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ASHEBORO - When most high school student-athletes leave home to embark on a collegiate sports career, there's plenty of maturing that has to be done. Having discipline and structure are characteristics that most athletes must learn if they are to be successful.

That won't be a problem for Uwharrie Charter Academy's Ashara Spruill. She has already demonstrated a maturity far beyond her years.

The UCA senior, a four-year starter on the Eagles' basketball team who will end her career with nearly every school record, has shown her strength of character off the court as well as she helps take care of her parents and niece every single day.

"My parents are older, so when I get time, I have to help take care of them and help with things around the house," said Spruill, sounding more mature than most high school-aged girls. "I have to help with homework, getting baths going. It's pretty chaotic."

Though she may have missed some of the activities most girls get to experience while in high school, she understands her situation.

"I am not a person who stresses, not really," Spruill said. "It was different seeing kids being able to do other things, but it's made me more mature, more responsible and given me a sense of teamwork outside of basketball."

She has met all her family obligations and earned straight A's in school while becoming a force on the basketball court. She will finish her career with more than 900 points and rebounds, an impressive feat. As a freshman, she averaged 3.4 points and 5.4 rebounds a game. In her sophomore year, she averaged 3.4 points while increasing her rebounds to an average of 7.2 per game. Her last two years have shown a steady increase in all categories. As a junior, she averaged 11.5 points, 9.6 rebounds, 2.5 assists and 1.7 steals per game,



UCA senior Ashara Spruill. Photo provided.

team bests in every category. Once again this season, she is the team leader in all statistics, scoring 17.5 points, 13.3 rebounds, 3.5 assists and 2.2 steals per contest.



Uwharrie Charter Academy's Ashara Spruill. Photo provided.

"She came in as a freshman and I saw all the potential in the world," UCA coach Austin Davis said. "It took her about two and half seasons to realize just how good she can be. She is a tremendous athlete. Even in her first couple of years when she wasn't scoring she had a knack of rebounding, finding the ball and going over people to get it. She has always played hard and been a tremendous defender. She has taken her time to realize what type of player and ability she has."

Quiet in nature, Spruill said she kept that demeanor on the court for more than two seasons.

"It was halfway through my junior year," Spruill said of when she said she realized it was time to be aggressive. "It's just the type of person I am, staying in the background. But after my junior season ended, Coach Davis said I had to step up and most of the scoring would come through me. It was something I knew I was capable of, to come out and produce

more points."

Always wanting to play basketball in college, Spruill kept in contact with a number of area schools, hoping to catch their attention. She put her highlights on Twitter and got a phone call from Division I Texas Southern. It didn't take much prodding for Spruill to sign.

First, Spruill has at least one more game in an Eagles jersey. UCA will travel to Christ the King in Huntersville for the first round of the state 1-A Playoffs tonight

"This class has been to the playoffs all four years and she has been a big part of that," Davis said.

Success on the court and success off the court. Spruill has experienced both and shown a maturity not many her age can claim.