

Jalen Quinn gardners attention during his 2019-2020 basketball season

By Lenny Sementi

Super soph, Jalen Quinn or diaper dandy as Dick Vitale would say, not only turned heads in central Illinois as the Warriors seventeenth player and the youngest to reach 1,000-points but garnered more than a little attention from the entire state if not the entire Midwest. Quinn reached the century mark in mid-February while dropping a game-high thirty-one points on Meridian in a Central Illinois Conference skirmish.

His video game-like stats and his prowess on the floor with or without the ball led to numerous end of the season accolades starting with unanimous choice first team All CIC honors. The six-foot three-inch point guard that plays his spring and summer ball with the highly acclaimed Illinois Wolves also was selected to the Champaign News Gazette's All Area 1st team and three separate all state squads.

He was a first team selection on the coveted Chicago Sun Times class 2A team and was also a first teamer on the 2A Associated Press team as well collecting the fourth most votes from sports writers around the state. And grabbed a spot on the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association's third team. His nine-points scored, 57 percent from the field shooting, 75 percent from the free throw line, 211-rebounds, 115-assists and 80-steals led all on the Tuscola squad this year earning him the Warriors MVP, Free Throw and Rebound award for the second consecutive season. Oh, he did his fair share of the damage outside connecting on 38 percent of his attempts from outside the arc pouring in 45 in all.

He was recently listed as the eighth best player



Photo: Douglas Cottle

Warrior Jalen Quinn during CIC basketball action with the Warrensburg-Latham Cardinals. The Cardinals edged the Warriors 63-59.

in the state for the class of '2022' by one of the national recruiting services. All this adds up to one thing more attention from the college ranks. "Jalen has either visited or a coach has attended a practice or game from Missouri, Illinois, Purdue, Eastern Illi-

nois, Indiana State, Southern Illinois, Illinois State and Virginia Tech," stated Warrior bench boss Justin Bozarth.

"He and I have had numerous conversations on how he wants to climb in those rankings. Since our season has ended, he

has an extreme passion and motivation to continue to develop not only his game but also his strength and conditioning. I think we are seeing Jalen mature as a player and a young man. On the court, he has a growing passion to get better. I think you could

see that statistically in the increase in his perimeter shooting this year as well as his ability to find his teammates in position for them to score the basketball. One of the things that opposing coaches have repeatedly talked to us about is how he's a difficult match up because not only does he score but he creates openings for his teammates to score as well. A lot of times when going against a great scorer, teams can focus in on limiting their shot opportunities. However, Jalen is really good at finding his teammates when the defense over commits to him."

Quinn who now sits in fourteenth on Tuscola's all time scoring list joined with two other All CIC performers Jacob Kibler (2ndTeam) and Grant Hardwick (honorable mention) helped lead Tuscola to one of the best seasons wins-wise in program history. The trio along with a few other big pieces like Cole Cunningham, Ben Dixon, and Nick Williams helped the Warriors to a

26-4 record overall capturing outright second place in the CIC and should be the odds on favorites heading into next season.

"Off the court, you can see Jalen mature like most kids his age. He's a naturally quiet kid most of the time but you can truly see his cordialness and respect when talking to college coaches and other adults," stated the coach. "In addition, he understands his influence on younger kids in our town who look up to him and his classmates. One of the things I'm more proud of is his new found confidence and willingness to interact with so many students from North Ward who see him out and about."



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