

# Dick Buckley

## Basketball coach made his point at Williamsburg

By JOHN HARTSOCK

As a high school boys' basketball coach, Dick Buckley never suffered losing easily. And during his 10-year coaching tenure at Williamsburg High School, Buckley never needed to.

From 1959-69, Buckley amassed an overall coaching record of 211-42 at Williamsburg, including three appearances in the PIAA, Class C state championship game.

His 1965-66 team compiled a perfect 25-0 record and thumped Jim Thorpe High School, 89-54, in the state title game at Pittsburgh's Civic Arena.

From 1964 through 1967, Buckley's Williamsburg teams racked up a composite record of 123-7, reeling off an amazing 66 consecutive victories over three seasons.

"I think a precedent was set at Williamsburg," Buckley, now 74 and living in Kane, Pa., said of Williamsburg High School's long basketball winning streak. "The kids had good teams and a lot of pride. Winning begets winning, and the kids didn't like losing."

Neither did Buckley, whose thorough coaching preparation was matched only by his fiery demeanor.

"He was a tremendous motivator and a fierce competitor," said Jeff Appleman, a sophomore sub on Buckley's 1966 state title team and a two-year starter in each of the next two seasons. "He wasn't a big guy, but the players were scared to death of him."

Yet, at the same time, Appleman's respect for Buckley is so high that Appleman aspired to the coaching profession as well. Earlier this season, Appleman — who has enjoyed a long coaching career at both the Williamsburg and Hollidaysburg

high schools — established the all-time victories record by a Blair County high school girls' basketball coach.

"We definitely had a great deal of respect for him, and playing for him was a real privilege," Appleman said of Buckley. "He definitely put a stamp on my coaching career. He was somebody who you could model yourself after."

Buckley's 1965-66 team was led by guard Bill Kagarise, who averaged over 34 points a game and earned a Division I basketball scholarship to American University.

"He was a great shooter — from the outside, he was just deadly," Buckley said of Kagarise. "But we went seven or eight players deep, and everybody on that team hustled. They were all team players."

Vince "Pepper" Appleman, Jeff's cousin, was in that year's starting lineup, as was Wayne Detwiler, Ken Aurandt, and Dick Wilkinson. Tom Frye was the team's sixth man, and Bruce Houck was the seventh man.

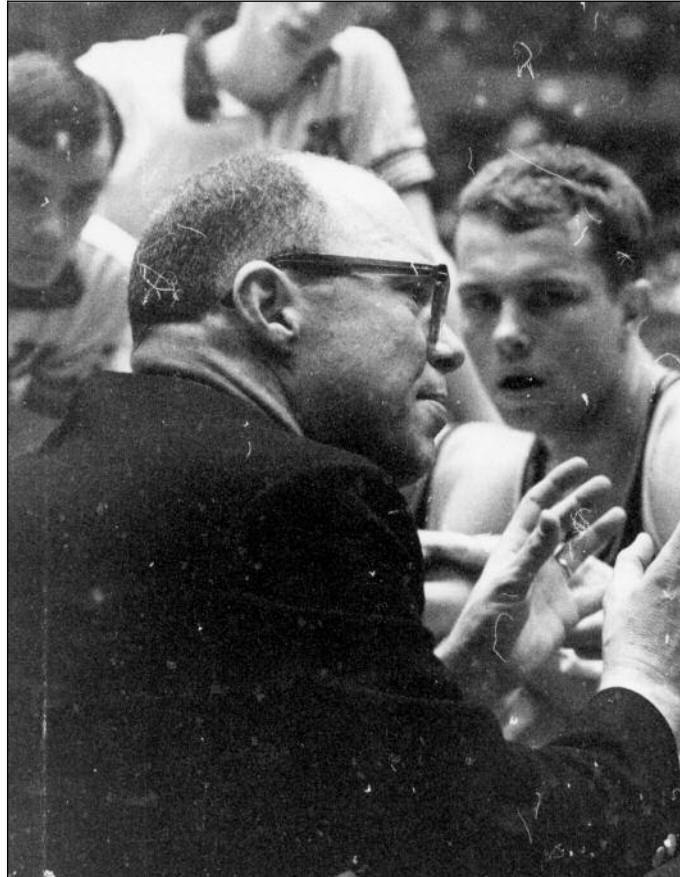
Jerry Campbell, a long-time personal friend who served as Williamsburg's junior varsity under Buckley in the 1960s, thought Buckley was a master technician at getting the

most out of his players' talent.

Williamsburg's 1964-65 team averaged 99.5 points per game.

"I thought one of the things he did so well was that he adapted his approach to the game to the kids he had on his teams," Campbell, who will present Buckley for induction, said. "If his team was smaller or quicker, he'd adapt to play more man-to-man defense. If a team was more offensively-oriented, he'd adapt that way. He wasn't like some coaches who had a specific approach and forced the kids to try to fit into that approach."

Williamsburg's three outstanding teams on which



Coach Buckley lead Williamsburg to a PIAA title in 1966.



Williamsburg's 1966 PIAA Class C championship team included, first row, from left: Manager Don Grannas, assistant coach Jerry Campbell, Bill Kagarise, head coach Dick Buckley, manager Ken Weimert. Back row: Jeff Appleman, Rich Tate, Ken Aurandt, Tom Frye, Wayne Detwiler, Vince "Pepper" Appleman, Chris Detwiler, Dick Wilkinson, Bruce Houck.

Jeff Appleman was a member also enjoyed the type of balance that made coaching them a pleasure.

"The state championship team won 25 games, and then the next year, we won 24 games in a row before losing to Union High School at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the (PIAA) western final," said Appleman, who suffered a broken nose in the Union game. "We had a tradition that carried over, and an expectation of winning that helped everybody to play together."

In 1968, Williamsburg's starting lineup of Jeff Appleman, Ed Gunnett, Frye, Terry Cooper and Sam Farringer each scored in double figures in a western final victory over North East High School of District 10.

Williamsburg lost in the state championship game that year by one point to Mount Penn High School of District 3 at the Pittsburgh Civic Arena.

"I think about it a lot, coming that close," Buckley said of nar-

rowly missing coaching the program to its second state title.

"Williamsburg is a very sports-oriented, close-knit town. The people are very friendly, and they lived for their sports.

"I'm proud to have (lived in) that area, it's a great place," said Buckley moved to Kane in 1969 and coached that high school's boys' basketball program for four years before taking over as the school district's junior high school principal.

"At times, I'm sorry that I ever left (Williamsburg)," he said.

During Buckley's 10 years at Williamsburg, the Blue Pirates won eight straight Juniata Valley League titles and six District 6 titles.

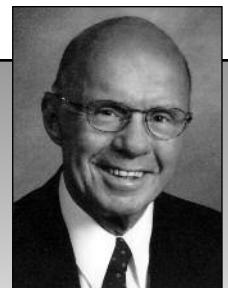
Buckley, a Pittsburgh native who grew up in Bradford, Pa., and his wife, Peg, are the

parents of three daughters. The couple also has seven grandchildren.

Buckley is thrilled to return to Blair County for his induction into Hall of Fame.

"I was astounded when I got the phone call," he said. "I couldn't believe it. I was away for 37 years. As a coach, it's something you dream of, but I never expected it."

## Buckley bio



**Sport:** Basketball.

**Hometown:** Kane.

**College:** Slippery Rock

**Hall of Fame achievement:** Amassed a record of 211-42 in 10 seasons at Williamsburg High School.

**Current residence:** Kane, PA