. Saturday."

Continued from Page B1 (Dec. 28). So we should be prepared."

John Pelphrey, a 6-foot-10 senior who is rated Kentucky's No. 1 recruit, leads Paintsville with 20.8 points and 10.2 rebounds. Guard Mike Mix is the leading scorer at 17 p.p.m. by guard Keith Adams (7.4) and forward Joey Couch (7.4). Jared Gray (3.2) is the team's leading rebounder.







## 1987 KENTUCKY ALL-STAR LINE-UP

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	HOMETOWN	COLLEGE
1	Frank Jacobs	TE-LB	6-5	225	Highland Heights	Notre Dame
3	Bryan Barrett	KS	6-2	200	Loyal	Air Force
10	Jeff Houk	QB-FS	6-2	195	Louisville	Kentucky
11	Skip Leach	QB-FS	5-9	165	Louisville	Missouri
12	Freddie Maggard	QB-FS	6-3	205	Cumberland	Kentucky
13	Brian Renaud	QB-DE	6-1	175	Lawrenceburg	Undecided
20	Jimmy Baughman	RB-LB	5-9	180	Danville	Murray State
21	William Dishman	RB-LB	6-1	195	Lexington	Kentucky
22	Dale Fox	RB-CB	6-0	202	Corbin	Undecided
23	Darren Hayden	RB/TE-LB	6-3	230	Louisville	Eastern Kentucky
24	Norton Hazard	RB-DB	6-0	170	Louisville	Undecided
25	Larry Jackson	RB-DB	6-1	170	Mayfield	Kentucky
26	David Scott	RB-LB	6-1	210	Louisville	Kentucky
27	Maurice White	RB-DE	6-0	185	Owensboro	Central St. (Ohio)
40	Derrick Thomas	OT-LB	6-3	215	Lexington	Kentucky
41	Billy Swanson	RB-LB	6-0	220	Paducah	Kentucky
50	Courtney Longacre	C	6-4	220	Shepherdsville	Kentucky
60	Keith Marcum	OT	6-2	225	Forest Hills	Undecided
61	Ernest Thompson	OG-DT	6-0	235	London	Eastern Kentucky
62	Walter Underwood	OG	6-4	270	Louisville	Alabama
64	Dennis Guillaume	NG	6-2	225	Louisville	Morehead State
70	Greg Armstrong	OT-DT	6-2	300	West Paducah	Murray State
71	Jerry Bell	DT	6-3	256	Louisville	Kentucky
72	Bobby Craycraft	OT-DT	6-4	255	Ashland	Vanderbilt
73	Jeff Dick	OT-DT	6-1	235	Mayfield	Undecided
74	Kent Carter	OT-DT	6-6	265	Corbin	Western Kentucky
75	James Jagers	DT	6-2	254	Louisville	Eastern Kentucky
76	Richard Newton	OT-DT	6-4	242	Prospect	Undecided
80	Joey Couch	TE-LB	6-3	230	Paintsville	Kentucky
81	Chris Collins	TE-LB	6-3	230	Louisville	Murray State
82	Jeff Ellis	TE-LB	6-4	230	Louisville	Ohio State
83	Joe Johnson	WR-DB	6-1	180	Mayfield	Western Kentucky
84	Steve Kelley	TE-LB	6-3	222	Hopkinsville	Kentucky
85	Phil Logan	WR-FS	6-2	185	Louisville	Kentucky
86	Eddie Thomas	WR-FS	6-0	175	Fort Knox	Indiana

### 1987 KENTUCKY ALL-STAR COACHING STAFF

**HEAD COACH:** Phillip Haywood, Belfry High School

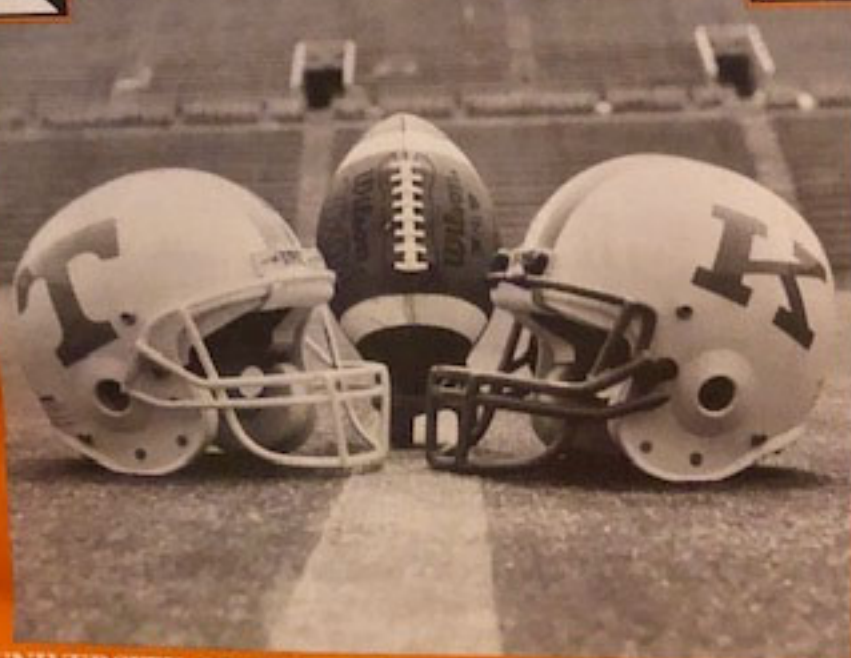
**ASSISTANT COACHES:** Mike Glaser, St. Xavier High School  
 Bruce Herdman, Morgan County High School  
 Steve Mickey, Belfry High School  
 Joe Ruddell, Tates Creek High School

