

2022 Basketball Banquet Talk

Good afternoon. For those of you who do not know me, my name is Tim Grimm and I run a website under the name of www.nhsrecords.com . For over a decade I have been North basketball's statistician, for nearly two decades I have been North football's statistician, and I have been chronicling the school's ups and downs throughout that period.

Today is my fifth time to have the privilege to address the season ending Basketball banquet and it strikes me that the spirit level in this room has never been higher. Success breeds a sense of excitement and pride throughout the assembly.

To say that the class of '22 was successful in their quest to anchor a program's return to prominence is an understatement. The achievements by this group of seniors as a whole and the lofty levels of career prominence achieved by individuals is unparalleled in the recent history of North high school.

When an athletic career is over, what remains are the memories, the lessons learned along the way, the photographs, the trophies won, and... this is where my part comes in... the record of the statistics that career produced. The class of '22 produced a set of statistics that rank it among the very best North has produced in forty years and this afternoon I intend to back up that statement with those numbers.

Let's start with this fact: **In the last 40 years**, only nine graduating classes have won a Sectional Championship during their years as varsity players and none have won more than that. 31 Senior Classes graduated with zero Sectional Titles during their varsity high school career.

During our seniors' three varsity seasons, North posted 41 victories against just 32 losses. **Between 2001 and 2021, zero senior classes** graduated with even a winning record let alone ELEVEN games over .500 for their varsity careers.

During our seniors' three varsity seasons, North posted a winning record in City Basketball contests with 10 wins against 8 losses. **No seniors since 1984** had a higher number of City victories (12) and no senior class since '04 could even match the total of 10

And...

...just for the record...

...other than Coach Bob Walker's incredible back-to-back-to-back Sectional Titles from 1978-1980, no head coach at North has EVER won multiple Sectional Championships until our own Coach **Jason Roach** accomplished that feat in just his fifth season at the helm of the Huskies.

2022 Basketball Banquet Talk

Let's put some focus on what he and his staff have accomplished in an incredibly short period of time with the help of this group of seniors.

In the SEVENTEEN seasons before his arrival, North basketball was ONE HUNDRED games UNDER .500. An average season saw the Huskies finish with a record of 8 and 14 (a 36% winning percentage). In City competition, North averaged FEWER THAN TWO wins per season—and I will remind you that North is the school in Evansville with the largest male enrollment.

So, this class finishing up its Varsity career with a victory total ELEVEN GAMES OVER .500 and TEN City wins holds up very, very well against the last forty years of North basketball. This staff and these players have elevated the North program to the top levels of the City and Conference programs and justly deserve applause for the recognition of their efforts.

Please join me in one more round of appreciation for what this group has done.

Team sports require dedication from every member of the organization. Every practice requires every player and every coach demanding the best of themselves to produce the final effects that will compel a team to victory. Not every player gets minutes during the official competition, not every coach sits in the seat nearest the scorer's table, and yet, they all matter.

No team wins like this group has without everyone fulfilling their roles and obligations to "The Team". Ask anyone who was ever a part of a successful team, years after their competition days were over, why they won, and they will speak NOT ABOUT the shot that went in at the buzzer or the night someone got thirty points, but rather, they will wax poetically in their own fashion about how that particular group was willing to do whatever it took to PREPARE to win.

That preparation comes from every staff member, every manager, every player putting in the hours of work in advance of the games themselves to teach or learn the skills it takes to win, to provide the support for a winning environment, and the dedication to do "the work of winning".

Those of you who are underclassmen in this room today—be you a player, a manager, or a parent—need to take away from this season what THEY did in order to win. They provided a model—it's up to you to continue that success.

As for this group of seniors, while each and every one of them contributed to this successful venture, a few achieved levels of success that deserve recognition. They excelled over a period of time and placed

themselves among some of the top performers in the 63-year history of North Huskies Basketball. Let's revisit some of those achievements and relive a few of those moments.

For me, my favorite moments in North basketball history seem to have always come against the Castle Knights. I won't go into depth about the Huskies' overcoming an historic 14-point second half deficit to beat Castle in the 2018 Sectional Championship, but I thought perhaps that was my favorite game of all time... until the Huskies went on the road to Paradise this season.

