

# Jessica Austin:

She didn't let preseason injury affect the role she would play on the team

By Bruce Smith  
Matchup

Jessica Austin's career summary with the Weber High girls basketball team might just list one point, but there was no doubt that her contribution was much more.

Austin nailed a free throw in Weber's 71-29 victory over Emery during her junior year. She was looked upon to be Weber's starting power forward as a senior, but an injury ended her career. She spent the season as a team manager and biggest cheerleader.

"I rolled by ankle a couple of times, but didn't think anything about it," she recalled. "A few weeks before the season started, I had to tell the coach I couldn't play. I had a broken ankle and couldn't play all year. It was a big disappointment."

Losing the 5-foot-9 Austin made a difference, and coach Rick Stoeckl prepared by moving others. Austin had played on the junior varsity squad the season before. Despite the injury, she stayed with the varsity team during her senior season and made sure she was part of it.

"I'll remember most that the team stuck together," she said. "We've seen each other through everything and been through so much together."

Truth is, as much as she missed playing her senior year, she made up for it.

"I'm really competitive," she said. "I'd yell at the refs and others would tell me that I shouldn't do that. I tried to protect the girls so they wouldn't get hurt."

Austin started on the sophomore team in 2010-11 and played mostly on the junior varsity team as a junior. As she was an integral part of Weber's team during the summer until the injury. Since she couldn't play, she continued to be part of



Jessica Austin (lower right) poses with many of her Weber High basketball teammates prior to a football game during her senior year.

the team.

"I did stats (statistics) and hung out with the girls," she recalled. "I stayed with the team. It was cool."

Coach Rick Stoeckl admitted the Warriors missed her on the court. He knew the kind of player she was and how she could contribute. While Austin didn't have a history of huge statistics, she would have at least been a key factor in the team's depth.

Instead, she was proud to tape players before the game and scream during it. She said she lived and died with the outcomes - perhaps even more than she would have if she had been part of it.

"If I would have played, we would have had my depth and my height," she said. "Still, it was a great season."

Austin's best memories, however, were different than other Weber players. Her highlight came during the summer season.

"I played against Fremont and they had a girl we called 'Big Red,'" she said. "I drew a lot of (defensive) charges against her. She got really frustrated and fouled out. She was hothead and I felt really good."

Austin was an athlete. Although she didn't get to show much of it her senior year, she said her best memories at Weber were the relationships she built with her teammates. Shortly after the season ended and following graduation, she packed her bags and moved to New York City, where she hoped to be a nanny and then attend Columbia University.

## The rest of the story ...

Every Weber player likely had a great story or memory of the Warriors' 2012-13 girls basketball season. Not all could be told here, but the smiles on each of these girls' faces might give you an idea of the excitement they felt leading up to the season and the success that followed – both on and off the court.

Here is a photo collage of the rest of the team.



McKenna Dahl – Sr.



Courtney Bedke – Jr.



Hannah Charlton – Jr.



Karon Garrett – Jr.



Megan Bedwell – Soph.



Abbie O'Neill – Soph.



Haley Nelson – Soph.



Mikah Meyer – Soph.



Kayla Green – Soph.



Reilly Shook – Soph.



Hannah Dixon – Soph.



Jessie Shaw – Soph.



Sophie Gustaveson – Soph.



Kyra Bramwell – Soph.



Jocee Porter – Soph.



Abri Carney – Fr.



Hanna Johnson – Fr.