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It was around the age of 7 when Keith Fulmer affectionately became known as “Bundy.”

The nickname came to be for the former Franklin High School three-sport standout and



current Oil City High School Athletic Director during a daily wrestling match with his older brother, Jason Fulmer, and stepfather, George Sterner, in which they would emulate their favorite wrestlers from the WWF.

“When Jason and I would wrestle, he would always be someone different, but I would always be King Kong Bundy,” Bundy Fulmer

said. “King Kong Bundy always wrestled two guys at a time, and he had a five count instead of a traditional three count, and I thought that was the greatest thing growing up. Then one day George started calling me Bundy, and it just stuck.”

A lot has changed since those fun-loving youthful days for the 1997 Franklin graduate, but two things that haven’t changed over the years are his beloved nickname, and his love of athletics.

“If you know me, you call me Bundy. All my family calls me Bundy and all my co-workers do as well,” Fulmer said. “I introduce myself to people as Bundy, my email has Bundy on

it, and even my professional baseball contract I signed when I was younger had Bundy on it.”

After spending most of his life either playing or coaching sports, it seems only fitting that Bundy is now heading a sports program, having just completed his first year as the full-time AD at Oil City, and his second overall, after serving as interim AD for a year as well.

“I knew it was going to be a cumbersome job when I decided to take it, but I have a passion for athletics, so I enjoy doing the job. I really enjoy watching the kids grow and working with all of the other athletic directors,” he said of being the AD. “A lot of people have the perception that we just schedule games and that’s it. But, there’s definitely a lot more to it than that. You’re constantly working and there is something different every day. It’s summer and I’m still contacting other athletic directors and scheduling games for the winter and spring seasons. I’m also making sure that all of the kids get their physicals for fall sports so that they can start practice on the first day.”

Oil City has done well in a number of sports, but Bundy would like to see every sport at the school reach its top potential.

“We want to be competitive in every sport. I think success bleeds from program to program,” he said. “People see how well the football and cross country teams do, and then the winter sports want to replicate that success. I want to see that continue to build from season to season with all of our teams.”

Bundy also recently finished his first year as Venango County’s representative for District 10, following in the footsteps of his father-in-law, Bob Taylor.

“It was a good experience. My father-in-law has been doing it for many years,” Bundy said of being involved with the D-10 committee. “There are a lot misconceptions on how things are done — like choosing playoff sites. There are a lot of factors that go into decisions like that, so I get to be involved and see what’s happening on their end of things. I get to be a voice for schools in our area and get to inform them on what’s going on and how things work.”

But, those wrestling matches with his older brother didn’t just help create Bundy’s longtime nickname, they also fueled a competitive spirit in both of the brothers that led them on a long successful journey in athletics.

“I definitely think the competitiveness between Jason and myself helped set the stage for what the two of us were able to accomplish in our athletic careers,” Bundy said. “It was cutthroat between the two of us constantly, and it didn’t matter what we were doing. We used to go to our grandparents’ house for Sunday dinner when we were kids and we would play Wiffle ball in the side yard. We competed against each other hard, and sometimes it came to blows. But in the long run, I think it made us who we are today.”

That competitiveness sometimes proved to be too much, even for some members of the family.

“Jason and I were so competitive playing miniature golf when we were growing up that our stepmother refused to play with us anymore,” Bundy said. “But, that’s how we were brought up. We wanted to win.”

## **Bundy shines at FHS**

Bundy’s athletic career began to heat up in high school at Franklin where he earned four letters in baseball, three in football and two in basketball while playing for such

legendary coaches as Steve Shingledecker, Harry Miller, Fred Blackhurst and Bill Hager.

“I loved all three sports, but being a left-handed pitcher, I had more opportunities to play baseball at the college level than I did at the other two sports,” Bundy said. “In football, I did all of our kicking, plus I played on both offense and defense. I had some Division III schools show some interest in me playing football early on, but I told them I was definitely looking at baseball.”

Bundy starred on the mound as he helped the Knights reach great levels of success, including a D-10 title during his sophomore season.

“We were a pretty solid program year in and year out. We won a D-10 title and made the playoffs every other year,” he said. “We definitely had a core group of guys that moved on to play at the next level. Growing up, I had Larry Turner, my stepfather George Sterner, and Henry Burchanowski as coaches in Little League through Senior League and those guys helped create the core of what our baseball program became at FHS. Henry used to pick me and his son, Todd Burchanowski, up and we would throw batting practice to each other a couple times a week before school. We loved baseball and we wanted to get better.”

## Moving on to next level

The decision to focus on baseball paid off for Bundy as he moved on to play at the Division I level for three years at Radford University before finishing out his senior year at Slippery Rock University.

