

No.2 Ankeny too tough for Warriors

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - Ankeny sophomore Jaali Winters is a splendid 6-foot-3 athlete who can jump up and touch the rim and smile at the crowd while she's scoring baskets.

One of these days she might even dunk the ball.

"I've thought about it," she said Wednesday after putting on a show at the Class 5A state basketball tournament at the Wells Fargo Arena.

Winters scored 17 points, grabbed eight rebounds and blocked seven shots to help the second-ranked Hawkettes dunk Cedar Rapids Washington, 66-58, in the quarterfinals.

Winters combined with Brittany Hedrick and Madi Robson, Ankeny's two outstanding guards, to send the Warriors (17-7) back to Cedar Rapids on a snowy day.

Hedrick poured in 24 points to lead all scorers, while Robson notched 14 points and nine assists.

"I think that's probably part of the reason why they're down here," said Washington Coach

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Frank Howell, saluting the Hawkettes (20-4). "They have an excellent point guard (Robson) and 32 (Hedrick) is a great shooter and Winters is outstanding in the post.

"You have to give their kids a lot of credit."

Winters' father is former University of Iowa basketball player James Winters, an undersized but effective center during the Tom Davis era.

Washington scored more points against Ankeny than anyone else did this season, but it still wasn't enough. Part of the problem was that Dani Franklin got into early foul trouble for the Warriors and missed 12 minutes of the game.



Franklin finished with 15 points, but spent too much time watching instead of playing.

"You'd like to have the most firepower out there as possible, especially when you're playing from behind a little bit," said Howell. "Maybe that would have made the difference, but maybe not.

"We lost to a really good team that is here for a reason. But just one kid in foul trouble can make a pretty big impact on a team."

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Franklin, a 6-foot-1 junior, was a divisional Athlete of the Year in the Mississippi Valley Conference this season and is being recruited by NCAA Division I schools.

Ankeny jumped to a 20-12 lead after one quarter and was still leading by those same eight points when the game ended. Washington got within three points early in the second half at 33-30 and 37-34, but never got any closer.

"Every time we needed to, we had somebody that stepped up," said Ankeny Coach Scott DeJong, who is seeking his seventh state title with the Hawkettes.

Aleena Hobbs popped in 21 points for the Warriors by hitting 7 of 10 shots from the field and 7 of 9 shots from the foul line. Abby Herb scored 15 points for Washington by hitting 11 of 12 free throws, but was only 2 for 13 from the field against Winters & Co.

Washington seniors Herb, Madison Kramer and Colby Bjornsen struggled from the field in their final high school game and shot a collective 3 for 24. Hobbs and Franklin, the two juniors in the starting lineup, combined to shoot 14 for 21.

"They're a strong defensive team," said Kramer. "We just couldn't get going and play our game."

Franklin picked up her third foul with 1:31 left in the second quarter and collected her fourth foul with 3:47 left in the third period, earning a seat on the bench both times.

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