Trailing 49-33 halfway through the third quarter, Husky fans were treated to all the worst qualities of an arrogant program displaying their pride with zeal. The Knights were dancing on the floor after made shots, arms above their heads, mugging in front of their student stands, pointing at the North bench as the lead grew... We are all probably familiar with the antics the Knights display when they are in their home confines and in front of their adoring fans.

It was at that moment, however, when the very model of the "Team" I was describing earlier, came to light and to life for the Huskies. The Knights depended upon their back court to provide the energy and speed for their offense to succeed and to that point, their guards had been very successful.

They had also been quite animated about their success.

And that's when senior **Jewellz Hailey** was inserted into the lineup along with sophomore **Brayden Huebner**.

What followed in the next twelve minutes of play was a text book example of players understanding their role and being utilized for their strengths. In a matter of moments, their fresh legs, tremendous bursts of speed, and excellent defensive skills were on display. **Hailey** smothered their senior guard and **Huebner** worried the junior guard into multiple turnovers. The Castle offense suddenly stalled and the entire North club could sense the change in the game.

Eventually **Hailey** and **Huebner's** defense brought out a level of frustration from the Knights that bubbled over into a game changing technical foul and continued until after the game was over. With the Knights rattled and distracted by the lightning quick hands and feet of North's back court, the green and white began to take advantage and suddenly points started rolling in and the deficit was gone. The Huskies won in dramatic fashion as **Huebner** drew a foul in the game's closing seconds and sank the game winning free throw. This was the very definition of no single player being more important than another to the success of a team—and every player having a role to play.

While we speak of individual games, was there a more uplifting moment in this past season than that bitter cold January night at North when the Vincennes Lincoln Alices came to town?

I have been around the program long enough to remember 2010 when this scrubby looking little guy would shag basketballs under the basket during shoot arounds. The ball itself was nearly one third as big as he was, but he would run them down and toss them back to players with all his might. Even now the memory of **Matthew Bunnell** shagging balls as six-year-old brings a smile to my lips.

It brings a smile because, way back then when he was a little tyke, the ball took a high, *rain-making arc* as he thrust his hips and launched this enormous sphere out to the players from under the basket. Imagine then, the smile that broke out on my face, in December of 2020, during the height of Covid, when I saw that same form on display at The Ford Center when North took on Gibson Southern in the River City Showcase. **Matt** hit three of five “*rain makers*” from out deep in three-point land to announce his arrival on the varsity stage.

I will miss those “*rain makers*” and will always remember the night Vincennes came to town and **Matthew Bunnell** got “*red hot*”. He came out and buried his first two threes from *waaaaay* downtown and the Huskies jumped out to a six-point lead right off the bat. He hit two more in the second quarter and everyone in the ol’ ball hall knew he was dialed in—including the Alices’ coach. When Vincennes came out to start the third period, their plan was to deny **Bunnell** the ball and force it inside. That plan worked for awhile but as the clock wound down on the quarter, **Matt** tossed another “*rain maker*” from out near the five second line and drew nothing but net.

In between quarters, **Coach Nero** sent manager **Holly Mosteller** up to see me to make sure of what the record for made three-point shots in a game was. I assured her it was eight and the die was cast for a ‘*fourth quarter for the record book*’. After **Huebner** sank a three to open the period, the next four times down the court, the ball made it to **Matthew’s** hands out on the wing. Four straight possessions, four straight high arcing shots went up from outside and each and every one went in with a “*swish*”.

Nine made-threes broke a record that had stood for twenty years...and each and every one of them resembled that same hip thrust and high arc that six-year-old had used to toss balls back to players twice his height and twenty feet away.

Bunnell made his mark on the Husky record books during his career. He finishes in the top 10 for most three-point goals made *and attempted* in a career and in the top 5 for most three-point goals made in a season.

His back court mate this season was more of a playmaker than a shooter—on this club, as I have already mentioned, every one knew their role and did their best to fulfill it. Senior **Aidan Blackford** finishes up tied for 11th on the all-time games played list and, in those games, he always provided a steadying hand out front. He finishes in the top 15 in both career assists and steals and consistently drew the responsibility to defend the opponents' top scorer. His ability to provide the spark that enabled the Huskies to blow a game open was never better on display than the Jasper game this season.