“Playing college baseball was an eye-opening experience. The guy that recruited me at Radford, Wayne Smith, was our pitching coach and he definitely taught me how to pitch. We are still close today,” Bundy said.

After appearing in 19 games, including a couple of starts, as a freshman, Bundy became a weekend starter at Radford for his sophomore and junior seasons before leaving to play at SRU for his senior year.

“After my junior year at Radford, there was a big blowout and eight of us left. I finished my senior year at SRU and I threw 12 complete games out of 12 starts and I set the strikeout record that year,” he said. “We also won the PSAC title and I don’t think they’ve done that since. We went on to regionals and lost to Kutztown for the right to go to the College World Series.”

Bundy also credits Shingledecker’s coaching with helping him have the opportunity to play baseball at the college level.

“Steve showing me how to throw a changeup in high school was probably the best thing that happened to me and gave me the best opportunity to play at the next level,” he said. “If I was struggling, I always reached out to him with whatever the problem was for me and he would give me an idea of what was going on.”

After finishing up his collegiate career, Bundy moved on to play a year with the Johnstown Johnnies of the Frontier League.

“I played a year there and went something like 5-3 on the mound. It was another great experience, getting on a bus at midnight after a game and traveling to the next city. Playing professional baseball was something I always wanted to do since I was a kid,” he said.” But, I had to shut it down after having two shoulder surgeries. I can still throw batting practice to my kids today, but not at the capacity that I did before.”

## A rivalry rekindled on the hardwood

Bundy's journey in athletics eventually led him to Oil City in 2006, where he went from being an assistant basketball coach for several years to being the head coach for seven more years. After serving a year as the interim AD during his final season as head coach, he took over the role in a full-time capacity last year.

As the head coach of the boys basketball team, Bundy led the Oilers to new levels of success with back-to-back appearances in the D-10 title game.

"During my tenure, I thought we were pretty competitive overall. In the beginning, we were competitive, but we couldn't clear that hurdle to get into the playoffs and make a run. However, over the last few years, we were finally able to make that jump, and we ended up hosting a PIAA playoff game for the first time," he said. "I always told our players that we're going to play the hardest and I thought they all bought into that. Every team we played talked about how hard our kids played and how hard they fought. That is a testament to all the kids that came through the program. Players like Judias Johnson, Cam Van Wormer and Jake Hornbeck were the leaders of those teams, they bought into what we were trying to do, and that led us in our playoff runs."

With Bundy firmly entrenched as the head coach at Oil City and Jason Fulmer returning as head coach at FHS, it seemed meant to be that the two brothers would square off again, and a twist of fate made it happen in a big way.

For several years, the two schools played in separate regions and even in different classes, but in 2022, realignment in D-10 led to the Oilers and Knights playing in the same region, and in the same class, guaranteeing at least two matchups a year between the two sets of rivals.

But of course, the two brothers took it a step further, meeting for a third time in the D-10 championship game in 2023.

“Jason and I would talk all season and he thought we had a chance to get to the D-10 title game,” Bundy said. “We ended up on the other side of the playoff bracket from Franklin and then we met in the finals. I admired the job that Jason did at FHS, the athletes that he had, and what he was able to get out of them. I knew it was going to be tough to compete with them, but I give our guys credit, they didn’t back down. Franklin had the horses to make a run, and they were able to do that over the last couple of years.”

## Looking to the future

“It was tough to step away, but with my sons Brady and Jordie coming up, I wanted to have the opportunity to spend more time with my family and watch them play,” Bundy said of resigning as head coach after the 2023-2024 campaign. “With Dylin Chapin here now, he has a lot of great ideas, he’s younger, and the kids seem to feed into what he has to offer. I think it will be good for my sons to be coached by someone other than myself.”

It might seem awkward for someone who grew up in Franklin and shined in multiple sports for the Knights to end up working for their biggest rival, but Bundy couldn’t be happier at Oil City.

“When people ask me why I don’t go back to Franklin, I tell them they had their opportunity. I interviewed for a job there just like I did at Oil City. Oil City wanted me and I have no regrets,” he said. “My wife is from Oil City and I got to meet her, the people I work with are great, and the administration is great. I couldn’t have asked for a better situation.”

Bundy has come a long way since those early wrestling days with his brother, but he is raising his kids just like he and his brother were raised.

“Jason and I had a great upbringing, and we want to continue that with our kids,” Bundy said. “I treat my kids how my parents treated me. At times they don’t like it, but it’s going to make them better in the long run. I couldn’t be happier with where I grew up and in the era that I grew up.”