**TRAINER:** David Bayes, A.T.C.



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**TENNESSEE • KENTUCKY**  
ALL-STAR

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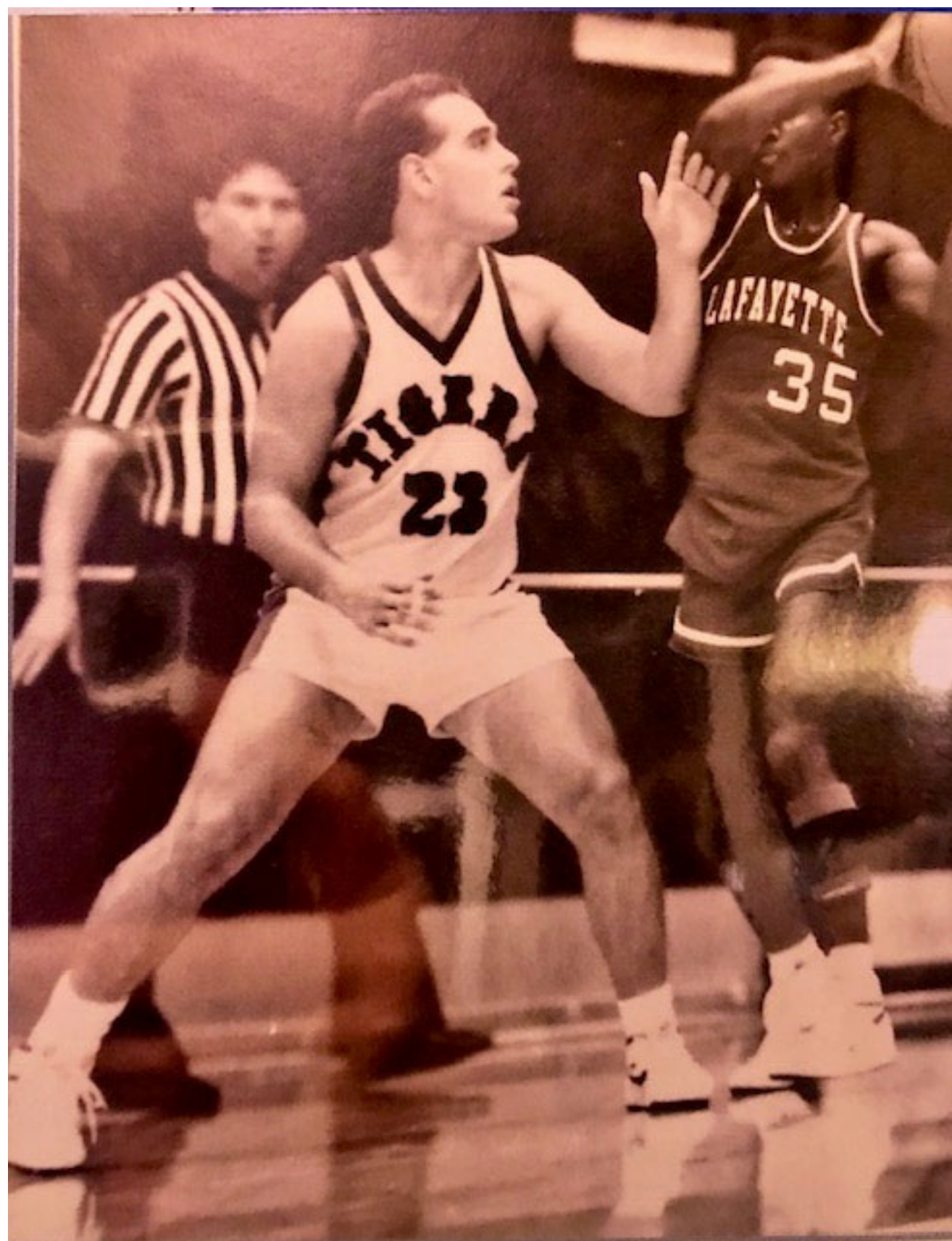
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NEYLAND STADIUM

