

The End of an Era in Estill County Engineers Football

by **TORY JONES**

There are two names that will always be synonymous with Football in Estill County and that's Hoover Niece and Mike Jones. I was fortunate enough to grow up around both men and witness their love, dedication, and passion for the game. It was Hoover who coached my dad Mike in High School and also Hoover whom helped bring him back Home to Estill County in 2001 as the new Head Coach of the Engineers Football Team.



Estill Engineer Mike Jones

My family likes to joke that Mike Jones was born with a football in his hand, and while that's a little farfetched one thing's for sure... He fell in love with the game as a child and it's been the foundation on which he's built a career and life. It is what led him to become an Academic-All American at Union College and later inducted into their Hall of Fame. Growing up with a Coach as a dad, I spent many days of my childhood with him on the field or antagonizing players during drills much to his amusement. I have fallen asleep on more school busses than I care to mention, ran through more sprinklers during hot summer practices, filled too many water bottles and had everything compared in some way to the game of Football. Not to mention slept on plenty of air mattresses while tagging along with him to Football Camp. I have heard more talk about X's and O's and seen more football film than any television show growing up. At the time I was annoyed with how much Football was a part of our everyday lives but what I didn't know is it was teaching me a valuable life lesson on "Having a Passion and a Purpose". That's what my dad was put on the Earth to do, coach Football.

In 2001, When Coach Jones started here at Estill, the football field was in poor condition and had not been maintained well. The locker room was a very small and ragtag facility with limited space housed in what is now the bus garage between the High School and Middle School. The Weight Room was behind the bleachers in the High School gym, and much of the equipment had been there since he, himself had played ball for the Engineers in the 80's. Jones sought to better the facilities for the program and with the help of Kevin Richardson, of Backstreet Boys fame and a former Engineer himself, they broke ground in 2002 on a new Estill County Field House. That same year Coach Jones would be named Coach of the year in Estill's District. Over the next several years, the program continued to grow and improve with the Engineers having one of their best seasons in 2008 going 11-2. Both losses were to Breathitt County who went on to play in the State Championship that year.



2014 3A Coach and Player of the Year

After that season, Jones was again named Coach of the year in Estill's District and nabbed 3-A Coach of the Year as well. In 2014 he would nab a rare honor along with my brother Trevor Jones, being named 3-A Coach of the Year and 3-A Player of the Year. And in 2016 again nabbed District Coach of the year and would lead the Engineers to their FIRST and ONLY District Championship. Over the last 18 years Estill has visited the playoffs 11 out of 18 Seasons. While all of those accolades are praise worthy, it's the moments you don't hear about or see that go unnoticed, yet are so special. It's seeing him up all hours of the night scribbling plays on a notepad, it's in helping kids get a ride to and from school, campy one liners and off the wall nicknames, and hospital visits. It's in consoling his



The Estill Engineers and Head Coach Mike Jones

team on the tragic loss of a player, encouraging them through bitter defeats, and remaining positive when it's not an easy option. My dad has had his share of heartbreaking lows and incredible victories doing what he has loved most.

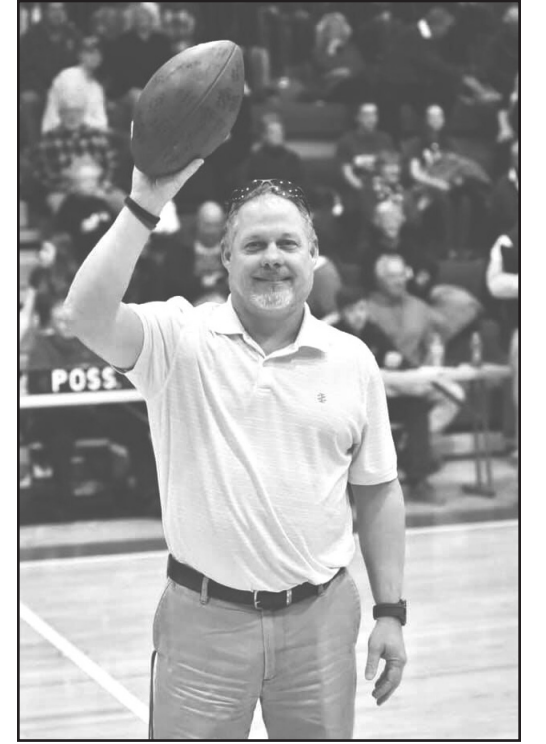
Every Era must reach a conclusion. Every Chapter must have an ending. For 18 years Coach Jones has poured into the lives of hundreds of young players here at Estill. He has used the game to teach them about persistence, determination, discipline, dedication, work ethic, heart, and how to be a leader. I know he will never forget his time with the Engineers. And while I know he will never be fully done with Football, I'm very much looking forward to enjoying every moment I can with the guy who's been coaching me since birth.

Story and photos courtesy of Tory Jones



Estill Engineers Coach Mike Jones

This past season was Coach Jones's final season serving as the Head Coach for the Engineers. After a near two decade run, he's riding off into the sunset. While I know he will miss those Friday Night Lights at Hoover Niece Field, he's planning on enjoying his retirement and spending more time with his five children and four grandchildren. It's a bittersweet time for him, because I know how much he has loved heading up the Engineers. But as such in life, ev-



I love you Dad, Congratulations on your Retirement!

Estill County Engineers 2018-19 Boys Basketball

| | | | |
|--------|------------------------|---|------|
| Jan 8 | Owsley County | H | 6:00 |
| Jan 11 | Powell County | H | 8:00 |
| Jan 15 | Montgomery County | H | 7:30 |
| Jan 18 | Lee County | A | 7:30 |
| Jan 19 | Breathitt County | A | 5:00 |
| Jan 22 | Owsley County | A | 8:00 |
| Jan 24 | Bath County | H | 7:30 |
| Jan 26 | Fleming County | A | 2:30 |
| Jan 28 | Buckhorn | H | 7:30 |
| Jan 31 | Western Hills | A | 7:30 |
| Feb 2 | Letcher County Central | A | 2:00 |

Estill Lady Engineers 2018-19 Girls Basketball

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|------|
| Jan 8 | Owsley County | H | 7:30 |
| Jan 11 | Powell County | H | 6:00 |
| Jan 15 | Lexington Catholic | A | 7:30 |
| Jan 18 | Lee County | A | 6:00 |
| Jan 19 | Harrison County | H | 2:30 |
| Jan 22 | Owsley County | A | 6:00 |
| Jan 28 | Berea | A | 7:30 |
| Jan 31 | Madison Central | H | 7:30 |
| Scott Blank Classic | | | |
| Feb 1 | Buckhorn | A | 8:45 |
| Feb 2 | Whitley County | H | 7:30 |

Estill Middle Engineers 2018-19 Boys Basketball

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|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Jan. 3rd (Thurs) | Garrard County Home |
| Jan. 7th (Mon) | Rockcastle Away |
| Jan. 10th (Thurs) | Clark-Moores Home |
| Jan. 14th (Mon) | Model Away |
| Jan. 15th (Tues) | Berea Home |
| Jan. 17th (Thurs) | Madison Middle Home |
| Jan. 21st (Mon) | Farristown Away |
| Jan. 22nd (Tues) | Berea Away |
| Jan. 28th (Mon) | Caudill Home |
| Jan. 31st (Thurs) | Foley Away |
| Feb. 4th-9th | Conference Tournament |

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