



## Longtime Chesnee baseball coach Dean Jones dies at 79

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He served as the Eagles' coach from 1965-2010, winning 729 games and claiming back-to-back state titles in 1982-83.

Chesnee High School and the South Carolina high school baseball community are mourning the loss of a legend.

Dean Jones, the coach synonymous with Chesnee High School baseball and the man at the helm of the program for some of its greatest successes, died Monday. He was 79.

Jones served as Chesnee's coach from 1965-2010. He won 729 games with the Eagles, and claimed back-to-back state titles in 1982 and 1983, along with championships in 1988 and 2010. He was named State Coach of the Year in 2010.

Along with many local, state, and national honors, Jones was named to the inaugural class of the South Carolina Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2016. The baseball stadium at Chesnee High School bears his name, and his No. 20 jersey has been retired by the school. He is a member of the South Carolina Coaches Association Hall of Fame, was one of three coaches chosen to coach in the inaugural SC-NC All-Star baseball game, and was the National Federation of State High School Association National Baseball Coach of the Year for 2008-2009.

Jones served Chesnee High in many other capacities as well, including as longtime athletic director and as head football coach for 14 years, compiling a 78-55 record.

Jones, a Chesnee graduate, played in the San Francisco Giants organization.

When he was hired, Jones resurrected the Eagles' defunct baseball program and turned it into a powerhouse.

"When I started coaching in 1964, there wasn't a baseball team at Chesnee," he told the *Herald-Journal* in 2016. "They had gotten rid of baseball. One year our schedule wasn't but 10 games, and I think we only got to play eight."

It took Jones 10 years to win a region title, but after that breakthrough in 1974, many quickly followed. The Eagles piled up 22 conference crowns by the time Jones retired in 2010.

His last game in an Eagles uniform was the series-clinching victory in the 2010 2A state championship. His influence at Chesnee has lasted long past that.

“He is our program, really,” Chesnee coach Scott Wease said. “He started it, and he was the man for 47 years. Even after he retired, my assistants and I thought of him as the guy. We wanted him to be the face of the program, and that’s what he was.”

Wease, who played for Jones at Chesnee and went on to be drafted, said the loss is tremendous.

“Other than my father, he’s been the most influential man in my life,” Wease said. “He was one of the best, not just one of the best coaches, but one of the best men.”



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