**JULY 18, 1987**

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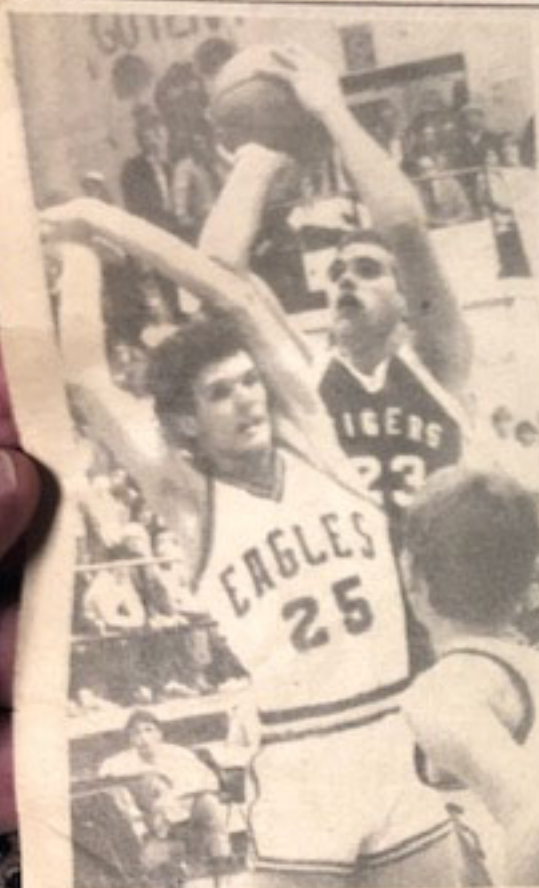








the Paintsville Herald Big Blue Special MARCH 20, 1985.



COUCH GETS two of his 1000 points.

## And they're only sophomores

String music in Eastern Kentucky... and they're only sophomores.

Sounds like something Joe Deas might say in one of his TV's Game of the Week broadcasts.

But for two Paintsville High basketball Tigers, the wording's true.

Joey Couch and John Pelphrey, sophomore members of the state-bound Tigers, hit the 1000-point plateau during the 1984-85 basketball season in consecutive fashion.

Pelphrey's "shot heard round the region", a layup at the buzzer to beat Pikeville in the opening round of the regional tourney, maybe the most memorable of the smooth center-forward's career. Couch's 1000th came earlier in the season at Morgan County as a birthday present for George Washington on February 22.

"That's a career type thing," PHS coach Bill Mike Runyon said of the achievement. "For John and Joey to make it in two years speaks for itself."

For the record books, Couch, a 6-2 forward scored 961 points so far this season on top of 542 last year. He's averaged 18.7 points and 6.8 rebounds per contest this year. His field goal accuracy measures 48 percent while at the free throw stripe he's hit 135 of 207 attempts for 65 percent.

Pelphrey, at 6-6, leads the Tigers in field goal accuracy this season with a 54 percent grade. He's scored 810 points so far on top of last year's 429 point output. Pelphrey has also connected on 74 percent of his free tries, making 136 of 184 from the line. He leads the Tigers in rebounding, pulling down an average of 9.6 caroms a contest.

Tiger coach Bill Mike Runyon says his soph sensations have matured considerably in their second year, complimenting each other on the court.

"They know when and where they should give the ball up to the other," Runyon said. "They have developed a special bond that some people who play a lifetime together never get."

And they're only sophomores...



PELPFREY'S 1000th propelled the T...







