

1965 Trenholm Basketball Team

The Trenholm Wildcats' 1965 Basketball Championship Team had a remarkable journey to win the State 1A Championship, and the 60th anniversary of that victory highlights a legacy of teamwork and resilience. Under the guidance of Coach Charles Mahorney, this talented group became known for their fast-paced style of play, particularly their ability to execute fast breaks. Two key players, Jake Pillar and William Robinson, dominated the defensive boards, quickly dishing the ball out to their speedy teammates—Charles Moore, Willie Byrd, and Leon Ricks—who led the way in transition.

Their path to the championship included both the semi-final and final games played at Alabama State University in Montgomery. The final game was especially dramatic. By the middle of the third quarter, all five starters had accumulated four fouls each and were forced to the bench. With the team trailing by 9 points, the second team was called upon to write their own chapter in history. In a testament to their depth and experience, this group not only held their ground but also turned the game around, managing to take a 6-point lead by the middle of the fourth quarter helping the Wildcats to clinch the Championship.

Every member of the team contributed to the win, making this championship an enduring symbol of their teamwork. The only deceased member of this team is Ed Thompson, but the legacy of all players—Charles Moore, Willie Byrd, Leon Ricks, Jake Pillar, Walter Abernathy, William Robinson, Leroy Marshall, Clark Grimes, and Bernard Bailey lives on.

Quinn Beckwith

Quinn Beckwith, a standout basketball player from Deshler High School, prepped under Coach Wayne Bracy and played a pivotal role in four state playoff teams, including two Final Four appearances in 2003 and 2004. Beckwith averaged 22 points per game for the Tigers, earning back-to-back All-Area and All-State honors as a junior and senior. He was also a finalist for the Class 4A Player of the Year award. In addition to basketball, he excelled in track, finishing second in the state in the 110-meter high hurdles.

Following high school, Beckwith played at Shelton State Community College, helping lead the Buccaneers to consecutive state championships in 2005 and 2006. He was named to the ACCC All-State Tournament Team in 2005 after making 100 three-point shots.

At the University of North Alabama, Beckwith was a two-year letterman from 2006 to 2008. He helped the Lions achieve a 15-14 record in 2006-07 and an impressive 27-9 record in 2007-08, culminating in a NCAA Regional Championship and an Elite Eight appearance. Beckwith earned First-Team All-Gulf South Conference honors in 2007-08 and was named Gulf South Conference Player of the Week in December 2006.

Coach Howard Chappell

Taking over as Deshler's head football coach in 1934, His first three teams finished undefeated, and four of his first five teams went through their seasons without a loss. After five years at the helm, Chappell boasted a remarkable 42-2-1 record, making him one of the most successful coaches in the school's history.

Chappell's career at Deshler was temporarily interrupted when he enlisted in the Navy during World War II, answering the call to serve his country. Upon

returning, he briefly worked as a car salesman before reigniting his coaching career. He returned to Deshler as head coach in 1951, leading the football program for another eight seasons and compiling an overall record of 90-56-5.

In 1960, Chappell transitioned into education administration, becoming the principal of R.E. Thompson School, a position he held until 1975. He also played an important role in local government, serving as Tuscumbia City Commissioner for a decade. Chappell was a driving force behind the creation of the Tennessee Valley Conference and was instrumental in introducing track and field to North Alabama schools. His legacy was further cemented when he was inducted into the Alabama High School Athletic Association's Hall of Fame in 1995

JOHNNY DILL

Johnny Dill, a 1971 graduate of Deshler High School, excelled in both basketball and baseball. As a standout athlete, he was named to the All-State Basketball Team in 1971 and earned the title of All-Quad Cities Most Valuable Player. In baseball, he played as both shortstop and pitcher, securing a State Championship victory in 1968 as the winning pitcher. His athleticism shone through during his senior year when he was named MVP of the East-West All-Star Baseball Game.

Following high school, Johnny signed a basketball scholarship with the University of Alabama, where he contributed to two SEC Championship teams and served as team captain in 1975. In addition to his athletic achievements, Johnny was recognized for his academic prowess, earning a spot on the All-SEC Academic Team. He graduated from the University of Alabama's School of Business, leaving a legacy as both a scholar and an athlete

Corey Donley

Corey Donley is a 1991 graduate of Deshler High School, where he played under legendary coaches Wayne Bracy and Tandy Gerelds. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest two-sport athletes to ever wear the Deshler uniform.

Standing at 6'2" and weighing 190 pounds, Corey was a dominant presence on the basketball court. As a guard, he led the Tigers in scoring, with a career-high 51 points in a game against Coffee. His stellar performance earned him a 1991 All-State Basketball selection while leading Deshler to a semi-final appearance with a 22-7 record. Corey had a reputation for shining in the biggest moments.

On the football field, Corey was just as impactful. As an All-State wide receiver, he made crucial plays during the 1990 4A State Championship game against the T.R. Miller Tigers. In the fourth quarter, Corey caught an 83-yard pass from quarterback Scott Thompson, tightening the score to 21-13. After a defensive stand, Corey delivered again with a pivotal punt return, setting up the Tigers at the 22-yard line to help tie the game. His overall season performance included 36 catches for 1,004 yards and 7 touchdowns, leading the team in receiving and securing an All-State selection.

Jimmy Gardiner

Jimmy Gardiner is the epitome of a student-athlete who has not only achieved success in multiple sports but also made a lasting impact on his community. A 1983 graduate of Deshler High School, Jimmy was a standout across several sports during his high school years. As a key player on the Tiger baseball team, he earned All-Area honors in both 1982 and 1983, posting an impressive batting average of over .400. His leadership helped guide Deshler to the State Finals in 1982 and to both a Regional and County Championship in 1983. His baseball prowess also earned him a spot in the prestigious 1983 East-West All-Star Game.

