

By Mike Kilroy
exploreVenango.com

Easton Fulmer's first priority was to make sure his ravenous teammates had plenty to eat.



The recent Franklin graduate had a lot of hungry players around him on the Knights' boys basketball team this past winter. The point guard made sure their appetites were satiated.

"We had a lot of mouths to feed," said Fulmer, who certainly didn't starve himself, averaging 22.2 points per game to lead Franklin.

"We had a lot of dudes who loved to score the ball."

Franklin averaged more than 70 points per game last season on the way to a 23-4 record, a District 10 Region 4 championship, a District 10 Class 3A title, and a trip to the PIAA playoffs.

Damon Curry averaged 15.8 points per game and Luke Guth 13.9 for the Knights.

And then there was Fulmer, who was a nightmare for opponents to contain. When they did manage to hem in the lightning-quick, 6-foot-1 guard, he was adept at giving the ball up to his teammates to score.

"There were just so many options for me," said Fulmer, who also averaged a healthy 5.2 assists per game. "When the defenses really trained in on me, there were a lot of people wide open. I couldn't believe how wide open Damon Curry was throughout the year. It was ridiculous."

Fulmer finished his career with 1,596 points in 100 games. Not bad considering he only scored 93 points as a freshman.

Fulmer's last two years were sensational. He scored 578 points this year as a senior and 530 points last season as a junior.

He shot 45% from the floor in his career and also handed out 375 assists.

It was the team success, however, that Fulmer said he will cherish and remember the most.

"What I really like to think about was changing the whole Franklin basketball culture," Fulmer said. "My freshman year, we weren't great. There were definitely some dark days early in my career, team-wise, wins-and-losses wise."

But, Fulmer saw some hope. He was part of a core group that showed promise.

"We decided that we wanted to learn and we wanted to win real bad," Fulmer said. "My sophomore year was when we turned everything around."

Fulmer credited Ian Haynes with sparking that resurgence. Haynes was a senior that season on the basketball team, but football was his main sport — he's currently a quarterback at Kutztown University. Still, he helped Franklin go 18-8.

Fulmer considers Haynes a mentor.

"Ian Haynes, I mean, he's one of the greatest leaders I've ever been around," Fulmer said. "He's one of the dudes who really taught me how to be a leader just out of straight example.

Basketball wasn't his No. 1 sport. It was probably his third sport. He was the heart and soul of our team. No doubt about it."

Fulmer strived to be that for his teams, wanting badly to follow in Haynes big footsteps.

"You just want to be like that," Fulmer said. "He was the one I always looked at as someone I wanted to be like. He helped me out a lot when I was younger."

Now Fulmer is eager to tackle his next challenge.

This spring, Fulmer signed his letter of intent to play basketball at Edinboro University.

It had long been a dream of Fulmer's to play in college. Because of his size — he has just 150 pound on his 6-1 frame — he knew Division I schools weren't going to be lighting up his cell phone.

He set his sights instead on Division II — and the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference in particular.

But as his senior season approached, Fulmer was getting no interest from the PSAC.

"I remember going into my senior year, me and my dad (Jason Fulmer, who is the Franklin boys basketball coach) were sitting down to dinner. He's like, 'Listen. I just want you to know that if you were truly a PSAC player, the interest would be here by now.' That was a real reality check." Not long after, PSAC schools began to take notice of Fulmer's well-rounded skills on the floor. Clarion University, California University of Pennsylvania, Pitt-Johnstown and, yes, Edinboro, came calling.

In all, more than 20 Division II and III schools were actively recruiting Fulmer.

"It definitely felt good, but there definitely was a lot of stress," Fulmer said. "I mean, you're trying to find a home for the next four years, hopefully, so you have to make sure everything is the way you want it, from the team to the school to everything. But when you finally commit and know where you're going and you're confident with your decision, there's a lot of weight lifted off your shoulders."

Edinboro checked all the boxes for Fulmer. It was close to home. It was a PSAC school and he received an athletic scholarship.

Family is important to Fulmer. His uncle, Bundy Fulmer, coaches the boys basketball team at rival Oil City.

That made for some interesting clashes when Franklin and Oil City squared off — Jason and Easton on one bench and Bundy on the other.

“It was something you always think about,” Easton Fulmer said. “I know my freshman year, I really didn’t get much of a chance (to play against my uncle). I got like 30 seconds in that game. That’s something that stuck with me. My sophomore year, I had a career high on him. I think it was 31 points (it was). It was big, too, because I knew I could score the ball and that helped me out through the season.”

Fulmer may find it more difficult to score the ball in the PSAC. He knows he will have to reinvent himself at the next level.

For the past three seasons at Franklin, he was the point guard. He had the ball in his hands for a large majority of the game.

That will change at Edinboro, where Fulmer will play off the ball as a shooting guard.

He’s already at work on that adjustment.

“I play in a lot of leagues over the summer and I try my best to let other people bring the ball up,” Fulmer said. “I’m trying to get used to being the two-guard. Another thing I’ve been working on is shooting the ball more consistently. I can obviously shoot the ball pretty consistently now, but just trying to get it that much more ironed out. I’m not going to be able to attack the rack as easily as I did in high school.”

Fulmer is also hoping to put more weight on his frame.

He’ll also have to be stronger finishing his shots.

“I’m not the biggest guy around,” Fulmer said. “I’ve put on 10 pounds over the summer, but I definitely need to put on more. I’m not going to be able to finish over everybody because there’s going to be a lot of dudes in my face. I’m going to have to work on hitting harder shots.”

Fulmer, though, is happy to get the opportunity to play at the Division II level — a goal of his since the junior high.

“It’s really a dream come true,” Fulmer said. “Out of the gate, the PSAC was really the goal for me and I’m definitely excited to be there.”