

Date : 5/21/2023 7:47:05 PM

From : "Ensign, Joan"

To : "Dawn Heinrichs" , "Guttenberg, Randy" , "Jack Heinemann" , "Judith Engebretson" , "Katherine Dotzler" , "Mark Hetzel" , "Mitch Listau" , "Ted Frey"

Cc : joanensign@waunakee.k12.wi.us

Subject : Re: Coach Mackenzie

Good evening Mitch,

Thank you for taking the time to write and advocate for Dana MacKenzie. It is clear he had a great impact on your life. These types of decisions are difficult and very complicated, so it is important to hear from individuals like yourself. I will be including the rest of the school board members and the administration with this response so everyone can read your email.

Thank you,
Joan Ensign

On Sun, May 21, 2023 at 7:25 PM Mitch Listau <mitchlistau@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello,

My name is Mitch Listau, I was on the Waunakee Varsity team from 2014-2018. I was a three-time all-state selection by the Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association and was a second-team all-state pick by the Associated Press my Senior year. I scored 1,829 career points (most all time in Waunakee history) and twice was named the Unanimous Badger North Conference player of the year. I was able to play in two state tournaments my sophomore year and junior year, making it to the championship game my sophomore year. Not only that, I was able to play at the La Crosse civic center my junior and senior year, as well as the Rick Majerus WBY tournament held annually with some of the best players and teams in the entire state of Wisconsin. I went 83-21 in my entire career at Waunakee and was able to make memories that last a lifetime.

Playing on winning teams is something that might be easy to take for granted, especially after it happens for a long period of time. I was able to play alongside many great teammates, and the culture that we were able to build in that program I feel had a lasting effect. With all of that said, culture has to have a foundation. Players obviously being the building blocks to represent and show what that culture really is on AND off the court. But what is the base of the "culture pyramid"? Coaches. Coaches hold players accountable and set standards whether that be on the court, in the classroom, or in the community. Wearing "Waunakee" on your chest meant something to me. It was way bigger than just winning games and scoring points. I wanted to make a lasting impact on the community for not just being a great basketball player, but a great human being.

Year in and year out, we were beyond blessed and fortunate as a program to receive not only the opportunity to play in the nicest venues in the state against the best competition around, but we always had the nicest jerseys, travel gear, shoes, etc.. Again, like I was saying before, stuff like this can sometimes be taken for granted especially in a very affluent area like Waunakee. Coach Mackenzie and the rest of the staff always had the teams best interest in mind when it came to this sort of thing, and wanted to give us the best possible 4 years of high school basketball they could provide.

I always have respect for high school coaches regardless of what sport they coach. It is an extremely difficult job in terms of juggling, trying to keep everyone happy, provide a great experience for the players, and also put a winning product on the court. At the end of day, especially in basketball, only five players can be on the court at a given time. This means that on average there are about 10-12 players that will be sitting on the bench. How do coaches determine who to put on the court? It is the five players that are going to give the team the best chance to win. Never one single time in my high school career did I feel like Coach Mackenzie, Coach Selk, Coach Knutson, or Coach Knatz were unfair in terms of earning playing time or finding a "bigger role on the team". Expectations were made very clear in the beginning of the year that playing time was earned and that there were no guarantees.

Now you might be thinking that it is easy for me to say this because I was the best player, and maybe I got special treatment over others because of that. I can tell you that Coach Mackenzie treated every single person in a Waunakee jersey with the same amount of respect, and never was there a time that "favoritism" was displayed. If a player had issues with playing time and felt that they deserved more, Coach Mackenzie's office door was always open and encouraged players to come to him and talk about their current situation. He would tell you what he was seeing day to day in practice that you could work on and areas of improvement in your game.

I am extremely disappointed in the school board and those that were against bringing back Coach Mackenzie.

Feel free to reach out if you have any further questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Mitch Listau
Waunakee Varsity (2014-2018)

