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WESTWORD

WEB EXCLUSIVES

Freshman Loyd garners AP all-state honorable mention Rookie guard one of 18 Illinois players to be honored

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Around Town Editor

Freshman guard Jewell Loyd has been named to the Associated Press Class 4A girls' basketball all-state team, one of 18 Illinois players so honored. Loyd, who made the honorable mention list, expressed her excitement about the honor. "It is awesome! I am a freshman, so it is cool," Loyd said.

Girls' basketball team's head coach Tony Konsewicz said he can understand Loyd's elation. "When you are 15 years old in your first year of high school, and you are recognized as one of the top 18 in the largest [enrollment] class of girls basketball players, I would be very excited."



Loyd

Loyd plays on traveling teams year-round and aspires to play college and professional basketball, a goal that drives her. "I never stop playing," Loyd said.

Loyd's stellar performance this year caught the eye of the statewide panel of sportswriters and broadcasters. She averaged 19.5 points, 7.1 rebounds, 3.1 assists, 2.2 steals and 1.4 blocks per game. Overall, she shot 49% from the field, 36% from beyond the 3-point arc.

Her teammates on the court appreciate Loyd's hard work and unselfish play. "Jewell doesn't let her talent get to her head," junior Maggie Kearns said.

The feeling is mutual.

"The girls on the team were really great," Loyd said. "They were a lot of fun."

Her coach agrees.

"It was really fun to see her evolve from the first day to where she ended the season," Konsewicz said. "The scary part for the rest of our opponents is to see how good she is going to be by the time she is a senior. It is good for us, and bad for them. Jewell's honorable mention is a tribute to how hard she plays; she is talented."

West's last all-state varsity player was Nancy Zoros in 1984. This year, Loyd was one of two freshmen to make all-state.

"It is nice to see Niles West getting the recognition," Konsewicz said. "I'll be shocked if [this year's recognition] is the only nomination Jewell gets. She is going to be scary good."