The Wildcats came to town undefeated in either SIAC baseball, football, or basketball since the 2021 Huskies had traveled to their gym and beat them in basketball. The newspapers remarked how the Wildcats were exerting a sense of dominance over the Conference that had not been seen in a decade by any school and were a double-digit favorite to beat the Huskies this season.

*And then **Aidan** stole the ball with six minutes to play in the game.*

The game had been tight throughout and Jasper had scored a batch of points to take a one-point lead into the fourth quarter. It appeared as though they had all the momentum as the game entered the final period. When they brought the ball up court following a Husky turnover, it was **Blackford** who upset their apple cart. He stole the ball at midcourt, dribbled ahead a few steps, and then fired a behind-the-back pass to **Cameron Gelhausen** who scored on a lay-up.

Jasper now trailed and when they came back down court, **Aidan** denied a lay up with a blocked shot out of bounds. When the Wildcats missed a shot after the inbounds, **Blackford** broke free and raced up court where he took a pass and quickly buried a 15-foot jump shot from the right side of the lane. When **Aidan's** defense forced a Wildcat to alter his shot, it was **Blackford** who pulled down the rebound then whipped a pass 60 feet ahead of him to **Gelhausen**, hitting the lanky senior in stride and affording him the opportunity to leap and jam home a *thundering dunk-heard-round-the-SIAC*.

Aidan's spirited play had announced to the rest of the area's teams that the Huskies were armed and ready to take on all-comers in 2022 as North went on to beat Jasper by 11 points.

Another senior's role playing came to the forefront that night as **Mason Wicks** had one of the best games of his career. Playing against a four-year starter for Jasper, a Division One scholarship athlete, and a multi-

sport All-Conference player, it was **Wicks** who got the better of his opponent with 11 rebounds, four blocked shots, and seven points while holding Jasper's best player to just five points until the game's closing seconds.

Wicks had several games in which his contributions "*Per Minute*" were among some of the most inspiring play North has seen in "*the Pivot*" in decades. The following week on the road at Harrison was another tight battle with neither team being able to break away from the other. North trailed 49-47 with 3:42 to play when **Wicks** muscled his way up for an offensive rebound and then, with three defenders hacking away at him, pushed through their barrage of fouls and put the ball back in the basket to tie the game.

The next possession saw the game still tied and **Blackford** with the ball out front. Harrison was playing overly aggressive near the three-point line to deny any of North's outside shooters an open shot. **Mason** took advantage of the reduced Harrison presence underneath, spun around his defender, and waved his hand high in the air so **Blackford** could see him open and dashing to the bucket. Catching the ensuing pass, he sank a short shot and the Huskies now led by two with two-to-play. It was **Wicks** who then put the final nails in the coffin with a pair of free throws in the game's closing seconds to insure a three-point win.

I say his contributions "*Per Minute*" were among the best because **Mason** ends his career holding a rather obscure record. While his inspired play helped to fuel victories like I described moments ago as well as a host of others [the two-point win over Memorial, the upset of #2 rated Linton-Stockton both come to mind], it certainly seems *like "what might have been"* when you learn that **Mason Wicks** broke 1978 All-State performer **Stoner Gray's** all-time season record for most personal fouls in a season with 91. If you have to hold that record, that is pretty good company to be in.

When the book is closed on the 2022 season, two names will be linked most closely, **Cameron Gelhausen** and **Ryan Caddell**. Having played together since their earliest days on the basketball court, they carried their partnership to new heights in their final season together.

I remember watching **Cameron** as a gangly looking sophomore on the JayVee squad and initially thinking that he looked more like a football player than a basketball player. All elbows and knees, it didn't appear in warm ups for the first game that he had enough body control on the court to keep from fouling out.

I could not have been more mistaken.

He displayed a fluidity around the perimeter that allowed him cut and dash to the basket and then finish with authority. I watched his development as a sophomore and then saw it all come to fruition as a junior. If you were in North's gym in December 2020 and saw a COVID-depleted Husky squad missing arguably two of its top three players against Mater Dei, you got an education, too.

Cameron went out that night and made 12 of 15 shots from the field including six of seven three-point shots on his way to 31 points (we won't speak of the missed free throws here). Combined with 8 rebounds, 3 assists, 3 deflections, and a pair of steals, it looked for all the world like **Dave Schellhaus** had reappeared from out of the 1960's.