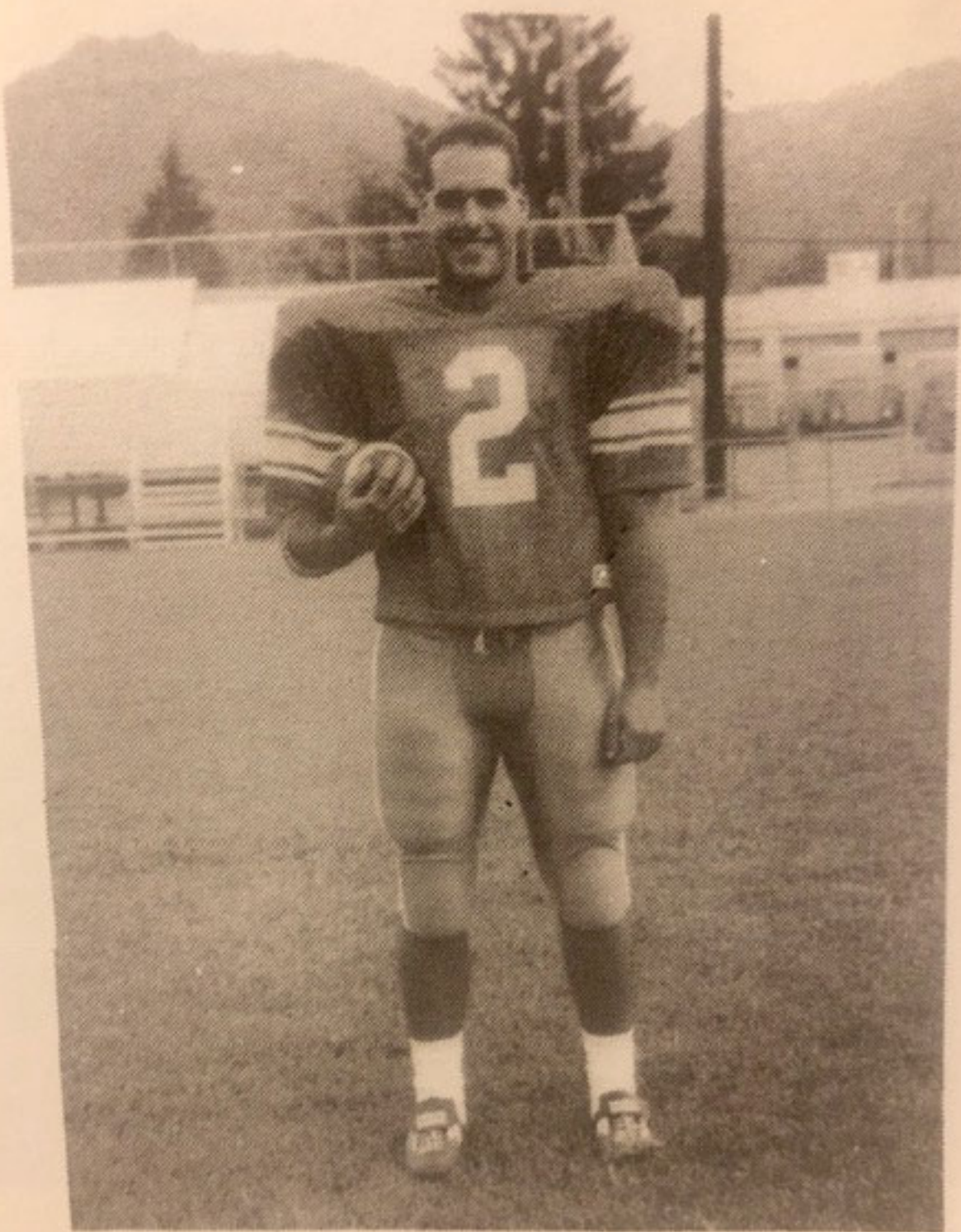




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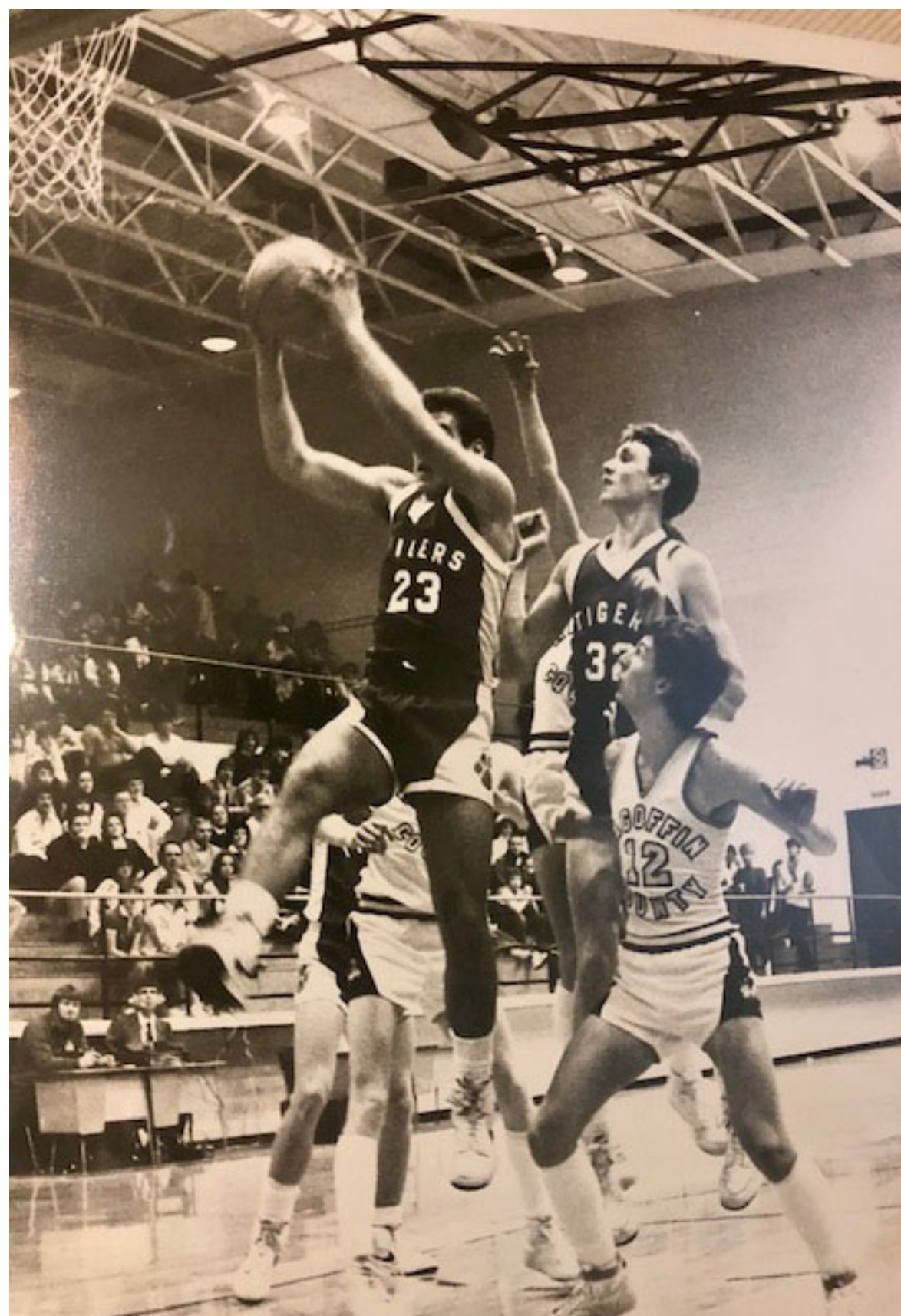


