

EHS' Stephen becomes senior class' third member of 1,000-point club

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Oliver Stephen, Mark Smith and A.J. Epenesa all entered Edwardsville High School as freshmen in the fall of 2013.

When the book closes on them this spring, their place in EHS' athletic history will be assured.

Stephen became the third member of this senior trio to join the Edwardsville basketball program's **1,000-point club** when he hit a three-point shot with 3:58 left in the game; Epenesa and Smith had reached the plateau earlier in the season.

“It's pretty awesome,” Stephen said about the accomplishment. “We all grew up together and knowing we each have 1,000 points is pretty huge. There's been a whole bunch of players who have come through this program; I'm glad I'm a part of that's a pretty big thing.

“That's an awesome feeling,” Stephen said about all three being able to graduate from the program as 1,000-point scorers.

Smith's ability to kick the ball out to Stephen or another open man for a good shot has helped Stephen amass the points he has been able to. “He's a great point guard and he will pass when it's open.”

Having Epenesa back Friday night from a pair of all-star football games he took part in helped make a difference for the Tigers. “He's our big man and we missed him a lot when he was out in Hawaii (for the Polynesian Bowl all-star game); it's really good to have him back,” Stephen said.

When Stephen looks back at his high school days, the memories of the 1,000-point careers between him, Smith and Epenesa will loom large.

“It's definitely something to look back on,” Stephen said. “I'll probably remember this for a long time.”