

Jan. 29 JoJo's Tavern/Fish4Scores Athlete of the Week

Steinert on a roll thanks to an all-around Big Mack attack from Ewell

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

Jan. 29: Coach Bryan Rogers is quick to note that the Steinert High girls' basketball team has not had a star in its four game winning streak.

There has been, however, a common thread in all four games. – consistently solid play from junior guard/forward Mackenzie Ewell.

“It's somebody different every game, but someone who has played really steady has been Mackenzie,” Rogers said. “She had a very good game against (West Windsor-Plainsboro) North.

“All our forwards been playing well, Mackenzie is playing well and they all know their roles right now and it's just helping us a lot. But Mackenzie also helps handle the ball and she did a good job playing (Kerry) McNeilly on North.”

Ewell held the Northern Knights dangerous scorer to nine points and scored 13 of her own as Steinert won handily.

For her all-around efforts, Ewell is the *JoJo's Tavern/Fish4Scores.com Athlete of the Week* for the week ending Jan. 27.

Ewell has been a softball/basketball player all her life, since starting with HGSA and Hamilton PAL as a little kid. She says it's tough to decide on what her main sport is but admitted that playing travel softball last summer put a limit on how much she could work on hoops.

“I really like them both, so it's hard to say,” Ewell said. “I shot outside a little during the summer and would do some shoot-arounds.”

Once November arrived, however, Ewell put all her focus on basketball.

Bolstered by BFF Gerri “Bear” Laird, Mackenzie started working on facets of her game the Spartans would need after losing point guard Melissa Koster to graduation.

“Shout out to the Bear!” Ewell said.

Rogers feels Ewell has developed her game since her sophomore year.

“She played (on varsity) last year so she got her feet wet,” Rogers said. “She has played between a guard forward position and this year she stepped up and handled the ball more for us.”

Out of necessity.

“Yeah, we don't really have Koster back,” Ewell noted. “We needed someone to step up and handle the ball so I decided to do that. When the season started I really made that my main focus.”

That is not all Ewell has improved upon. During the Spartans' winning streak, she is averaging just under nine points per game, which is a nice bump from earlier in the year.

“She's become more aggressive on the offensive end and has been more confident as the season has gone on,” Rogers said. “Her results have shown.”

Asked if scoring was another focus, Ewell said “You could say that. I'm driving more, getting fouled.”

Was that her choice?

“I've been told to go the basket,” she said with a smile. “A lot.”

It seems to be working out for the best. But only if you're into winning streaks.

