

Estill County Engineers off to a great start despite restrictions

The 2020-21 Estill County Engineers are off to a great start despite restrictions caused by COVID and were 6-2-1 overall and 3-0 in the district with wins over district opponents Lee, Owsley and Powell. They held off the Owls 43-34 and easily put away the Bobcats and the Pirates by big margins. Their only 14th Region loss (3-1) was a narrow 2-pointer, 56-54, to the Wolfe

County Wolves. The Engineers are led by versatile junior Landon Napier who averages over 18 per game in the first six contests and has scored 22 in the last two contests. Seniors Dyllon Long and Cobbe Click are also in double figures for Estill. Long has averaged over ten points per game in the first six contests, and Click has scored more

than 11 per game in the first five contests. All three Estill points-leaders scored in double figures in a 30-point loss in the Legacy Nissan Classic to the undefeated North Laurel Jaguars and heralded sophomore Reed Sheppard (see story on same page). The son of former UK guards Stacey Reed and Jeff Sheppard was actually fourth in scoring against

the Engineers but has scored 50 points since then against South Laurel. Napier, Long and Click are also great rebounders and have a great supporting cast in both rebounding and scoring, including senior Will Isfort and others. The Engineers are currently third in the region with a .57641 rating behind Hazard's Bulldogs and Knott County

Central. Estill was scheduled to play the 7-2 Breathitt County Bobcats on Tuesday and will face the 5-9 Lee County Bobcats at home on Friday, February 5th. The Engineers lead the district with a 3-0 record, followed by Owsley with 3-1. Lee County is 1-3 with a win over Powell County and the Pirates are winless in all games.

20-21 Lady Engineers are off to a rocky start

The Estill County Lady Engineers are off to a rocky start for the 2020-21 season with a 4-6 overall record, 3-3 in the 14th Region and 1-2 in the 56th District. The Lady Engineers continue to play younger players and this year have only one senior, Britney Mason, and three juniors on the roster. Several players have been scoring for the Lady Engineers with some of the more consistent being veteran 8th grader Jayci Long, and juniors Mia Hale and Hannah Baker. Long has had 18, 17, 15 and 13 point games thus far and consistently adds to Estill's scoring column. Mia Hall had recent games of 25, 23 and 17 points, and Hannah Baker has had some good scoring. Sophomore Haley

Angel had 25 points recently against Jackson County. Owsley County's Lady Owls lead the 14th Region with a 10-1 record (also 10-1 overall) and are tops in the 56th District at 4-0. Powell County trails Owsley in the district with a 3-4 overall record, 2-3 in region and 2-1 in district. Estill's 1-2 district record puts them in 3rd place ahead of 0-4 Lee County. The Lady Bobcats are 2-8 and 2-5 in the 14th Region. The Lady Engineers were at East Jessamine on Tuesday night and will be homestanding on Friday, February 5th against the Lee County Lady Bobcats in a double-header with the Engineers. Their next game will be at Campton against Wolfe County on Feb. 8th.

Estill Lady Engineers 2020-21 Girls Basketball

Jan 7	Model (W)	57-49
Jan 9	Rockcastle County . . (L)	37-52
Jan 12	Owsley County (L)	42-68
Jan 16	Casey County (L)	38-50
Jan 20	Bourbon County (L)	41-48
Jan 21	Powell County (L)	47-48
Jan 23	Buckhorn (W)	45-33
Jan 26	Lee County (W)	62-25
Jan 29	Jackson City (W)	73-45
Jan 30	Leslie County (L)	39-52
Feb 5	Lee County H	7:30
Feb 8	Wolfe County A	7:30
Feb 9	Bluegrass United H	6:00
	(Lexington home school)	
Feb 11	Montgomery County . . A	7:30
Feb 15	Madison Central H	7:30
Feb 19	Owsley County H	7:30
Feb 20	Hazard H	7:30
Feb 25	Menifee County H	7:30
Feb 26	Nicholas County A	7:30
Mar 1	Jackson City H	6:00
Mar 3	Bath County A	7:30
Mar 6	Powell County H	7:30
Mar 9	Berea A	7:30
Mar 10	Frederick Douglass . . H	7:30
Mar 12	Breathitt County A	7:30
	Coach Ruth Hughes	