**Joey Couch**  
Senior





Joey's KY vs TN football jersey and  
KY vs IN basketball jersey.





# Paintsville frosh making their mark

By MARK MAYNARD

Independent Sports Writer

Paintsville Coach Bill Mike Runyon has high hopes for freshmen John Pelphrey and Joey Couch.

While Couch and Pelphrey have been quite a hit locally, Runyon's long-range plans include statewide exposure — as in the State Tournament.

"By their senior seasons, they have a chance to win it all," says Runyon flatly. "I really believe they do."

"That entire freshman class, along with the sophomore class to some extent, has real talented athletes," he said. "It's the best group of athletes I've ever seen."

Not since Mike Scott's freshman season at Greenup County have any ninth graders made such an impact on the area scene.

Couch, averaging 21 points per game, is fourth in area scoring and Pelphrey's 16.7 ranks him 15th.

After tossing in 30 points last night, Russell's Todd Parsley remained the area's leading scorer with a 24.3 average. Brian Maynard (22.5) and Harry Meek (22.3), considered the top two guards in the 15th Region, stand Nos. 2 and 3.

While Paintsville's reputation centers around football, Runyon is certain there's room for basketball. Winning the Northeastern Kentucky Conference regular-season championship was a step in the right direction for the Tigers.

Couch and Pelphrey, Paintsville's version of the dynamic duo, is bringing respect to Tiger basketball.

"Both physically and mentally, they are more like juniors," says Runyon, who also starts Mike Minix, another freshman. "I didn't expect either one of them to be where they're at now."

Couch and Pelphrey, both 15-years-old, were football starters as well. Couch, a sturdy 6-foot-2, rushed for 839 yards. Pelphrey, a lean 6-5, played an offensive end.

"I was shocked at the way they



JOHN PELPHREY



JOEY COUCH

played at first, but I'm not shocked now," Runyon said. "When you get to this point in the season, they're really sophomores. These kids demand the basketball and our offense is geared to the forwards."

Couch and Pelphrey are both well over 50 percent from the floor for the season.

"They've got the range, inside or outside," Runyon said. "With a few breaks, we could win the region this year. You just never know what's going to happen."

Meanwhile, Parsley continued his steady pace with a nice shooting touch. The 6-7 senior scored 99 points in the past four Russell games, all losses.

Streaking Greenup County ran its winning streak to 15 straight with a win over Lewis County Tuesday night. Scott, the Musketeers' 6-11 junior, averages 20.4 per game.

Morgan County's Anthony Ferguson, hitting for 20.5, stands fifth in the area.

Rounding out the Top 10 area scorers are: East Carter's Art Daugherty (18.6), Rowan County's Pat Conn (18.6), Ashland's Chuck Cantrell (18.3), and Prestonsburg's Kelly Cecil (18.1).

Daugherty, moving from 10

last week, pumped in 38 points for the Raiders in a recent win over Fairview.

Parsley and Maynard, who are cousins, staged a shootout of their own last night in Sheldon Clark's 88-78 triumph over Russell. Parsley outscored Maynard 30-29.

## TEAM TOTALS

	W	L	Pct.
Greenup County	21	3	.875
Johnson Central	15	3	.833
Ashland	17	5	.773
Sheldon Clark	13	4	.764
Prestonsburg	13	5	.730
Boyd County	13	6	.684
East Carter	14	8	.636
Lewis County	13	8	.619
West Carter	11	7	.611
Rowan County	11	7	.611
Morgan County	13	8	.619
Magoffin County	14	11	.560
Paintsville	11	10	.524
Lawrence County	10	11	.476
Fairview	7	10	.411
Russell	7	11	.389
Elliot County	6	14	.300
Barland	3	18	.143
Holy Family	1	17	.059

## INDIVIDUAL

### Player (Team)

1. Parsley (Russell)
2. Maynard (S. Clark)
3. Meek (J. Central)
4. Couch (Pville)
5. A. Ferguson (Morgan)
6. Scott (Greenup)
7. Conn (Rowan)
8. Daugherty (S. Clark)
9. Cantrell (Ashland)
10. Cecil (Pburg)
11. Thompson (Fairview)
12. K. Ferguson (Lawrence)
13. R. Ison (Elliot)
14. Taylor (Boyd)
15. Pelphrey (Pville)
16. Kidwell (Lewis)
17. Plummer (Lewis)
18. May (Morgan)
19. Rayburn (W. Carter)

## CONFERENCE

### Eastern

- East Carter
- Rowan County
- Bath County
- West Carter
- Lewis County
- Elliot County
- Flaming County
- Marion County

### Northeast

- x Paintsville
- Lawrence County
- Fairview
- Raceland
- Morgan County
- Holy Family
- x clinched title

## Boyd changes game time

SUMMIT — Boyd County's new Director Jeep Clark announced Saturday that Saturday's game will be at 8:30 p.m. varsity game.

