

Bluford/Webber Township High School



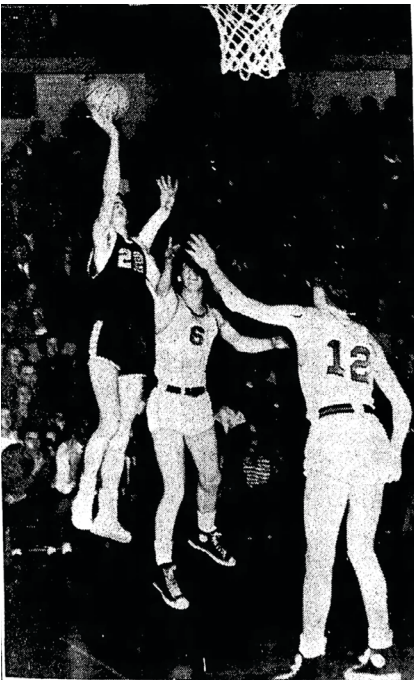
2022 Sports Hall of Fame



STANDING L. to R., Barry Forsythe, Bob Osborn, Cecil Wiley, Tom Payne, Randy Mills, Marshall Mills, Gene Donoho, Ed Donoho, Larry Lane, Gary Phillips. KNEELING, Joe Brockett, Coach, and David Catron, Manager.



Pep Club



Gillespie (22) of Bluford takes a jump shot from the side against Fairfield. Van Buskirk (6) and Martin (12) of the Mules attempt to jinx the shot. Fairfield advanced to the finals with a 53-40 win. (Ronjon Photo.)

Benton Coming Up BLUFORD DEFEATS SESSER!

Coach Roger Yates' district champion Bluford Trojans cleared their first regional hurdle last night, whipping Sesser's Red Devils 72-66 in the West Frankfort tourney.

It was Bluford's 21st victory of the season as against six losses, and moved the Little Egyptian conference team into a meeting with Benton's Rangers on Thursday night.

Benton humbled Christopher last night in the opening round.

Ed Donoho paced Bluford's all-underclass quintet with 25 points. Bob Osborn scored 14, Jack Michels 13, Randy Mills and Ed Case 10 apiece.

Tallying for Sesser were Reid 24, Garner 20, Laur 8, Wilmore 6, Basso 4 and Jones 4.

Sesser finished its 1968 campaign with 18 victories, 8 defeats.

Bluford Wins Homecoming In Thriller 77-75

Coach Don Colwell's Bluford Trojans turned their homecoming night into a bigger celebration last night by defeating Mills Prairie in the final seconds of play, 77-75.

Mills Prairie led 18-11 at the quarter, 32-26 at halftime and 55-50 going into the final period.

Bluford's 27-point stretch drive was climaxed by a long shot at the gun by Gary Pierce. The bucket pulled the Trojans home.

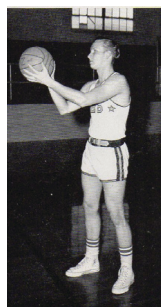
The victory brought Bluford up to a 3-3 mark for the season.

Trojan scoring: Pierce 20, Alan Wiley 16, Danny Lovin 13, Tom Payne 9, Darrell Owens 8, Jack Bigley 6 and Duane Ellis 5.

Felix scored 26 and Edwards hit 12 for Mills Prairie.

Mills Prairie won the prelim 60-50.

Bluford plays at Wayne City next Tuesday night.



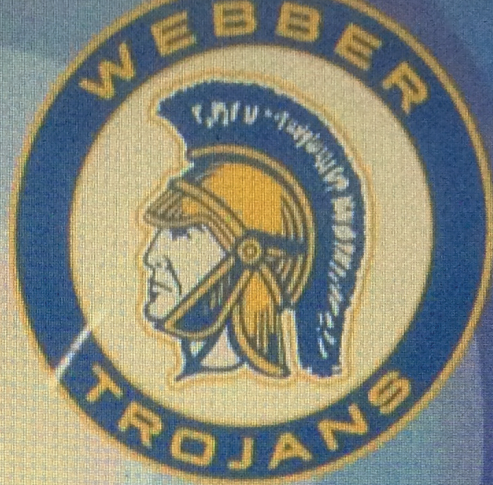
TOM PAYNE

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Introduction

The selection process for the 2022 class of the Bluford/Webber Township High School Sports Hall of Fame was again a difficult process, given the school's rich sports history and the many possibilities available. This year's hall of fame committee was made up of Bob Hamerski, who serves as chairman of the committee, and members Jessica Case, Dale Colwell, Roger Yates, Rod Stover, Bob Herzing, and Randy Mills. There are three individual athletes, two teams, and one friend of the program selected for the 2022 class of the Bluford Webber Sports Hall of Fame. Now let us celebrate the inductees' accomplishments.