Estill County Engineers 2020-21 Boys Basketball

Jan 8	Menifee County (W)	56-33
Jan 12	Owsley County (W)	45-34
Jan 14	Wolfe County (L) (OT)	54-56
Jan 16	North Laurel (L)	59-89
Jan 19	Trinity Christian	0-0
Jan 22	Powell County (W)	62-24
Jan 25	Wellspring Guardians (W)	59-29
	(Richmond home school)	
Jan 26	Lee County (W)	50-29
Jan 28	Great Crossing (W)	56-49
Feb 2	Breathitt County A	7:30
Feb 5	Lee County H	6:00
Feb 9	Bluegrass United H	7:30
	(Lexington home school)	
Feb 12	Hazard H	7:30
Feb 13	Bath County A	2:30
Feb 16	Elliott County H	7:30
Feb 19	Owsley County H	7:30
Feb 22	Berea H	7:30
Feb 23	Madison Southern . . . H	7:30
Feb 25	Jackson County A	7:30
Mar 2	Wolfe County A	7:00
Mar 5	Powell County H	7:30
Mar 8	Nicholas County H	7:30
Mar 9	Menifee County A	7:30
Mar 12	Model H	7:30
	Coach Jon B. Bentley	

North Laurel sophomore Reed Sheppard even better than expected this season



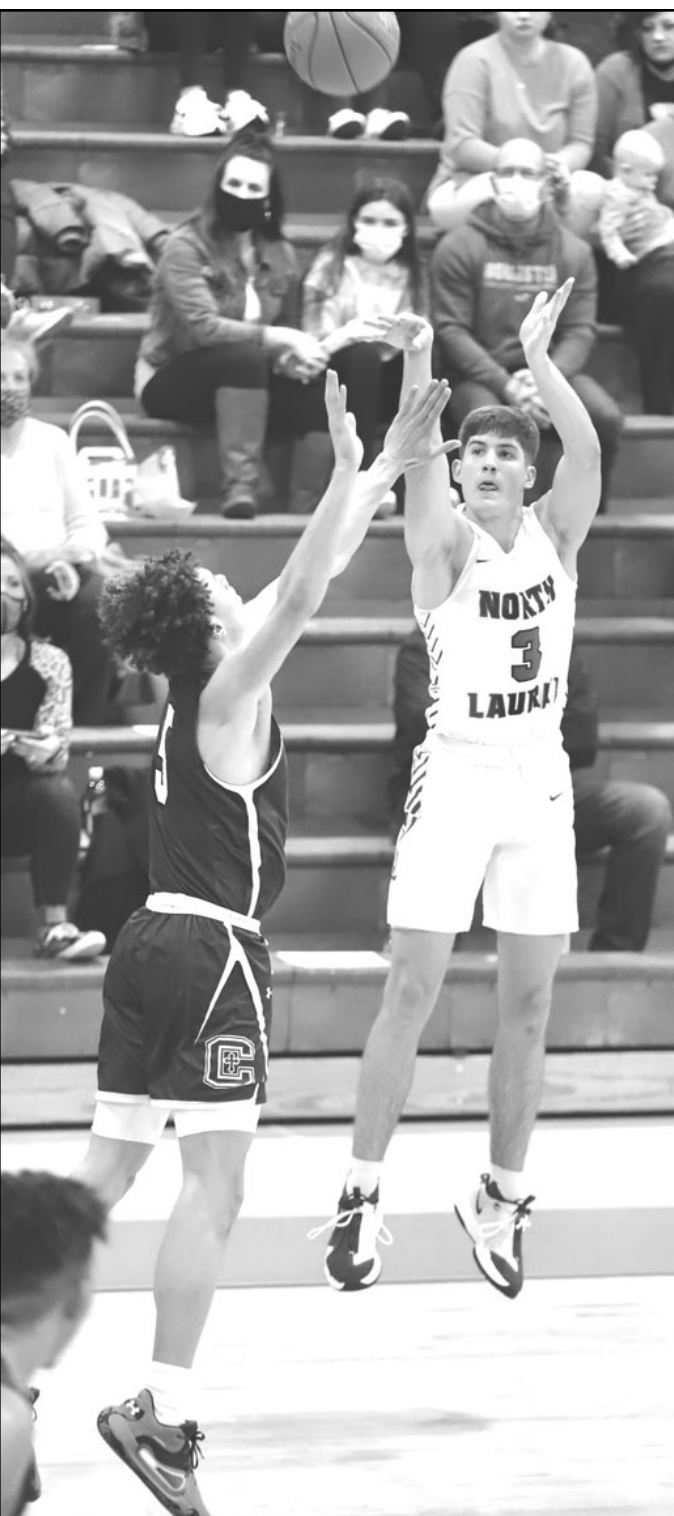
by Larry Vaught

His coach thought Reed Sheppard would be a better player this year and also expected more statewide attention to be focused on him as he did improve. Sheppard averaged 20.6 points and 5.2 rebounds for North Laurel as a freshman. He shot 50.4 percent overall from the field, 34 percent from 3-point range and 77 per-