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SECOND KENTUCKY SPORTS IN BRIEF

-10-

(LOUISVILLE)-PAINTSVILLE, WHICH WON THE HILLBROOK IN LEXINGTON LAST WEEKEND, HEADS THIS WEEK'S UNITED PRESS POLL OF KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COACHES. PAINTS JESSAMINE COUNTY, LAFAYETTE, TATES CREEK AND HENRY CLAY TOURNAMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY'S MEMORIAL COL PAINTSVILLE EARNED FIVE OF 10 POSSIBLE FIRST-PLACE VOTE TIE WITH HOPKINSVILLE.

HOPKINSVILLE, WHICH FINISHED THIRD IN THE HILLBROOK, FIRST-PLACE VOTES AND SLIPPED TO SECOND IN THE POLL. HE BEAT HOPKINSVILLE 80-76 BUT LOST 68-63 TO PAINTSVILLE CLIMBED ONE SPOT TO THIRD. PADUCAH TILGHMAN BEAT MEMPH JONESBORO (ARKANSAS) IN WINNING THE WENDY'S CLASSIC SA FROM FIFTH TO FOURTH. OWENSBORO, WHICH WON ONE GAME IN SLIPPED TWO SPOTS TO FIFTH.

SENECA BEAT MANUAL 65-53 TO EARN THE OTHER FIRST-PL POLL AND CLIMBED FROM SEVENTH TO SIXTH. ROUNDING OUT T MARSHALL COUNTY, NORTH HARDIN, MASON COUNTY AND LOUISV PLEASURE RIDGE PARK, WHICH TIED FOR 10TH. THE NEWCOMER POLL ARE MARSHALL COUNTY AND MASON COUNTY. THE ONLY TE THE POLL WAS LEXINGTON LAFAYETTE, WHICH LOST 54-52 IN PAINTSVILLE.

HERE'S THE WEEKLY UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL BOARD WITH FIRST PLACE VOTES IN PARENTHESES AND TOTAL POINTS

1. PAINTSVILLE (5) 93.
2. HOPKINSVILLE (3) 80.
3. HENRY CLAY (1) 77.
4. PAD. TILGHMAN 53.
5. OWENSBORO 46.
6. SENECA (1) 40.
7. MARSHALL CO 28.
8. NORTH HARDIN 17.
9. MASON CO 15.
10. LOU SOUTHERN 14.
10. PLSRE RDG PK 14.

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# Special Honor Paintsville's Favorite Sons

By Tom Wallace

It's a situation that, as Bill Mike Runyon says, "only comes along once in a lifetime."

Runyon is the basketball coach at Paintsville High School, and the situation he proudly refers to has to do with a pair of that community's favorite sons—Joey Couch and John Pelphrey.

"Having two players from your town, your school, serve as captain for the University of Kentucky football and basketball teams during the same year is just a great honor," Runyon says. "We're all very, very proud of both John and Joey for what they've accomplished at UK."

Proud, yes, but not surprised.

Those two were always as focused, so mature," Runyon said. "When they were freshmen, they sat down and drew up a list of goals they wanted to accomplish. And they accomplished every one, except winning a state championship."

During their four years as starters, Couch and Pelphrey put the Paintsville basketball program on the map. During that period, the Tigers had a 97-33 record and went to the Sweet 16 three straight years.

"If I had a bunch of players like John and Joey, they would never fire me up here," Runyon says, laughing. "I think they spoiled us for good."

Joey Couch clearly remembers the first time he ever saw John Pelphrey. They were opponents during a grade school game, a confrontation that has, incidentally, been the cause for controversy ever since.

"I played against him and got 30 points," Couch said. "We have a big quarrel even today. They beat us but I got my 30 points. He says I only had 16. But I have a lot of people on my side. John's got no evidence or anything. We've got the scoreboard."

Pelphrey can only shake

his head and laugh when he hears Couch's version of that first meeting.

"Everybody knew Joey Couch," Pelphrey said. "He's the all-time leading scorer in grade school in the world. He was 6-2, 200 pounds in the fifth grade! He'd come up to you at lunch and say, 'You want those mashed potatoes?' We'd say, 'No, Joey, take them.'"

As youngsters, Couch, thanks to his early physical maturity, was the dominant player. He was also somewhat of a nomad, going to several different school systems before finally landing in Paintsville.

"He played at eight different schools," Pelphrey says. "He kept getting kicked out."

Runyon says that as far back as the sixth grade, he could tell that Pelphrey and Couch were going to be something special.

