

Since entering the high school program as freshman, none of the teams 54 wins was as sweet as Saturday's for Eastern's three seniors, Katie Ernstberger, Rachel Hamilton and Brooke Rodewig. The three have been part of a lot of big moments, but Saturday's 40-38 win over Paoli ranks at the top. Ernstberger called the win, the best moment she has experienced in high school. She also expressed how good it felt to get over the frustration of losing two years in a row in the sectional finals to Paoli.

"We deserve it," she said. "It's about darn time we won one of these!"

Rodewig had trouble finding words to say what the win meant to her.

"This means everything to me," she said. "It's really an indescribable feeling. I really don't even know what to say. I am just so happy."

Hamilton admitted to being anxious before the game, but was thrilled with the way she and her teammates stepped up to win the game.

"It really means a lot," she said. "I wasn't sure if we were going to be able to pull it out, but we all stepped up and did it. It really means a lot knowing that we came back, fought for it and finally got it."

While Rodewig was happy, she said the thought of losing Saturday night never entered her mind.

"I really felt like this was ours from the beginning," she said. "We were all motivated and then we got off to a great start and I never doubted we could pull this out."

Head Coach Mike McBride said he was glad to see the three seniors finally experience a win over the Lady Rams.

"Paoli has been a thorn in our side," he said. "Prior to this game, our seniors had never beaten them. We stuck to the plan and got it done when we needed to."

Young guns

Sophomore Morgan Martin has seen her playing time increase throughout the season. She said she expected to play some varsity this year, but could never have imagined playing such a big role.

"No, I didn't think I would be in this position," she said. "It's just awesome to be part of it and be able to have this experience. I am just so glad we get to go to regionals!"

Another sophomore, Bailey England played an important role in the Lady Musketeers' win over Crawford County in the sectional semi-finals.

Laken Heavner, also a member of the sophomore class, played a role in the win over the Lady

WolfPack as well.

Two more sophomores dressed for the games and were on the sectional roster.

Mix that class with a very talented freshman class and it's easy to see why McBride smiles when asked about the state of his program.

Juniors are vital

If the Eastern Lady Musketeers have any unsung heroes, they are members of the junior class.

Rebekah Feist is a starter, who rarely tries to do things she is not capable on the basketball court.

She never forces shot and rarely turns it over.

Kaitlyn Stewart is more of a role player who has been coming on as the season progressed. She played a key role in both wins in the sectional tournament.

It's that kind of stability from both Stewart and Feist that makes them very important pieces to the puzzle.

Feist has been in the program the last two years when the seasons ended with losses to the Lady Rams.

"Winning this means a lot," she said. We've gotten to the championship the last two years against Paoli and it feels good to actually win one!"

Feist had five points in the game and grabbed six rebounds in the championship game.

In the semi-final game, Feist managed just two points and admitted to looking past Crawford in anticipation of the championship.

"It was hard to focus on Crawford County because we were looking so forward to this one," She said. "We had to knuckle down and get that one and then control our nerves in the championship."

McBride closing

in on 100

With two wins Saturday, McBride now has 92 wins as a head coach, eight shy of the 100

mark.

Even with a state championship he could not obtain eight more wins, but should give the century mark a run before the Christmas break next winter.

While that will be a nice accomplishment, he admits that you play and coach to win championships.

“Every year this is a goal,” McBride said. “We’ve had chances and opportunities in the past and this year, this group stayed together and were good enough to pull it out.”