Those nights of brilliance happened throughout his *senior* campaign as well, but the scoring was more evenly distributed than on that COVID-depleted night. Of course, anyone who was at the Memorial game this season when he scorched the nets with six-for-six shooting from three-point range on his way to a 28-point outing got to see him at his best on offense. As a vital cog in the team's rise to a Sectional Championship, however, the best gauge of his value may be this: *he had 6 'double-doubles' this season* and another three games in which he was just one rebound away.

In nearly half the games this season, **Cameron** could be counted upon to produce excellent production consistently both inside and outside, on offense and on defense, and to handle himself in a manner that kept him out of foul-trouble and on the court. He led with the ball in his hands and without it, he put in the work, he covered the big men, and out ran the small ones. *He played like "a coach's son"* in every aspect of his game.

His talents were recognized by his inclusion in All-Conference and All-Metro lists and it is fitting that he finishes his high school career acknowledged for the great player he has been.

Playing at forward on the other side of the court from him was one of the most prolific pure shooters in Husky history. **Ryan Caddell** has played varsity basketball for four seasons and participated as much as any coach in the development of this class and its rise to prominence. I know one program that will be glad to see him gone from the ranks of the Green & White—*and that is the Patriots of Terre Haute North*.

As a 14-year-old, **Ryan** displayed his sharp-shooter skills when, with the clock running out in a tie game, **Caddell** found himself with the ball in the corner of the court and looking at the basket with no one else to pass to. There was no backboard to bank off of, only a rim hanging out perpendicular to him from 23 feet away.

2022 Basketball Banquet Talk

The Huskies were buried in an 11-game losing streak and had been beaten by 16 points the night before. Everyone's legs were tired and there was little hope that North would be able to continue to play with the Patriots in an overtime period.

And the clock was ticking down to zero.

Unphased, freshman **Ryan Caddell** tossed the ball up and sank a perfect three point shot to give North the victory, break the losing streak, and start a streak in which they won four of their next five.

That 11-game losing streak was one of the low points of North basketball in the last ten seasons and **Ryan Caddell** snapped the Huskies out of it.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, could pretty much be said of the rest of his Husky career.

Consider that the following season, the Huskies were again riding an extended losing streak when they went on the road to play AT New Albany. North trailed by 10 points with five minutes to play when SOPHOMORE **Caddell** began a barrage of shots that brought North roaring back. In the span of two minutes, he sank a pair of threes and hit a running two pointer to put the Huskies in position to win a 48-47 verdict.

The following night, he sank three overtime free throws to help lockdown a FIVE overtime victory against the Patriots.

As a junior, on the road at Terre Haute, **Ryan** killed the Patriots with 21 points the last two of which came from the right side of the lane against a pair of defenders as the buzzer sounded to give the Huskies a 60-58 victory. As a senior, the Patriots came into North gym ranked #8 in the state and riding a 16-1 record. North had dropped a pair of games in a row by double figures and looked to be falling out of relevancy—until **Ryan** re-ignited the offense with 25 points and the Huskies sent them back to Terre Haute in yet another quiet bus ride.

Four more times this season **Ryan** would light up the nets with 21 or more points and he saved his best all-round games for the drive to the Sectional Title. The Huskies were rewarded with what I have chronicled as the best senior class experience in at least 20 years if not 40. As for his place in Husky history, **Ryan** finished in the top 10 in all-time points scored, 2nd in three-point field goals made, 4th in career games played, and first in career free throw percentage. As a shooter he was deadly accurate, as

2022 Basketball Banquet Talk

a rebounder he was steady, as a defender he was tenacious, and as a leader he was unparalleled in driving others around him to success.

I have described for you the qualities of the 2022 Huskies as they relate to success on the court. It is these same qualities that lead me to believe that when the class of '22 holds its ten-, twenty-, and thirty-year reunions, these same young men will be recognized as the leaders in their community. The book is not closing on these fine young players, it is just beginning to recognize their great potential.

And now it gives me great pleasure to turn the microphone back over to the FOUR-TIME Sectional Champion and recently named Coach Of The Year, my coach, your coach, our coach, Mr. Jason Roach.