"John was playing in a Buddy-League at the time," Runyon said. "He was tall, slim, redheaded. You could just look at him and tell he was going to be a good player."

What was it about Pelphrey that tipped Runyon off to future success?

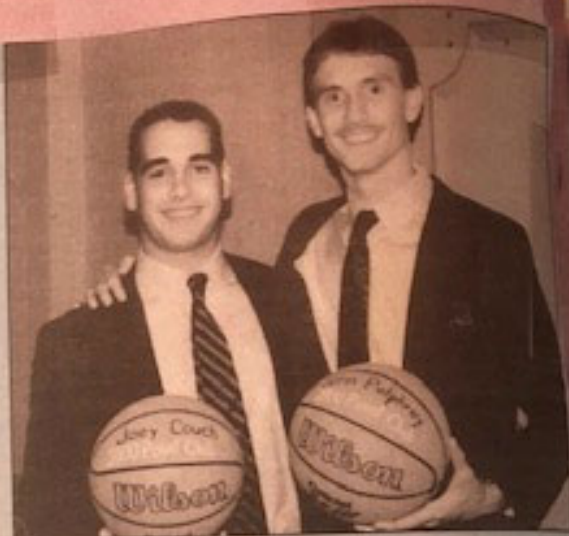
"Intensity, no question about it," Runyon said. "Even then, John was incredibly intense. You know how it is with most kids that age... their concentration has a tendency to wander from time to time. Not with John. He was into the game from start to finish."

And what does Runyon remember about Couch as a youngster?

"Just that he was a great athlete," Runyon said.

The glory that would come to Paintsville happened only because of a kind kiss from fate. Couch and Pelphrey could very easily have spent their high school days in other cities or, in Pelphrey's case, another state.

"We got lucky, to be frank with you," Runyon said. "John's parents moved back here from



Joey Couch and John Pelphrey each scored more than 2,000 career points for Paintsville High. During their four years, the Tigers made three Sweet 16 trips.

Ohio. And Joey could just as easily have gone to Johnson Central or Sheldon Clark."

Even then, the two still almost didn't become teammates. In fact, Pelphrey came within a veto of possibly being teammates with either Reggie Hanson or Deron Feldhaus before arriving at UK.

"When John was in the eighth grade, we seriously looked into moving someplace else," Jennie Pelphrey remembers. "I knew it's hard to believe now, but



Pelphrey (13) and Couch (43) on an AAU team in '82.

back then Paintsville was a football/baseball town. Basketball just wasn't that important. We looked at a couple of schools, Mason County and Pulaski County."

But any talk of moving was quickly shot down by Pelphrey. He took one look around at Couch and the rest of his future teammates and said, "Paintsville was the place to play."

"I think John and Joey just decided there were things they could achieve at Paintsville," Jennie Pelphrey said. "And they wanted to do it together."

Pelphrey says it was really about trying to beat the odds.

"It was a small town," Pelphrey said, "and when you're from a small town, a lot of people say you can't do this or you can't do that. We just felt that we could do a lot of things. We were very ambitious."

If there were ever two kids born to be basketball players, it would have to be Joey Couch and

# Couch, Pelphrey Help Captain UK's Ship



Couch wears the net after the Tigers won the Begley Classic title.

All photos provided by Joann Pelphrey

John Pelphrey. From the very beginning, destiny dealt these two a handful of basketball cards.

Couch's father, E.A., and his uncle, Jim Calhoun, were key members of Carr Creek's 1956 state championship team. Both also went on to play at the college level.

Pelphrey's father, Jack, is a former coach who introduced John to the game of hoops at a very early age.

"I saw my first state championship when I was about eight-months-old," John proudly states.

Given that basketball-rich gene pool to draw from, it was only natural that Couch and Pelphrey would carry on the tradition. It didn't take them long, either. Both were starters on the varsity as freshmen.

That year, the Tigers finished with a 12-14 record, but the two young stars served notice that better days were in store. Couch led the team in scoring that season, averaging better than 20 points per game.

"Joey is the best freshman basketball player I've ever seen," Runyon said. "He was just an incredibly skilled player. At that time, his great strength and his stronger hands allowed him to do some things that John couldn't do."

It was along about this time that Couch and Pelphrey

drew up their list of goals.

"It was pretty weird," Couch says, "because we were always built up so much in grade school and then we all got together. It was unbelievable the amount of talent we had. There was (Mike) Minnix, myself and John. Even though we were pretty young, we could see into the future and see what we could build there. We were fortunate to have a good coach...we just had all the tools. We reached most of our goals. You can go back there and look in that high school...there are banners hanging all over the place."

Thanks to their exploits, Paintsville High is, as Pelphrey points out, "a basketball school now."

Although Pelphrey, Couch and Minnix were the cornerstones of that class, they weren't alone when it came to athletic ability.

"Thirty-three out of 50 people in our class got some kind of athletic scholarship," Pelphrey proudly says.

When Couch and Pelphrey were sophomores, the Tigers started the season slowly, offering no sign that this would be the breakthrough year. In fact, Pelphrey says, early on, the Tigers were downright awful.

