

**Sent:** Sunday, October 16, 2022 9:50 PM

**Subject:** Letter for Basketball



Hope all is going well, I'd be happy to reach out and speak on my experience with the Waunakee Basketball program. I want to make clear that any opinions expressed in this email are strictly my opinions and don't reflect anyone of my family or teammates unless specified. I'd also like to clarify that this is strictly my varsity basketball experience as well as my experience playing for Wisconsin Swing in which Dana was the head coach. So "What was my Waunakee Basketball experience?" I don't even know where to begin, but first I'm going to go back and touch on my time with Wisconsin Swing since that was where the relationship began. I played for Wisconsin Swing in fifth and sixth with Dana as our head coach. [REDACTED] also played on swing those years. Needless to say, I've known him for quite some time. Over the course of my entire relationship with him, going back to fifth grade and seeing him every day throughout the basketball season, he was never able to get my name right. Like ever. He openly admitted that, and while the rest of the team was [REDACTED] he never made the effort to do that. There were times where he would go up to other players on the team and ask which one was which rather than coming to one of us and trying to get the differences down. I feel that the most important thing for a coach to do is be able to have strong relationships with his players and I can tell you firsthand I never had a genuine conversation with him. Perhaps that was because he didn't even know my name. I'll give an example of what strong relationship building looks like. My time playing for Waunakee football, there were certainly some ups and downs, for going into my senior year I was abruptly notified that I would be changing positions from cornerback to outside linebacker. The outside linebackers coach, Joe Marx, I had not known too well outside of just the weight room, so I'd say we didn't really have much of a relationship. However, after the conclusion of the football season, I'd say that we had a very strong relationship. I had only known the guy for one year, but he made such an effort to get to know me and make me feel like an important part of the team even though I was a back-up and didn't get in the game much. There was a practice earlier in the year that I was on the sideline for most of since they didn't need me to scout and coach Marx, rather than talking to other players and coaches, spent over an hour talking about life and getting to know me better. This is certainly something he didn't have to do but chose to because he values building relationships with his players, and I believe that has a direct impact on how successful the Waunakee football program has been. Not only in regard to winning games, but in developing young men. If you want to develop young men, you can't spend a majority of the game terrorizing the officials over a call that happened in the prior half. What does that teach your players? That you should behave immaturely every time something doesn't go your way. I understand everyone has their moments and no one is perfect, but it speaks volumes when your coach is spending more of the timeout having conversations with the officials than actually making any adjustments. Speaking of adjustments, during one of our team meetings this past year, we collectively as a team advocated for how we'd like to make more adjustments in games when it's not going well. When brought to Dana's attention, Dana and I quote said "We don't make adjustments, we make teams adjust to us". So how is it when we're getting blown out that we're the team that shouldn't be making adjustments? The two biggest attributes a high school coach should have is first and foremost their ability to build relationships and secondly understanding x's and o's. If you can't build relationships and don't make adjustments, how are you qualified to be a coach? Additionally, we were in the locker room after a road game in Reedsburg and we hadn't played so well. He was upset, and understandably so. Dana had given some of us scout team players so playing time during the game to try and fire up the typical rotation and we played pretty well. He did compliment us on our performance but said and I quote "you guys aren't good enough to play". It's important to note that our scout team scrimmaged the first and second team every day throughout the course of the season, and we rarely lost to the second and probably split or took 2 out of 5 versus with the starters throughout the course of a 5-day practice week. So, it leads me to question what he's watching at practice, and for him to make that comment was infuriating because it made not only myself, but my fellow scout teammates feel hopeless that no matter how hard we competed, he already had his mind made up for whatever reason that it was. So, what's the point of showing up to practice rather than playing high school sports, if no matter how much effort you put in throughout the summer, the early mornings in the gym, the weight room etc, you're never going to get an opportunity to play. I'm not asking to play the entire game or even a half, but simply one chance over the course of my varsity career is all that I asked for but never received. So in summary, my varsity basketball experience, rather my life experience with Dana Mackenzie has been one to forget. From not knowing my name to not being qualified to coach, I feel that it is in the best interest of the community to cut ties and start looking in

the other direction. I don't believe he is the right fit for this program and has shown he is not the right fit over the course of his coaching tenure. I appreciate the opportunity to submit a player testimonial and hope you consider this in your evaluation.

Best wishes,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact a signature.