

DeLong's hard work reflects in her stats

By Lauren Callison

Wildcat basketball player Isabelle DeLong is leading the team in scoring for the second year in a row.

Coming into this season, DeLong had the most varsity experience out of the returning players and had to bring some leadership to the team.

"She does a nice job when out on the floor to help keep the team composed," said Head Coach Ross DeLong, Isabelle's father.

"That's not something that shows up in the stat book, but it's very important to the team."

Isabelle DeLong has improved tremendously this year. She leads the team in scoring and in rebounds. After 11 games played, she was averaging 17.6 points per game and shooting 35 percent overall from the field and 38 percent from behind the three-point line.

"I have gotten so much better at taking better shots and knowing when to throw a pass or not," said DeLong. "For me, this year the game has really 'slowed down' and has become easier to process what I should or shouldn't do."

DeLong also found her spot in the Wildcat record books after a home game against North Cedar in December. She scored 37 points against the Knights, passing former Wildcat Stacy Schlapkohl's record of 36 points in one game.

DeLong said breaking the single-game scoring record was truly "a dream come true."

"The girls with their names on the

record boards are some of the best athletes that went through Durant, and it's crazy that I can now be a part of that," said DeLong.

"I was really excited for her," said her father who also holds the single-game scoring record for the boys' team. "Nights like that don't come around too often. Her teammates really did a nice job of getting her the ball when she was open. They recognized that she was having one of those nights. You can't have a night like that without everybody's involvement."

In response to DeLong's success this season, she has faced many box and one defenses from teams trying to shut her down.

"In response to that, I just stay patient; I don't force things and look for my open teammates," said DeLong.

DeLong feels most comfortable on the court whenever she has the ball.

"I love being able to create open looks for my teammates and myself," said DeLong.

Although DeLong leads the team in scoring, she doesn't feel any pressure to provide the bulk of the scoring.

"As a team, I feel that we do a very good job of getting the ball to the girl with the 'hot hand,'" she said. "That differs from game to game, but everyone does their fair share of scoring."

The Wildcats are now 3-9 as of Jan. 17.

"Our focus is on taking care of the basketball and limiting turnovers that lead to easy baskets for the other team," said Coach DeLong. "The goal is always to make improvements every day."

Isabelle said she would not be the player she is today without her father.

"My dad has coached me all growing up, and I've realized that his expecta-

tions get higher and higher as I progress as a player," said DeLong. "From day one he has pushed me to be the best player and person I can be."



Photos by Mackenzie Oberlander

Top: Isabelle DeLong looks to inbound the ball to another Wildcat in a home game. As a junior, DeLong leads the team in rebounding and scoring. Bottom: In a road game at Tipton, Coach Ross DeLong huddles with his players during a timeout.

Bright future ahead for Durant's bowling team

By Isabelle DeLong

The boys' bowling team is looking to have a bright future considering some of the top bowlers are underclassmen.

There are 16 guys out for bowling.

Sophomores Matthew Jenkinson and Gavin Broussard are two of the leading

bowlers so far this season. Jenkinson led the team in total pins with 1,209 after six games played, and Broussard was in second with 1,152.

Broussard was surprised to be one of the top bowlers this season.

"I honestly wasn't sure if I would even be on varsity so to be doing well and

contending with the other bowlers is an accomplishment in my eyes," said Broussard.

Broussard has worked in the off-season to get himself prepared to have a successful season.

"Though the season for the bowling team was over, I still bowled every Saturday morning until May when the summer league started on Wednesdays," said Broussard. "I would also go out to a couple different alleys with [teammates] Zach [Pearlman], Matthew, and Garrett [Pearlman]."

Jenkinson has also been preparing for this season by bowling frequently during his free time. He has been bowling for a long time.

"I started bowling in kindergarten because my mom asked me if I wanted to be a bowler like my grandpa," said Jenkinson.

Broussard also has been bowling for most of his life.

"I started bowling in second grade in a Saturday league run by Tracey Hansen

where she critiqued my skills and helped me improve in bowling," said Broussard.

Although Broussard is happy he is having success so far, he knows he can't settle.

"It feels good to know that I'm ahead of some pretty good bowlers, but I think I need to stay more consistent to remain at that top spot," said Broussard.

Other varsity bowlers include seniors Jaxson Saylor, Zachary Pearlman, and Brady Meincke and freshman Draven Cole. Head Coach Dan Sterner is very proud of how well rounded his team is this year.

"The team is composed of a really talented group of guys where any one of them can step up and lead the team," said Coach Sterner.

"It's been fun to watch the underclassman come up and perform well to take some of the pressure off of our upperclassman. It's really helped bring the team together as they know one of their teammates will pick them up if they're having an off day."

Coach Sterner is excited to be able to help Broussard and Jenkinson develop throughout their high school careers.

"They both [Broussard and Jenkinson] have bowled in junior leagues for a long time and have developed a good foundation for success in the high school level," said Coach Sterner.

"My goal is to try to teach them finite skills to help them refine their game, which should help them achieve great success."

Coach Sterner believes that both Broussard and Jenkinson are very talented in many ways.

"If I had to pick what their strong suit was, I'd say resiliency," he said.

"Bowling is like a marathon and not a sprint. You can't let one bad frame compound itself into two, three or four. They both can have an off frame, but they put it behind them and keep filling frames with spares and strikes."

Arty's Ice Cream and Grill's boys' basketball player of the month



609 W. 5th St.
Wilton, IA 52778
563-732-2222

Senior Colyn Dean is playing guard and post for the Durant Wildcats this winter. In 14 games played, Dean was shooting 36 percent from the field and had recorded a total of 37 rebounds. "I've worked to improve on my post moves and passing abilities. My highlight of the season so far is having a good game against Wilton," said Dean.



Dean

Peel's Inc. wrestler of the month



755 W. Iowa 80 Road
Walcott, IA 52773
(563) 468-5460

Sophomore Maliya Berry is a first-year wrestler for Durant. She is currently wrestling at 125 pounds with a record of 9 wins and 9 losses. Her goal is to win at least one tournament in her class this season. She says her teammate Lainey Shelangoski has given her a lot of help.



Berry

Today's Dentistry coach of the month



502 9th Ave.
Durant, IA 52747
(563) 785-4541

Mr. Matt Straube is in his 10th year as the varsity head coach for the boys' basketball team. He started coaching the varsity boys in 2013. "I started coaching because I love the game of basketball and wanted to stay involved with the sport," he said. "I love working with the players and teaching the game." Coach Straube also serves in a dual role as the athletic director for Durant High School.



Straube

Apex Ink and Apparel's girls' basketball player of the month



708 5th St., Durant, IA 52747
563-785-6223

Junior Isabelle DeLong is playing guard and post for the Wildcats this winter. DeLong is leading the team in scoring for the second year in a row. "I have gotten so much better at taking better shots and knowing when to throw a pass or not," said DeLong.



DeLong