"We played so bad one night that the lights went out," Pelphrey said.

However, before the season was finished, Pelphrey, Couch and Co. turned the lights back on, carving out a 24-9 record and the school's first trip to the Sweet 16 since FDR was a rookie president.

"Definitely my greatest thrill," Pelphrey said. "We beat Johnson Central in the district and regional finals, and we had lost to them three times during the season."

Couch agrees.

"They didn't just beat us, they pounded us good," Couch said. "Nobody gave us much of a shot to beat them, but we did. Yeah, I'd have to say that's my greatest thrill."

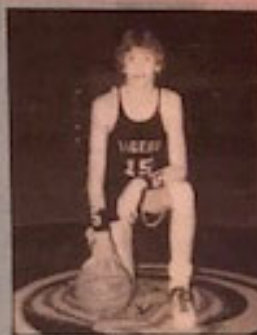
As juniors, Couch and Pelphrey guided the Tigers to a 29-5 mark, then came back the following year to post a 32-5 record. Despite the glowing record, that senior year ended on a down note, a 61-54 loss to Ballard in the Sweet 16 semifinal round.

"The saddest day of my life," Jennie Pelphrey says. "I can remember John and Joey coming out of Rupp Arena after that game. Of course, both of them were wearing sun glasses, but you could tell they'd been crying. Then when they got on the bus, all of them really broke down. I'll tell you, that was one of those days when you aren't real sure the sun is going to come up tomorrow."

When they concluded their high school careers, Pelphrey and Couch were linked by more than just victories...they were one-two on Paintsville's all-time scoring list.

Neither, however, was a one-sport whiz. Far from it, in fact, Pelphrey was an outstanding baseball player, while Couch, as all Wildcat fans know, just happened to be fairly proficient at football.

In truth, both came very close to being three-sport standouts. Up until high school, Couch was a good baseball player ("maybe my best sport"), while



Pelphrey as a seventh-grader. He helped lead that team to a 14-2 record.

Pelphrey, until he was a sophomore, played football.

John Pelphrey, a football player?

"I might have kept on playing if Joey hadn't about got me killed one night," Pelphrey said. "I was punting, and he snapped one over my head. That ended my football career."

"He played at it," Joey said.

"I used to call him 'old sack of bones' but I'm telling you, if he had stayed with it, he would have been known as one of the greatest punters to ever play high school football. He averaged something like 44 yards a punt his freshman year."

So, Joey, Pelphrey's story about you getting him killed isn't true?

"One bad snap and he still gets after me about it," Couch said. "It was against Paris. Yeah, he did just about get killed."

After high school, both players had to make the decision concerning which college to attend. Both desperately wanted to become Kentucky Wildcats. With Couch, who by then knew football was his sport of choice at the collegiate level, the decision was simple. UK wanted him and he wanted UK.

Pelphrey's situation was much different. He wanted UK, but then-coach Eddie Sutton wasn't so sure he wanted

★ Continued on page 2



\* Continued

### Captains (From Page 13)

Pelphrey. Up until the very end, it looked as if Pelphrey would sign with C.M. Newton at Vanderbilt. Only at the last moment, after Pelphrey was named Mr. Basketball, did Sutton offer the scholarship.

"To be honest, at the time, I didn't think John made a wise decision," Runyon said. "I thought Vandy was the place for him. I just didn't think he would fit into Eddie Sutton's system. And he wouldn't. I don't know how much he would have played if (Rick) Pitino hadn't come along.

"But I'll tell one thing...I'm not surprised by John's success or Joey's success," Runyon said. "You just have to know them to understand how competitive they are. Their personalities are alike in the fact that they hate to lose. That keeps their intensity level at a constant."

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Outside of perhaps Louisville or Lexington, Paintsville

may be the first city to claim both the UK football captain and UK basketball captain in the same year. That rarity isn't being taken for granted.

"It's a big honor, and the town is beginning to do a few things to recognize that," Runyon said.

Couch is quick to offer his praise for the city and school where he and Pelphrey honed their skills.

"It's an honor to have two Paintsville players as captains," Couch says. "It's a tribute to Paintsville and to our backgrounds and to what that town is all about. Especially our school system, and how it brought us up and got us ready for college. We have to give a lot of people credit."

As for Pelphrey and Couch, who are still close friends, there is nothing less than mutual admiration for the other's accomplishments.

"I'm really happy for Joey," Pelphrey said. "We shared a lot of great moments and did some re-

ally special things together. And we were sort of hand in hand through it all."

"I've got to commend John on how he's grown up," Couch said, "and I'm sure he says the

same thing about me, because we've come a long way from Paintsville. I couldn't have written it out any better. I'm just happy for John, and real pleased with my outcome too."



**Joey Couch**  
**6-3, 230, TE-LB**  
**Paintsville HS**

Honorable mention All-State performer . . . Earned all-conference and all-region honors during prep career . . . Named to Street Smith's All-America squad . . . All-State basketball player . . . Played in the 1987 Kentucky-Indiana All-Star Basketball Game . . . Plans to attend the University of Kentucky.