

freshman FIRSTS

Varsity player sinks volume-changing tenth point on Silent Night

The bright scoreboard illuminated the gym as its clock ticked down to its last few seconds in the first quarter. As time continued to diminish and the fans grew restless, **Drew Zurilla**, 9, was put into the game and shot his first jump shot as a Warrior.

As the shot went in—the shot that broke the designated "Silent Night" in the ChopHouse—the crowd erupted into a chant. The most distinguishable phrase in the crowd of chatter, "He's a freshman!" echoed off corners of the gym. But for Zurilla, he was most focused on the first points of his high school career.

"I just had a feeling I would score the tenth point," Zurilla said. "The fact that they were my first points of the season just made it better."

In his eighth grade year, Zurilla was cut from tryouts for the freshman team. A year later during his tryouts as a freshman, he found out that he had improved enough to make the varsity team.

"I was not expecting [to make varsity] at all," Zurilla said. "It was surprising, but I feel like it is where I belong."

Going into the season, Zurilla didn't believe he would get much playing time on the court. So

when head coach **Chris Warzynski** gave him an opportunity, he was ready to perform.

"Coach told me he wanted to play me more at practice before the game," Zurilla said. "I was very nervous, and didn't know what was going to happen."

Even though he knew he would be put in the game, Zurilla was surprised to be called into the game so early. With a couple of minutes left in the

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first quarter, he was ready to play.

"I was just waiting to get in and didn't expect the coach to sub me in so early," Zurilla said. "I got in and I was ready to shoot. I just had to get going early and be aggressive."

Warzynski noticed Zurilla's improvement in practices. Hard work is something that Warzynski acknowledges, which has earned Zurilla the playing time he has worked towards.

"As a player you earn the trust of a coach in practice first," Warzynski said. "[Zurilla] started playing better in practice and earned the

opportunity to play in games."

Seeing his potential, Warzynski noticed Zurilla's ability to shoot the basketball and decided to give him time to display his ability in the games, even as a freshman.

"It does not matter what grade he is in," Warzynski said. "[Zurilla] is one of the best shooters on the team and he has shown that to me."

Zurilla's ability to shoot has not only made him a great player to coach but a great teammate in the eyes of **Will Hill**, 11. Hill sees Zurilla as someone he can count on throughout the game.

"He's a very reliable shooter," Hill said. "I can trust him to take shots because I know he is capable of shooting very well."

Throughout his time as Zurilla's teammate, Hill sees the potential of the sharpshooting freshman. Hill sees how much of an asset Zurilla will be to the team, especially in a few years, if he keeps working on his game.

"[Zurilla] will be very good when he is older," Hill said. "He has lots of years on varsity to improve his game. He will just need to keep working hard."

Story by **Andy Bumgarner**
Designer **Harmon Kerriso**

SILENT NIGHT

senior night

10 POINTS UNTIL YOU CAN CHEER



AN ALREADY SILENT CHOPHOUSE:

ChopHouse leader **Brian Leonard**, 12, said Silent Night brought energy to a tough year for the student section. "This year, based on the numbers and turnout, wasn't the best year for the ChopHouse... It was a first for all of us. Having to limit numbers in a crowd is a big thing for getting the amount of hype everyone needs to have a good time... It may not be exactly what is has been in the past, but we weren't exactly silent this year," Leonard said; photo by a. morrall



HALF COURT SHOT:

At the silent night game, **Ian Coste**, 12, makes a memorable half court shot. "I just felt really happy it went in, especially because we won the game after. I have always loved playing basketball," Coste said; photo by a. mcLeod

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