

Hoke inspires in class and on court

Piqua Junior High coach and teacher is this week's 'Class Act'

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HOKE

PIQUA — In the classroom or on the court, intervention specialist and coach Rory Hoke wants his students and players to believe in themselves and their abilities. The eighth-grade teacher at Piqua Junior High and the head girls' basketball coach for Piqua understands that small improvements can add up to big successes.

Hoke graduated from Covington High School in 1996. "I was an average student," he admitted. "My real interests were on the basketball court." He was a stand-out shooting guard for the Buccs and made all-league in the Cross County Conference and all-district his senior year.

He worked at Health

completed his requirements and graduated cum laude from Wilmington College in 2001.

His first job was at Miami Trace in Washington Court House teaching seventh grade social studies. While there, Hoke was approached by the girls' high school basketball coach to take over the junior varsity team. "I had coached boys' AAU basketball, but never girls," he said. "It was a learning process in the beginning as I adjusted to the girls' game." Hoke even volunteered to coach the cross country team at Trace. "I had the whole program, both boys and girls at the junior high and the high school," he said.

He worked at Health Care Pharmacy for six summers and credits the owners with being influential role models. "Jay Meyer and Tom Hagan showed me how to treat people and create a positive environment," Hoke said. "They gave me valuable leadership skills."

"I was unsure of my career plans, but I knew I wanted to play Div. III basketball somewhere," Hoke said. "I took general education classes at Edison State Community College for one year." He decided on education as a major and transferred to Wilmington College to earn his bachelor's degree and play basketball for the Quakers.

Hoke did his student teaching at Wilmington Middle School. "I taught in a 7th grade social studies class, and I really liked that age group and decided to apply for middle school and junior high openings," he said. He

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After four years, Hoke took a position at Piqua Junior High as an eighth grade intervention specialist. "I had become very interested in helping students with special needs on an Individual Education Plan," he said. "I completed my master's degree in Special Education from the University of Dayton."

Hoke likes the small group settings as an intervention specialist. "I get to know kids on a more individual basis. Building that rapport makes everything easier," he said. "It is gratifying to watch the student's growth over the school year."

He continued his coaching at Piqua and has coached girls' 8th grade, junior varsity, and varsity basketball. He just completed his third year as varsity coach of the Lady Indians. "I want the girls to believe in their

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abilities," he said. "I tell them that the little things can make a big difference. The Greater Western Ohio Conference is a tough league, and every game is a real battle." Hoke credits veteran, retired coach Jim Meyer with helping mold his coaching philosophy. "I still rely on Jim to give me advice and a different perspective on things."

Away from school and the basketball court, Hoke

enjoys spending time with family, fishing, running, and weight lifting.

"I relax by watching sports on TV especially baseball, basketball, and football," he said.

He and his wife Sara, a part-time neonatal nurse in the neonatal intensive care unit of Miami Valley Hospital, have been married five years. They have two sons. Brody is four years old, and Cooper is three. The family lives in Troy.