

Colton Stewart:

Titans' big man showed he was more than what opponents were expecting

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

At 6-foot-4 (or 6-5 ... it depends who you talk to), Colton Stewart was the Olympus boys basketball team's primary big man. What made him special, however, was he was so different than all the other big men the Titans played in 2010-11.

Stewart was a jack-of-all-trades. He was Oly's leading scorer, averaging 14.6 points per game. He was also the team's top rebounder. His best attribute became noticeable in the Titans' season opener.

Going up against Cottonwood's 6-8 Daniel Kristensen, Stewart left the key, spotted up outside and nailed two three-pointers. He finished with 26 points in the Titans' 68-51 win.

Stewart had never played varsity until that game. His status as an unknown was over.

"I knew about Colton a long time ago," said Oly coach Matt Barnes. "He got stuck on the JV team last year because we had so many seniors and a lot of size. I knew he would probably do just as well on varsity. If I knew he would do this well, I might have brought him up."

A lot of others agreed, and named Stewart to the all-Region 6 team. The Salt Lake Tribune made him a first team all-state pick, while the Deseret News had him on the second team. Regardless, his abilities made a big difference in Oly's 16-7 overall record and second-place finish in region.

"A lot of us who didn't play football, played together during the fall and we knew each other really well," said Stewart. "We didn't have any growing to do. We were already there."

Stewart helped the JV team to a 20-0



Colton Stewart filled Oly's need for a big man, and his huge contributions made the Titans a better team than expected.

"I knew about Colton a long time ago. If I knew he would do this well, I might have brought him up (as a junior)."

- Coach Matt Barnes

season in 2009-10, and he was among many players on Oly's summer league squad. The Titans got off to a good start, and Stewart was one of the main reasons as opponents tried to find ways to defend him.

"Playing varsity was a lot different than what I expected," he said. "The size (of the players) and the speed (of the game). There was a also a lot more pressure situations."

Stewart adapted quickly. Through the first

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Colton Stewart (No. 42) and his teammates prepare for their game at Tooele.

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several games, he averaged more than 20 points, which attracted local media attention. He also had a huge 34-point, 17-rebound effort against rival Skyline.

“That was my best game of the season,” Stewart recalled. “I was really ‘on’ that night.”

He had several other good nights, but scoring really wasn’t what he recalled best of the season. While the team had its ups and downs, Stewart said his best memories were of spending time with his teammates in the locker room. He claimed it was unlike any other.

“It was a lot of fun,” he said. “We would get pumped up before games. We had music going and we would talk about things other than basketball.”

Stewart said there were only a few down times. He injured his knee at Box Elder. While he healed quickly, he didn’t have another breakout game until he scored 21 points in a badly needed 82-65 win at Woods Cross.

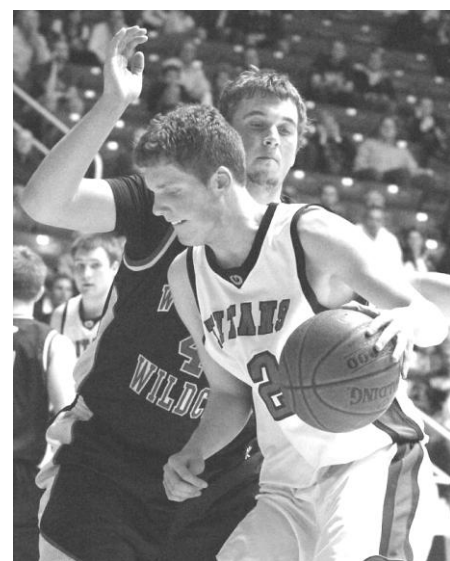
Stewart felt the team’s best game came on “Senior Night.” He said the team was anxious to play its home final against Bountiful. The pre-game locker room music fest helped as Oly grabbed a 23-11 lead and won the game.

“Coach Barnes mentioned that we didn’t beat Bountiful the previous year and it meant a lot to us to do something that last year’s team didn’t accomplish,” he said. “They were really good, but we wanted to do something better.”

Stewart said he felt no regrets about playing just one year of varsity.

“Our strong point was that on any given night, anyone could step up and score,” he said.

He was that person most of the time.



Colton Stewart

Favorite memory of the season: Playing in the big game against Skyline and doing well.

Most exciting part of the season: When Sam (Williams) hit the game-winner at Box Elder.

Biggest disappointment: Not making it further in the state tournament.

Favorite personal sports memory growing up: Playing Junior Jazz (basketball) as a little guy.

Future plans: Go to college and an LDS Church mission.