

## IBCA Assistant Coach of the Year: Bill Lane, Jennings County girls



Once a Panther, always a Panther.

Except for four years away to attend Ball State University, that Panther line aptly describes Bill Lane, a fixture in the Jennings County athletic program as an athlete and coach for nearly all of the past 35 years.

Lane has coached basketball throughout his 27-year tenure as a teacher at the school, most recently as a girls' basketball assistant to Kristi Sigler for the past seven seasons. Thus, Lane has been selected an IBCA Assistant Coach of the Year for 2024.

"Bill impacts those around him with his selflessness and his drive to succeed," Sigler said. "He leads by example as a tireless worker, and his players know that he always will be there for them. This has been most recently evident as players from a group that he coached from third grade through their senior year continues to come back and visit with him each time any one of them has an opportunity."

A 1993 Jennings County graduate, Lane was a senior on a sectional championship basketball team while playing for coach Kendall Wildey. He went onto Ball State, earning a bachelor's degree in education in 1997, then returning to Jennings County for a career as a teacher and coach.

His basketball coaching career started as a boys' assistant from 1997-2001, three seasons for Wildey and one season for George Grubbs. Lane then assisted the girls' basketball program in seven of the next eight seasons, three for Joe Granecki, one for Bob Howe and three for Jason Longmeier. Lane moved back to the boys' program from 2009-15, one season with Dean Foster, two with Howe, one with Mike Broughton and two with Joe Hartwell.

Lane then was a middle-school girls' head coach for two seasons before joining Sigler, a 1995 Jennings County graduate herself, and the girls' high school staff for the past seven seasons.

"Bill unselfishly has given 27 years back to our school and community as he has coached multiple sports throughout his time at Jennings County," Sigler said, noting he also was girls' soccer varsity coach for 11 seasons, boys' soccer varsity coach for two seasons and this spring will be an assistant baseball coach. "Bill is a person of character and is committed to doing things correctly. His work ethic and loyalty are unmatched, and he has played a vital role in the success of our program."

Beyond his role on the sidelines, Lane also is in his 27th year as a social studies teacher. He is considered a remarkable educator who has made a difference on the court, on the field and in the classroom.

"He has made a lasting impact," Sigler said.

Lane and his wife, Elizabeth, are parents to two children – Morgan, 20, and Cooper, 15.