

Ollinger fills many roles for J-Hawks

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 12 November 2013 23:34 - Last Updated Tuesday, 12 November 2013 23:36



Amanda Ollinger is a 6-foot-2 center who can do just about anything you need on a basketball floor and do it well.

She handles the ball well enough to be a point guard, she shoots well enough to be an off-guard, she runs the floor like a small forward and she can post herself near the basket and bang around like a power forward.

"She can literally play any spot on the floor," Jefferson Coach Jason Edwards said Tuesday at practice. "If they want to guard her big, she can step out on the perimeter. If they want to guard her small, she can take them down low and put it in the basket.

"She's working on her confidence and saying, 'It doesn't matter. I can play any spot.'"

Ollinger averaged 7.5 points and 6.8 rebounds for Jefferson last season as a freshman. The J-Hawks featured five seniors in the starting lineup last year when they finished 8-14, but those seniors are all gone now and Edwards has a young team in his second year as head coach.

Maddie Koolbeck (Coe), Dani Stromert (Loras), Kaitlyn Davidson (Mount Mercy) Rachel Broghammer (UNI) and Taylor Jacobson (UNI) are all college athletes now in a variety of sports.

"It's almost like starting all over, because we're so young," Edwards said. "I'm throwing a lot at them right now. I think that's probably why their heads are spinning a little bit."

Ollinger had a good summer with the Iowa Attack AAU basketball team, good enough to get college scholarship offers from Iowa and Drake. She also had an impressive fall with the Jefferson volleyball team and will decide at some point whether she wants to play basketball or

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volleyball in college.

Edwards said her confidence is much higher than it was a year ago.

"She's just got that mindset that she wants to be the best at everything she does," Edwards said. "And she's going to work her behind off to get there. It's good to have in practice, for her to set the tone and say, 'Look, this is how we're going to be.'"

Jefferson has another good-looking young player on the squad this year with freshman Kennedy Dighton, a post player with a nice touch around the basket. Ollinger and Dighton will give the J-Hawks a pair of good-sized players this season.

"It's definitely nice to have those two together for a long time. They're young," Edwards noted. "You've got a freshman and a sophomore."

Edwards said senior Maddy Blietz will play a bigger role on the club this year after averaging 3.5 points. He also thinks he has a pair of promising point guards and other players who can help the team.