Individual Inductee

Ami (Carman) Pierce - Girls' Basketball

Ami Carmen first made her presence known on the basketball floor early-on during her 2001-2002 freshman year with her scoring and rebounding accomplishments. Ami's performance at the Eldorado Invitational Tournament, for example, included a 23-point effort that helped the Lady Trojans to capture a third-place finish and gained Ami a place on the all-tournament team. That same year, Ami was chosen to be on the All-Mid South All Conference first team as a freshman. By her sophomore year, Ami Carman was picked by a Southern Illinoisan newspaper sports writer as an upcoming "player to watch" in the region. The reporter was not wrong. Carman continued to make important contributions to the Bluford/Webber squad, her efforts bringing her another invitational all-tournament team spot as well as another All Mid-South Conference first team selection. In her junior year Ami made it into the top twenty-five scorers list in the southern Illinois region and again made the All Mid-South Conference first team. Carman led the Lady Trojans to a second place finish in the conference that season and to a victory in the first game of regional play. In her crowning senior year, Ami Carman led the Webber team to a twenty win season and was chosen for the Southern Illinois All-South Class A Girls basketball Team. The Southern Illinoisan praised Ami's play, noting, "All-conference for the fourth time, Carman made three all-tournament lists and averaged 17.5 points, 10.3 rebounds, 2.3 steals, 2.2 blocks, and 1.3 assists. Carman broke the school's scoring mark with 1,554 career points and set a new rebounding mark with 1,059." After her graduation, her coach noted, "It's going to take two or three girls to replace what she did." Ami Carman's 1,564 points places her in the second spot on the girls' all-time leading scorer list, while her 37 points in a game gained her the second spot on girls Trojan's single game scoring list. Carmen is also a member of the select Bluford/Webber Township basketball 1,000 points club.



Individual Inductee

Jerry Shields - Boys' Basketball

No one saw it coming. Jerry Shields played as a sophomore on the Bluford/Webber junior varsity as a 5'10" point guard. He returned his junior year having grown five inches. Shields then had to adjust from playing as a guard to playing inside, a task he worked hard at, spending his junior year playing inside on the junior varsity as a post player and as sixth man on the varsity, maxing out his allowable quarters. Laboring to develop his talents, he returned his senior year at 6'4", his playing skills improved beyond anyone's expectation, as if by magic. Jerry used his hard-earned ball-handling skills, along with his added height, to break almost every school scoring record for a single season in the book, records that still stand today. Before the innovation of a three-point line, Shields gained the most points in a season (753), the most points in a game (50), and the most field goals in a season (302) of any Bluford/Webber basketball player. His total career points stand at 958. Jerry hit for 77.9 at the free throw line in the 1981-1982 season, while his 55 percent shooting effort from the field brought him a 29 point scoring average that year, making him the second leading scorer in the state. He also averaged 13 rebounds and 3.2 blocked shots a game. In his senior year, Jerry Shields was also chosen for the All Mid-South Conference team and All Christopher and Wayne City Tournament teams. One sportswriter was certainly impressed with Shields' play, writing how Jerry's scoring explosion of 38 points in a game against Sesser-Valier at the Wayne City Holiday tourney "doomed" the Trojans' opponent. West Frankfort Coach Tim Ricci said, after witnessing Shields' superb performance against his West Frankfort Redbirds, "We tried everything to stop him, but we couldn't do it. I'm a believer now. He could play anywhere."



Individual Inductee

Alicia (Ullery) Hester - Girls' Basketball

Labeled by her basketball coach “as one of our best all-around athletes” Alicia Ullery first came upon the Bluford/Webber Township girls’ basketball scene in her freshman year, playing as a forward. In that 2004-2005 campaign, Alicia’s promising abilities gained her a place on the Galatia Invitational all-tournament team. During her sophomore year, her growing accomplishments brought her all-tournament recognition at both the Sandoval and Galatia invitational tourneys. At the Ziegler-Royalton-Christopher tournament that same season, she led the Lady Trojans to the championship game and was placed on that invitational all-tournament list. These honors were followed by Alicia, while just a sophomore, earning a spot on the All-Conference team. Early in her junior year, Ullery was scoring at a 17 point a game clip and was pulling down an average of 12 rebounds a contest when a knee injury sidelined her the rest of the year.

