



Legendary Bunker Hill Basketball Coach Jim Hlafka Dies, Aged 90, Won 754 Games In 43 Seasons

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BUNKER HILL - Jim Hlafka, the famed boys basketball coach for Bunker Hill High School, died on New Year's Eve morning at Alton Memorial Hospital, aged 90.



Mr. Hlafka, who was head coach from 1950-2002, was 754-347 in his career with the Minutemen, and also was a popular teacher at the school. He graduated from Gillespie High School and was also a member of the Illinois Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame.

The gym was renamed Hlafka Hall in 2002 to honor the longtime coach, and an outdoor basketball court in Mae Meissner Whitaker Park in Bunker Hill was dedicated to him in 2022.

Mr. Hlafka, simply known as "Coach" in the Bunker Hill area, helped lead the Minutemen to eight Macoupin County tournament championships and six IHSA regional titles in his career. His teams won 20 games 16 times and 19 games three times.

Mr. Hlafka had five years from 1978-1983, where Bunker Hill went 122-13, including a 1980-81 record of 26-1. The 1982-83 team went 28-1, but the record went to 29-0, when it was discovered that Madison, who had defeated Bunker Hill in the IHSA Class A sectional, had an ineligible player on their roster, which forced the Trojans to forfeit all of their games he played in.

Mr. Hlafka is 14th on the all-time list of wins in Illinois high school basketball history, and eighth all-time in wins at one school.

Funeral arrangements are pending.