cent at the foul line while scoring 660 points. And he just happens to be the son of former University of Kentucky standouts Stacey Reed Sheppard and Jeff Sheppard, the MVP of UK's 1998 Final Four national championship team. "He had a great off-season and knew he was primed to have a good year," North Laurel coach Nate Valentine said. "I just didn't know how good because we didn't have summer ball and no pre-season scrimmages. We went into the season kind of blind but he's been great and our team has been great. I have certainly been surprised by the attention and coverage we have got. There is a lot of interest in our team and Reed." North Laurel averaged a state-best 95 points

while winning its first eight games, including an eye-opening 89-87 win over Covington Catholic when Sheppard had 45 points and 12 rebounds. Five times in 10 games North scored 98 or more points. "We are small but we are fast. The only way we can play is fast," Valentine said. "We don't make scoring 100 points a goal. We beat Madison Southern by 24 points and scored 82. Our guys were disappointed. I told them our expectations were not to win by 40 and score 100 every night. It's great if it does but we should not be disappointed if it does not happen." The 6-1 Sheppard is averaging 31 points and eight rebounds per game. He's hitting 41 percent from 3-point range and 86.2 percent at the foul line. In a win over rival South Laurel last week, he had a triple-double with 50 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds and came back the next night with 30 points, nine rebounds and eight assists in a win over Madison Central.

"Reed is such a good passer. Everybody looks at his scoring but he is one of the best passers I have seen. He has great court vision and is so unselfish," Valentine said. "We have got guys around him that can make open shots. He helps them and they help him." Sheppard put on about 10 pounds and was one of a small group of players that managed to work out on their twice a day even during the pandemic. Valentine said players even built their own devices so they could lift weights. "Reed's mental approach to the game is at a higher level. He has a better understanding of where he wants to be three years and beyond and what it takes to get there," Valentine said. "He was a good shooter last year but with age and strength he's better this year. He worked on his outside shot a lot. He's making a lot more 3's than last year and is a more consistent shooter. "But the thing he does really well is he gets to the basket and finishes. He makes a lot of tough shots most high school kids don't make." Iowa was Sheppard's first Power Five offer two weeks ago. Two former UK coaches who Jeff Shepherd played for have also offered. Rick Pitino gave him an Iona offer and Tubby Smith did the same at High Point. South Alabama and Stetson have also offered scholarships to Sheppard, who had a quadruple double as a freshman with 24 points, 10 rebounds, 10 steals and 14 assists.



North Laurel sophomore Reed Sheppard had a triple-double and scored 50 points in a recent win. He's the son of former UK guards Stacey Reed and Jeff Sheppard. (Les Dixon Photo)

Quotes of the Week

Quote of the Week 1: "I really like him a lot and hope things work out. They will never have another coach do what he has done at Kentucky. However, they are the only school in the nation that has five coaches win a national title," former LSU coach Dale Brown on UK coach John Calipari.
Quote of the Week 2: "The work he has done with his conditioning, building up his strength and explosiveness is pretty impressive. He's gonna be around a long time," 247Sports national basketball director Eric Bossi on former UK guard Keldon Johnson's career with the San Antonio Spurs.
Quote of the Week 3: "We never talk about him but he gives you one thing I know because I have seen it every game. You can bank on it and he is going to play 100 percent all-out every night. Does it turn into 20 points? No. But it turns into five deflections, two offensive cutbacks, getting on the floor. He gives you that if he plays five minutes or plays 15 minutes," former UK All-American Jack Givens on UK sophomore Jacob Toppin.

have more access to watch more kids now than ever, just not in person. I get three or four texts after every game from coaches wanting to know where they can download the game video. "One of the really nice things is that some teams we have played have been Reed's biggest promoter. A college coach will call them and they will tell coaches they need to be recruiting Reed. That has happened at least three or four times that I know of"