

Dean Wade - Basketball

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

What is more All-American than growing up and playing ball in small town Kansas? Today we'll meet a young man who experienced such an upbringing. He came from rural Kansas and is making an impact in big-time college basketball. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Dean Wade is a freshman forward for the Kansas State basketball team. He had what might be considered an All-American upbringing, growing up in a small central Kansas town.

Dean is the son of Jay and Trish Wade. Jay and Trish are originally from small town Kansas also. Jay grew up at Haviland. Trish's dad was in the Navy so they moved around a lot. Trish came to Haviland when she was in the sixth grade.

Jay and Trish went to school together and then on to successful athletic careers. Jay played football for K-State and then transferred to Western Illinois University where he became all-conference and honorable mention All-American. Trish played volleyball and basketball at Barton County Community College before attending Florida Southern where she too became all-conference and All-American.

Trish and Jay got married and settled into careers in Wichita. She was a fitness and health trainer and he ultimately went into sales with Foley Caterpillar. They had a daughter and then a son. While the kids were still little, Foley Caterpillar transferred Jay to western Kansas so the family moved west.

"We looked all over for a good community to live in," Trish said. After visiting lots of communities, they decided to settle in the Stafford County community of St. John. "We loved the school. They had the nicest school secretary," Trish said.

Jay continues to work for Foley Caterpillar. Trish took a coaching and substitute teaching job at St. John High School. She is now the volleyball and track coach at the school, where she has had lots of success. Her volleyball teams won three state championships and she is a three-time Kansas Volleyball Association Coach of the Year.

Among her players was their daughter Teresa. Teresa became an all-state volleyball player at St. John, the Class 1A Most Valuable Player, and then played at Hutchinson Community College where she became a – what else? – All-American.

Teresa's younger brother Dean also followed in his parents' athletic footsteps. In high school he lettered in football and track, but it was in basketball that his talents shone the brightest. He became a four-year letterman on the basketball team, leading the team to three consecutive state championships and two undefeated seasons. Wow.

As a senior, he averaged more than 25 points per game while playing less than 20 minutes per game. Dean was named Mr. Kansas Basketball and the state Gatorade Player of the Year.

Of course, there are lots of standout athletes in high school, but small town Kansas kids tend to be overlooked by the large colleges and big media markets. Dean Wade started to get more attention in the summer before his senior year when he led his regional AAU team to the Great American Shootout in Dallas. In the title game, he scored 30 points.

Kansas State was the first major college team to show interest in Dean Wade. Wichita State and others followed, but Wade committed to come to Manhattan. He is now a 6'10" forward who is starting on the K-State basketball team. He is the team's second leading rebounder and third leading scorer.

One of his most exciting games was against Georgia. The game was back and forth. Dean Wade got hot in the second half and scored 16 points, including the game-winning shot with four seconds to play.

It was a lot of excitement for a player from a rural community like St. John, Kansas, population 1,295 people. Now, that's rural.

What is more All-American than growing up and playing ball in small town Kansas? We commend Jay and Trish Wade for making a difference by seeking a good small-town environment in which to raise their children. Just as Jay had been an All-American in football and Trish and Teresa became All-Americans in volleyball, how fitting that basketball-playing Dean Wade would be named a Parade All-American.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.