

Features



McGowan Charges His Way To Victory

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports

Every sport has a big play that can completely change the momentum of a game. Football has the interception and the big hit. Baseball has the home run. Basketball has the three-pointer and the charge.

A young man on Bernie's basketball team has become quite adept at both of these. Jordan McGowan, 18, is the son of Brian & Valerie McGowan and Charles & Tara Stewart. During his four-year career as a Mule, he has made over 150 three-pointers and drawn over 77 charges, breaking the previous MSHSAA record of 74.

McGowan began playing basketball competitively during elementary school.

"Since 5th grade I have played on a lot of different traveling teams," McGowan said. "In fifth and sixth grade I played on the local Eagles AAU team, the Dexter Show-Me State Games team, and the Kansas City Tar Heels AAU team, where I played with current Texas A&M signee Jamal Branch."

McGowan was also selected to play at some invitation-only camps during middle school.

"During seventh and eighth grade, I was selected to travel to the Adidas Phenom Top 150 camps in San Diego, California," McGowan continued, "which gave me the opportunity to work with coaches and trainers that had worked with players at all levels of the sport, including the NBA. I also attended Five-Star Basketball Camp in

Orlando, Florida, which was very influential in helping me decide to really pursue basketball.”

As a four-year starter for the Mules, McGowan has become an excellent outside shooter. Notable performances during his senior year include games against Dexter, Advance, and Dexter again in the County Tournament, where McGowan hit five three-pointers in each game. He also made 10 against Malden, and eight against Puxico. Bernie’s head basketball coach Brad Botsch, as well as McGowan, attributed his ability to his incredible work ethic.

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“He’s [McGowan] is one of the hardest-working kids we’ve ever had come through this program,” Botsch said. “He’s never been tremendously blessed with athletic ability, but he’s worked hard and excelled at almost every aspect of the game. He definitely has brought a lot to our team and our program over the last four years.”

“Hard work probably has more to do with it than natural ability,” McGowan commented. “Over this summer and this school year, I’ve shot between 300-500 shots a day. A lot of early mornings and late evenings in the gym, but it’s paid off. I’ve just filled the role my coaches asked me to fill. This year, it was to score for my team, so I have tried to do that.”

“He’s almost perfected the shooting form,” Botsch continued. “I’m a big believer in proper shooting form and mechanics really will deliver consistency from the outside. It’s like a baseball player: you have to have a good swing to be a great hitter. He’s got a great shot, and that’s the reason that he’s a great charger.”

To cap off an already excellent career at Bernie (the Mules’ record during McGowan’s tenure is 100-19, as of Feb. 26, and Bernie is currently working towards its third consecutive District Championship), McGowan also broke the MSHSAA record for charges drawn during Bernie’s contest against Notre Dame on Feb. 4, where he drew numbers 74 (the previous record of 73 was held by Kyle Roehrs of Sullivan High School) and 75. McGowan again noted his work ethic in making this accomplishment possible.

“As a young player I watched a lot of video of myself playing with my dad,” McGowan said. “We would discuss defensive positioning and reading where the

offensive player was headed and where I should to be when he got there to be able to draw the charge. After learning where to be, it was just being willing to get hit and not move. Now it's just second nature."

McGowan has received attention at the collegiate level, and is verbally committed to Three Rivers College.

"Crowley's Ridge College, Williams Baptist College, and Harding University all recruited me," McGowan said. "I plan on signing with Three Rivers College sometime in early April, but I've already verbally committed to them [TRC]."

McGowan expressed excitement at the opportunity to play for coach Gene Bess. Bess, now in his 41st season at Three Rivers, has led the Raiders to two national championships in 1979 and 1992, and is the most winningest coach at the Junior College level, entering this season with a record of 1114-290.

"I love the idea of playing for such a defensive-minded coach," McGowan commented. "Not only is he a great coach that has achieved many accomplishments, but he's a great guy too."

Despite all his accomplishments, McGowan remains humble, hard-working individual that credits his coaches and family with helping him bring his talents into fruition.

"Working hard comes more naturally to me than anything," McGowan said. "I don't consider myself much of a basketball fan - I rarely watch games unless its film on my next opponent. But, by far, the people that have helped me the most with my successes are my parents and grandparents, as well as my coaches here at Bernie, Coach [Brad] Bostch and Coach [Jason] Long."

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