

Arkansas High School Athletic Administrators Association 2013 Hall of Fame

Atwood “Buddy” Bell



Bell began his teaching and coaching career in 1953 at Jonesboro Annie Camp Junior High School, the same school he attended as a student. Bell worked as an assistant principal at Annie Camp before serving as assistant principal at Jonesboro High School.

In 1964 Bell was appointed principal at Annie Camp, a position he held for eight years. His love for sports was always a major ingredient in his work with students. Believing that a sense of belonging is critical to student success, Bell viewed sports as the perfect conduit for student achievement and success.

Until 1975 the Jonesboro Public School System did not have an athletic director. Bell often spoke about the need to bring the system's athletics under the umbrella of an athletic director; a dream job in his opinion. When the devastating tornado of 1973 struck the city significantly damaging and destroying several school buildings, a rebuilding and revamping of the school system was not far behind. The two junior high schools attended split school sessions and high school students attended classes in churches, the local YMCA and in temporary buildings located at the town's fairgrounds. The rebuilding years were long and hard, but with the winds of such change, Bell's dream turned into reality.

For 12 years, Bell served as the district's first athletic director, a position that required establishing uniform policies and procedures for district athletics. The Title IX act was in its infancy and girls' programs were added throughout the district. Successful season ticket promotions were sold for both girls and boys.

Bell attended Athletic Director's meetings on the local, state and national levels. As a charter member of the Arkansas Athletic Directors' Association, he learned from and shared experiences with fellow athletic directors. Through this networking, the complexities, expectations and best practice were discussed and enhanced.

Bell was instrumental in the construction of a new field house with dressing rooms, equipment rooms and coaches' offices. Additional sports, particularly for girls were added. The complexities of scheduling and recruitment of top notch coaches and teachers were top priorities.

The athletic programs in the Jonesboro Public School System continued to thrive and advance under his leadership. Bell was instrumental in promoting school spirit, writing an article for the school's newspaper defining just what school spirit means. He promoted healthy competitive competition and continued to emphasize that all students need to and will belong to something. Personal interest in students was a key ingredient to Bell's success as a teacher, principal and athletic director.

Bell established and cultivated community interest in the many sports teams and worked with community groups and booster clubs to promote and generate funds for athletics in the Jonesboro School System. Parent involvement was important to Bell for the success of the program.

In 1987 after 35 years in the Jonesboro Public School System, Bell retired as Director of Athletics. His contribution to the district serves as a gateway for continued success in developing athletes and athletic programs for what is best in public school sports programs.

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Conley “Buzz” Bolding



Bolding was born on July 16, 1946 in Searcy to Conley and Jeanette Bolding and attended all 12 years of school in Searcy. He graduated from Searcy High School in 1964. There was no doubt that Buzz and his brother Lamonte would become football players since their dad made All-State in football three years in a row and Little All-American while playing for Searcy.

In 1964 Bolding was a freshman punter for Arkansas State Teachers College (now Central Arkansas) and for four years played under Frank Koon and Raymond Bright. He also played linebacker and was selected as an All-AIC linebacker in 1967. He also served as team captain. After graduating from ASTC in 1969, he began his coaching career at Blytheville. After one season, he moved to Little Rock and coached under Ted Totter at McClellan High School from 1971-1977. While he was at McClellan he coached football and track and served as head track coach in 1976 and 1977. McClellan won the state football championship in 1971.

In 1977 Bolding got his first head coaching job at Cabot, where he remained for three years. He led Cabot to a conference title and two state playoff appearances. He also served as a coach for the 1981 All-Star football game.

Following Cabot, Bolding went to Magnolia where he worked as head football coach under Don Hubbard. He led Magnolia to a conference title and two out of three state playoffs.

In 1984 Bolding made his final coaching move as he accepted the Conway duo job as head football coach and athletic director. In 1991 Bolding retired from coaching and became the fulltime athletic director and Physical Education Coordinator. He served in that capacity until his retirement in 2010. Bolding returned to UCA and received his Masters degree in Secondary School Leadership in 1993.

While at Conway, Bolding worked diligently to improve all facilities and raised money for all sports. Under his leadership, Conway's program was voted three different times as the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Outstanding Athletic Program. He oversaw the renovation of the John McConnell football stadium, raised money for a new polyurethane track and helped raise \$500,000 for a new field house. He helped baseball coaches and parents build their on-campus baseball and softball fields.

During his stay at Conway, Bolding started programs for softball, baseball, boys' and girls' soccer, wrestling and bowling. Spirit groups also became his responsibility and they soon began participating in state competitions. Bolding helped to develop an Athletic Handbook which is still used today and helped develop an index for coaching salaries at Conway. His proudest accomplishment was the building of the multi-purpose arena at Conway High School. In 2010, upon his retirement, the Conway School Board named it the Buzz Bolding Arena.

While an athletic director, Bolding was very active in the AHSAAA. He was program chairman for two years, treasurer for seven years, vice president for two years and president for two years. He helped to get LTC Courses approved by the State Department of Education.

Bolding was named the Athletic Director of the Year by the AHSAAA in both 1996-97 and 2009-10. He received the Distinguished Merit Award in 1998.

Bolding retired in 2010 after 40 years in the field of education. Since then, he has volunteered to serve as director of the Arkansas Football Coaches Association and is serving on several committees and boards in Conway. He is an active member of Conway's First Baptist Church and enjoys traveling, golf and hunting.

Bolding has been married to his wife Carol for 39 years and has two sons. Bobby is the head football coach at Pine Bluff, his wife is Nancy and they have a 15-year-old daughter, Alex. Brad is the head football coach at North Little Rock and is married to Jana. They have three children, nine-year-old Anna, seven-year-old Katie and one-year one Brady.

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Richard "Dick" Hays

After graduating from Henderson State University, Hays accepted an assistant football position at DeWitt from 1950 to 1954. In July 1954 he became the athletic director-head football coach at Ashdown and remained in that position until his retirement in 1980.

He grew fond of sports while serving in the Navy. His GI Bill provided him with the resources to attend college and allowed him to become involved in varsity sports while at Henderson State.

During his coaching career, Hays won six conference football titles and produced a record of 165-102-8. In 1963 Hays was named the head coach for the AHSCA West All-Star team. He was twice selected as the Football Coach of the Year. In 1970 he was selected as Four State Area Football Coach of the Year.

Hays served as president of the Arkansas High School Coaches Association in 1970 after serving as vice-present from 1967 to 1969.

During that span the Ashdown athletic program won a boys state track championship (1964), a volleyball state championship (1978), girls' state basketball championships (1957, 1968, 1969, 1970), three girls' state basketball runner-up positions, six girls' basketball semifinal positions and four girls' basketball state sportsmanship trophies.

In 1991 the Ashdown School Board renamed the football stadium The Dick Hays Stadium.

Hays worked tirelessly to maintain, build and find funding for constant improvements to the Ashdown athletic department, which included a new track and practice field and a new field house. When the Ashdown gymnasium burned, it was Hays' responsibility to design and construct a new structure.

Dick and his wife Pauline have three children – Jimmie Hays, Kay Hays and Rex Hays.