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RANDLEMAN - Most high school coaches are in favor of student-athletes playing as many sports as possible. There are so many benefits in how playing multiple sports can help an athlete, including the improvement of strength, speed, footwork and mental toughness.

Randleman High School's Elizabeth York agrees with that philosophy and senior participated in both tennis and golf this past fall and now is a main cog on the Tigers' basketball squad.

Randleman, which is undefeated heading into action this week, has been nothing less than spectacular ever since York began her high school career. Along with Gracyn Hall and Jordan Booker and then Audra Petty, the Tigers, who are under the leadership of Brandon Varner, have been Randolph County's top team over the past number of years, winning all nine of their games this season. Last year, RHS finished 25-1, including a perfect Piedmont Athletic Conference season, and that followed years of 12-4 (10-2 in league play) and 24-3 (12-0). In York's four seasons, the Tigers are 70-8 overall and 36-2 in conference play.

York and her overall athletic ability has been a big reason why.

"It definitely helps you develop differently," said York, who leads the Tigers in scoring on the basketball court, averaging a hefty 19.9 points per game. "Basketball is constantly running and tennis is short bursts of energy. In basketball, you have to move right and left and that definitely helps in basketball. Playing a lot of sports helps you develop as an athlete and a person because you are working on developing success and relationships with teammates."



*Randleman senior Elizabeth York.
Photo provided.*

Varner, who has spearheaded quite a turnaround in the program - the Tigers won just 27 games in the eight years prior to his arrival - said playing numerous sports under different coaches is a strong benefit in high school.



Randleman senior Elizabeth York. Photo provided.

"I have some who go straight from the basketball floor to the softball field and some who go right from the volleyball court to the basketball court," Varner said. "They get to hear from different coaches. It's not always me coaching them. It's a lot of time and you have to be dedicated to do those things and (York) has been."

Besides playing basketball all four years, York, who played one year of softball, golf and volleyball prior to her senior season, added tennis to her resume this past fall.

"I had a friend who was playing tennis and she told me they didn't have many people and she thought I would be pretty good," York said. "I decided to give it a try and it was really fun."

She did that while playing on the golf team for the second year in a row.

"Randleman had never had a golf team and they were trying to put one together and I said I would play because my dad and I had gone out and played some," York said, adding that things were made easier because Heidi Adams coached both sports.

Now it's basketball season and York, who recently scored her 1,000th point, is exactly where she wants to be and her and the Tigers are meeting the lofty expectations Varner had for them when this senior group arrived at RHS four years ago.

"Whenever I came, Coach Varner had already been there one year and he had a lot of expectations," York said. "He had a lot of expectations for me and Gracyn. He had seen us and knew our potential. We just had to fit in with the team. There was no time to be scared or nervous. Coach Varner sets the bar high and he expects us to reach it."

This year may not have been the smoothest of starts, but the Tigers will take a perfect 9-0 record into games this week against Oak Grove and then PAC rival Southwestern Randolph.

Hall, who has had an incredible career as well, is averaging 15.6 points and 10.7 rebounds per contest.

"Between (York) and Gracyn, they know some basketball," Varner said. "They are both top five in their class. Elizabeth has matured so much as far as the way she plays and handles things mentally and physically. She has always had skill and talent. She has grown up so much as a leader for our team. She has an incredible basketball IQ and an understanding of the game."

York has run the point the past three seasons for the Tigers and that is another area she continues to improve and excel in.

"She moves well, can get up and down the court and if she didn't have the Covid year when she missed some games due to an injury, she would have passed the 1,000-point mark a long time ago. This is all about guard play and Elizabeth is playing well. She is going to take us as far as we can go."

It should be very far once again.



York scored her 1000th career point on December 6th against Central Davidson. Photo provided.