The next season, however, Alicia came roaring back to become the leading scorer for a Lady Trojan team that would go 25-2, the best Bluford/Webber Girls’ Basketball record in the school’s history. Alicia led the Lady Trojans that season in scoring and rebounding. She also made both the Sandoval and Ziegler-Royalton invitational all-tournament squads, being chosen the MPV at the latter tourney. Ullery was the Lady Trojans’ leading rebounder for all four years of her varsity play, while her membership in the select Bluford/Webber Township basketball 1,000 points club is made even more amazing by the fact she missed the majority of her junior year with a knee injury.



Members of the team included Alicia Ullery, Emily Heins, Shayla Richardson, Devin Helm, Ali Mayberry, Jessica Shelton, Danielle Snow, Halley Martin, Shanna Lumpkins, Chelsea Laird, Karisa Johnston, Amy Sneed, Shelby Elliston, and Michelle Summers. Team manager, J'ne Otey, assistant coach, Josh Smith, and head coach, Travis Helm.

Team Inductee

2007-2008 Girls' Basketball Team

Coach Travis Helm was cautious when discussing with a sports reporter about what he thought the Bluford/Webber Township girls' basketball squad might accomplish during the 2007-2008 year. "Experience, quickness, and height could help us this season," he explained. Hindsight would prove the coach's assessment to be a great understatement, a situation Coach Helm quickly figured out. "I knew we were going to be good when we beat Wayne City by 40 points in our first game," he recalled. With every player between 5-8 and 5-9, the hard-working squad ended up with a sterling 25-2 season, the top record of any Lady Trojan basketball team, a record tying the boys' 1968-1969 Bluford/Webber Township basketball squad for the highest winning percentage in a season.

The top four leading scorers for the 2007-2008 team were amazingly balanced in production, Alicia Ullery hitting at a 13.5 clip, Emily Heins, close behind with 12.5 a game, and Shayla Richardson and Devin Helm both averaging 10.5. Ullery also led the team in rebounding and shooting percentage. Devin Helms had the most steals that season, while Emily Hines passed out the most assists. Ali Mayberry and Jessica Shelton also made major contributions to the team. The Lady Trojans' only defeat that year in the regular season was to state-ranked class 2A Vandalia by four points. The 2007-2008 squad then went on to win the girls' basketball regional, only to fall on a last second shot in the first game of sectional play. Many believe the 2007-2008 team was the best group to ever play basketball at Bluford/Webber.



The 1995-1996 team included Brandon Bullard, Josh Elliott, Travis Marlow, Paul Murphy, Mike Wilkerson, Jeremy Payne, Todd Withrow, Wesley Schumm, Jared Payne, Steve Withrow, David Corbett, and Wayne Stone. Head Coach Rod Stover, assistant coaches Roger Yates and Barry Forsythe, and student manager, Sarah Hann.

Team Inductee

1995-1996 Boys' Basketball Team

The 1995-1996 Bluford/Webber Township boys' basketball squad, coached by Rod Stover, was a team of destiny. They achieved a 25-3 record, the second highest winning percentage of any Webber boys' basketball team, just behind the twenty-five and two record of the 1968-1969 boys' team. Many believe that the '95-'96 team was the most explosive and exciting of any sports team in the school's history. Webber gym would be so packed for games that season that many fans had to go into a classroom where a closed-circuit television carried the contests. The 1995-1996 high-scoring Trojans averaged 83.6 points per game and scored over 100 points six times. (The same players had established a single game scoring record of 133 points the year before.) They won both the Christopher Thanksgiving Tournament and the Conrad Allen Holiday Tournament Championships and were the Mid-South Conference Champs with a 12-0 record.

The Trojans so dominated the Wayne City Tournament that four of the five members on the five man All-Tournament squad were Webber players. Gaining state ranking in the regular season, this team would go on to capture the school's first regional title in any sport, the Class A basketball regional championship, beating a tough Benton team in the semi-final round by a single point with no time left on the clock and then defeating Waltonville for the title. The Trojans would then lose a heart-breaker to Breese Mater Dei, 64-62, in the first round of sectional play. Mater Dei would then go on to the state final championship, losing by just a basket. Webber's three losses that year were to state ranked teams.



Friends of the Program

Gary Shields

Gary Shields served for four years as student manager for the Bluford/Webber Township boys' basketball program. His dedication to the student manager position can be seen by Gary, on his own time and expense, seeking and receiving a certification as a student trainer. Gary did most of the taping of players and took care of most first aid situations.

But Gary Shields' work on behalf of Bluford/Webber Township sports did not stop there. Immediately after high school graduation, Shields became the official scorer and volunteered and devoted his time to this position for 26 years (1979 -2005). Gary Shields' three decades of support is recognized by his induction into the 2022 Bluford/Webber Hall of Fame.

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