In football, Jimmy excelled as well, earning All-Area honors in 1982 and Honorable Mention All-State as a quarterback and running back, rushing for over 1,100 yards. His athleticism wasn't limited to baseball and football; he was a two-year starter on the basketball team and a four-year letterman in track, where he competed in the 880-meter run and was part of the mile relay team.

After high school, Jimmy continued his baseball career at Wallace State, where he was a two-year starter, before moving on to Birmingham Southern to complete his collegiate baseball career. Following his time as an athlete, he pursued a career in dentistry, completing dental school and returning to Tuscumbia to serve the community.

For 28 years, Jimmy was known as "Voice of the Tigers," broadcasting Deshler High School games on the radio. Jimmy is a member of the Colbert County Sports Hall of Fame.

COACH TANDY GERELDS

Tandy Gerelds, Representing Coach Gerelds is his Wife Debbie and His Daughter Jessica and Son Todd.

Tandy Gerelds was born with a passion for sports and a strong sense of integrity, Gerelds first gained prominence as the head football coach at Woodlawn High School in Birmingham, Alabama, from 1971 to 1975.

After leaving coaching in 1975 to pursue a career in the insurance industry, Gerelds found that his heart still belonged to the gridiron. In 1984, he returned to coaching at Deshler High School in Tuscumbia, Alabama, where his impact would become legendary. Known for his focus on preparation, discipline, and integrity, Coach Gerelds instilled a new culture of excellence in the Deshler football program. He introduced an offseason training regimen that would reshape football across northwest Alabama. Under his leadership, the Tigers steadily improved, winning four games in his first

season and seven in his second. By 1986, Deshler recorded its first nine-win season in 20 years, and in 1987, the Tigers went 11-2, narrowly missing the state championship after a close loss in the semifinals.

Gerelds' crowning achievement came in 1990 when he led Deshler to a perfect 15-0 season, capping it off with a thrilling 28-27 overtime victory against T.R. Miller in the state championship. The Tigers scored a then-record 603 points that season. Despite losing key players to graduation, Gerelds showcased his coaching prowess again in 1991, guiding Deshler to a 13-1 season and extending their winning streak to 28 games before another showdown with T.R. Miller in the finals.

After retiring in 1994, Coach Gerelds left behind a legacy at Deshler with a remarkable 101-36 record, having transformed the program into a powerhouse that would continue to thrive for years. His coaching career spanned decades, during which he earned numerous accolades, including induction into the Colbert County Sports Hall of Fame and the AHSAA Hall of Fame.

Jana Killen

A native of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, Jana Killen has dedicated more than three decades to shaping young athletes at Deshler High School.

In the fall of 1989, Killen accepted her first teaching and coaching position at Deshler High School, where she has remained throughout her career. As a coach, she has led Deshler's volleyball, softball, tennis, and basketball teams to remarkable success.

Her most notable achievements come from her tenure as head coach of the girls' basketball team, where she has amassed an astonishing 897-220 record, winning seven state championships in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2015, 2016 and 2022 while finishing as state runner-up six times. Under her leadership, Deshler's basketball program has won 13 regional titles and over 26 area championships.

Killen's influence extends beyond basketball. She has also led Deshler's volleyball team to an impressive 1022-488 record, with two state runner-up finishes and more than 16 area championships.

In tennis, she coached a state runner-up in 2015, and from 1989-2001, she served as the school's softball coach. Her commitment to her athletes and her programs is unmatched, with only one losing basketball season in 35 years and consistent excellence across multiple sports.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions, Killen has earned numerous accolades, including being named state Coach of the Year three times and receiving 13 TimesDaily Coach of the Year awards. She was inducted into the Colbert County Sports Hall of Fame in 2008 and the Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame in 2021.

John Mothershed

Coach John Mothershed made a lasting impact at Deshler High School, where he served as head football coach from 1995 to 2013. After joining the school in 1987 as a teacher and assistant coach under the legendary Coach Tandy Gerelds, Mothershed helped cultivate a formidable football program that consistently excelled, including a state championship victory in 1990.

Upon his promotion to head coach and athletic director in 1995, Mothershed quickly established a reputation for excellence. His leadership resulted in an impressive overall record of 201-53, achieving a remarkable 71% winning percentage. Under his guidance, the Tigers claimed back-to-back Class 4A State Championships in 1998 and 1999.

Mothershed's teams were perennial contenders, finishing as Class 4A runners-up in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2010, and capturing 13 area and region championships with an outstanding record of 103-13 in Region Play. Throughout his 19 years, the Tigers qualified for the state playoffs every season, advancing to at least the third round in all but three years and compiling an impressive playoff record of 49-17.

In 2013, Coach Mothershed celebrated earning his 200th career victory with a 49-20 win over North Jackson in the final regular season game. His 201 wins make Coach Mothershed the winningest Deshler Football coach of all time. His coaching career spanned decades, during which he earned numerous accolades, including induction into the Colbert County Sports Hall of Fame and the AHSAA Hall of Fame.

Marty Willingham

Marty Willingham is a 1983 graduate of Deshler High School, where he excelled in multiple sports, including golf, football, baseball, and wrestling. A dominant force on the wrestling mat, Willingham became a four-time individual state champion and was a key member of Deshler's state championship wrestling team. He was selected as the Most Valuable Wrestler in Alabama for the 1982-83 season. Willingham's prowess earned him the honor of being named a High School All-American from 1980 to 1983. His national achievements as a wrestler are equally impressive, including being named to the USA Today High School All-American Squad, with an outstanding career record of 111-12-1, including 48 pins.

After high school, Willingham answered the call to serve his country, enlisting in the United States Marines from 1984 to 1988. After his military service, he pursued higher education and graduated from the University of North Alabama in 1992.