

Howard: Part Aquaman, Superman



by Steve Hu
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Howard started close to 10 games in her freshman year when she averaged 5.7 points, 5.6 rebounds, and 2.3 assists. In addition, she has also been on the water polo team for the Yellowjackets. Hence, Howard is part Superman and part Aquaman - accounting for the gender difference of course.

At 5-foot-10 and 143 pounds, Howard has been playing organized basketball since 5th grade. She is in her second year on varsity for the Yellowjackets and is a key player in the rotation. Depending on the rotation on the floor for the Yellowjackets, Howard can play either the guard or a post position. Howard is tall and a good jumper, which makes her a solid rebounder. In addition, she has a dominant jump shot due to her jumping ability that results in her getting fouled often.

During the offseason, she plays for her club team CA Ballaz. Howard works on her dribbling because she believes that dribbling is a useful skill even as a post player. She also works on free throws as her current season's goal is to shoot 90% and her ultimate goal is to shoot as close to 100% as possible.

Her individual goals are to strengthen her entire body that include her arms to pass faster, farther, and more accurately, her fingers and hands to be able to catch fast balls with more ease, her legs to increase her jumping ability, and her core to fight for post position. She hopes that her efforts will help her Yellowjackets to make a run for state title.

Berkeley High Coach Cheryl Draper says, "Rachel Howard is a 5'9 soph entering her 2nd year of varsity play for the Yellowjackets. She is our leading rebounder this year averaging 8.6. Rachel is the 6th man in our rotation. Her strength includes, rebounding, good outside shooter with 3 pt range. She is an outstanding on the ball defender, as well as defending the post. Rachel sees the passing lanes from both the post and perimeter. Her greatest attributes are her ability to catch in traffic (great hands), cutting sharply, fundamental foot work, and dribble drive to the basket. She has various low post moves, and can score facing or with her back to the basket. She has a very nice jumper, with a soft touch. Her on court presence is calmness, yet very aggressive, she enjoys competing in big games, she is extremely coachable, attentive to details, and very supportive towards teammates."

During the fall, she plays water polo for the Yellowjackets. She has only been playing water polo for two years but has been told that she has the ability and potential to play at the NCAA level. She would not mind playing both basketball and water polo in college.

As a sophomore, Howard has not been in contact with any colleges. But with her height and size, two sport skills, and playing for the basketball powerhouse Lady Yellowjackets, colleges should be taking notice soon. When these schools call on her, they should know that Howard is looking for a basketball program that is great, competitive, and fun. She prefers a warm and sunny climate. Howard would not mind being close to home to allow family and friends to watch her games but she would also not mind going further away for a new experience. Howard has a 3.80 GPA as her best subjects are English and History. As a result, she would like to attend a strong academic school with a wide variety of majors and minors.

Coach Draper says, "Off the court, Rachel understands time management in regards to her class work and practice schedule. She is popular and well liked by her peers. She is on time to classes and has an excellent attendance record. Miss Howard is a well mannered, neatly dressed 15 yr old. I see her as a Div 1 guard or wing player, her height limits her towards the wing /guard position, she should be a force wherever she goes, and her work ethic is off the chart. She excelled in water polo as a goalie or played on the front line where she was rewarded as an all league performer."

Howard comes from a large family as she has five sisters and two brothers. She considers her most trying non-sport ordeal to be her family's house remodel during her freshman year when the family of ten had at times only the use of one bathroom and no central heating. She considers her most trying athletic adversity to be her dislocation of her right shoulder during the fall of 2010 that caused her to miss her water polo team's playoffs. This also caused her to be behind in getting ready for the current basketball season and she had to be somewhat cautious with her healed shoulder. She believes that both of these recent adversities have tested her optimism, patience, and perseverance to make her more determined and focused.

Howard's teammates have given her the nicknames of "Larry Bird" and "Uh-Oh Oreo" as she often relieves

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San Diego State bound Chairese Culberson in the post. After this season, Howard will be expected to step up to fill the interior for the Yellowjackets. That task should be no problem.

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