

# “Gaudy numbers”: Stutz breaks 20-year-old BC3 basketball scoring record

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Butler County Community College sophomore guard Joel Stutz (33) drives past Westmoreland County Community College freshman guard Michael Yuricha (20) en route to a layup, his 1,304<sup>th</sup> career points at BC3 and the college’s all-time basketball scoring record on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019.

(Butler, PA) With a right-handed layup on his second shot of the game, sophomore guard Joel Stutz on Saturday became the all-time leading scorer in the 52-year history of the Butler County Community College men’s basketball program, breaking a 20-year-old record that the Pioneers’ 1,000-point scorers thought improbable to topple.

The 2017 graduate of Butler Area Senior High School eclipsed the two-year total of 1,303 points at BC3 held by fellow Butler High graduate Bryant Lewandowski during the Pioneers’ 90-69 victory over Westmoreland County Community College in the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference semifinals at BC3’s Field House.

Stutz entered the 51st game of his career at BC3 two points shy of passing those recorded by Lewandowski, a 1999 National Junior College Athletic Association Division III All-American whose final 17 points in 57 games as a Pioneer came in the NJCAA Division III Region XX semifinals against Montgomery College, in Rockville, Md., on Feb. 28, 1999.

Stutz's layup, off a Josh Knochel pass and against Wolfpack defender Michael Yuricha, was the first of 14 points he scored Saturday. Stutz now has 729 points this season and 1,316 in his BC3 career.

"My name recognized with some All-Americans, some great players that came through here, it is really an honor," Stutz said, adding "I don't think I realize right now how big it is.

"It's over. It's finally done. A monkey off my back. I don't have to worry about this anymore."

Stutz's historic shot came 21 days after Mackenzie Craig passed Julia Baxter to become the top scorer in the BC3 women's basketball program.

Craig, a sophomore forward and Karns City graduate, on Jan. 26 broke the Butler High graduate's career record of 1,093 points set from 2015-17. Craig scored 15 points Saturday night to move her program-leading total to 1,267 and help the Pioneers win their third WPCO championship in four years with a 62-43 victory over the University of Pittsburgh-Titusville.

## Passing the torch

As a freshman, Stutz's 21.7 points per game average led BC3 and was 15th best among players on the NJCAA's 104 Division III squads. As a sophomore, his 31.1 average leads the NJCAA's Division III and is nearly 14 points higher than that of his twin brother, Jace, BC3's second-leading scorer.

Stutz this season became the fourth player in the BC3 men's basketball program to score at least 1,000 points in two years, passing Matt Lobaugh, with 1,088 from 2004-2006; Austin Miller, with 1,159 from 2014-16; and Lewandowski, from 1997-1999.



Butler County Community College men's basketball coach Dick Hartung, left, presents sophomore guard Joel Stutz, center, with a commemorative basketball after Stutz scored his record 1,304<sup>th</sup> career point as a Pioneer on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019, in BC3's Field House. At right is Jace Stutz, Joel's twin brother and also a BC3 sophomore guard.

“There was an article written in a newspaper in which it said I would be pretty tough to catch at 1,300-plus,” Lewandowski said. “And the reporter was right. That it lasted 20 years, for me in itself, was an accomplishment. I was very proud of that.”

Lewandowski is also proud of Stutz, saying that it is “extremely hard” for a freshman to add 10 points to his scoring average at BC3 in his sophomore year.

“He is the type of player,” said Lewandowski, a 2018 inductee into BC3’s Pioneer Hall of Fame, “you want to pass the torch to.”

Lewandowski’s 1,303 were “a lot of points,” said Lobaugh, a graduate of Chaney High in Youngstown, Ohio. “It takes a special athlete to pass that.”

That special athlete, Miller said, is Stutz, who in passing Lewandowski accomplished that which Miller thought impossible.

“I didn’t think it could be done again,” said Miller, a graduate of Knoch High. “That’s a lot of points to have on average, and to keep it up over a two-year pace, it’s pretty impressive.”

Said Jace of Joel: “This year he is definitely the focus of every team’s game plan.”

Opponents “know he’s coming,” BC3 coach Dick Hartung said. “They read the NJCAA stats. He has a target on his back. And yet, he keeps going.”

## “Double-team Joel”

Stutz kept going in the face of Westmoreland County Community College’s box-and-one defense in BC3’s final regular-season game Wednesday night, scoring 17 consecutive BC3 points and 25 of the Pioneers’ 40 in an 11-minute span of the first half.

“Any time you play someone of that caliber, you definitely want to try to limit his touches,” Westmoreland coach William Johnson said. “It’s hard, because he is a high-talent player.”

Added BC3 sophomore guard Josh Campbell, a Knoch High graduate: “Every team we play, their game plan is to double-team Joel and try to shut him down. He is handling it really well for how hard it is.”



The top scorers through Feb. 16, 2019, in the history of the BC3 men’s basketball program are, top left, Joel Stutz, with 1,316 points; top right, Bryant Lewandowski, with 1,303; bottom left, Austin Miller, with 1,159; and Matt Lobaugh, with 1,088.

“He shoots the ball like no other person I have ever played with,” said Knochel, a Knoch High graduate, “with the frequency and the amount that they go in.”

Stutz developed a shooting form between his freshman and sophomore year at Butler High, Golden Tornado coach Matt Clement said, one that has led to his being ranked second in the NJCAA with 110 successful 3-pointers in 299 attempts and sixth with 131 successful free throws in 171 tries.

“The form of his shot, it never strayed,” Clement said of Stutz, who converted 70 of 192 3-point attempts and 47 of 59 foul shots in his senior year.

“The consistency of his form allows for good results. He kind of figured that out between ninth and 10th grade, and put a lot of time into it and became such a dangerous shooting weapon for us. ... He is also such a physical presence driving to the hoop and getting rebounds. When you add the shooting stroke, that’s what turned him into that complete player.

“These are gaudy numbers that he has put up this year.”