

## Muhl nets 19th ICCAC title with Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 28 February 2015 18:29 - Last Updated Saturday, 28 February 2015 20:18

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Tyra Polite was looking forward to helping the Kirkwood women's basketball team compete for the regional title this season and a possible run at the national tournament, but that's not how it turned out for the talented 5-foot-9 sophomore from Pennsylvania.

Polite spent the final game of the regular season at the end of the Kirkwood bench Saturday with a broken bone in her ankle and crutches at her side, done for the year with an untimely injury that has finished her career with the Eagles.

Kirkwood defeated Iowa Central without her, 63-48, and will be the No. 1 seed for the regional tournament, but Polite's absence is a big loss for the seventh-ranked Eagles.

"Leadership," said Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl, pointing to Polite's best attribute. "She's left-handed, she's our assist leader, she'd hit a three. She was just good with the ball."

Muhl captured his 19th conference title in 26 years as Kirkwood's coach this season with a 13-1 league record. The Eagles (25-5) will host Ellsworth (6-23) in the quarterfinals of the regional tournament Tuesday at

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5:30 p.m.

Polite averaged 8.7 points, 4.8 assists and 3.0 rebounds for Kirkwood this season in a balanced attack. The Eagles have a deep team and other talented players, but there's no doubt she'll be missed in the postseason tournaments.

"I'm here for my team," she said after Saturday's game. "I'll be with them as far as we go. I'll be here no matter what."

Polite has had sprained ankles before, so she knew this injury was different when she got hurt against Iowa Lakes Feb. 14.

"I knew it was something different because of the way it felt when I did it," she said. "I knew it was more intense and something serious."

Polite learned the results of the MRI on Tuesday and was not surprised when told there was a small fracture. "I didn't want to hear it," she said, "but it is what it is."

Polite plans to finish her degree at Kirkwood this spring and continue her basketball career at a four-year school back East, but she has not picked a college yet.

The Eagles had a fairly easy time with Iowa Central Saturday. Taylor Silva, Cassidy Clark and Ariel Sneed all scored 11 points for Kirkwood. Sneed also grabbed 10 rebounds for a double-double.

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Anna Martensen added 10 points on Sophomore Day at Johnson Hall.



"It wasn't pretty, but it was a win," said Muhl. "It was a hard game to play. You have a lot of parents here who haven't seen their kids play. We weren't very sharp today, but that's OK."

Ashley Ray scored 16 points for Iowa Central (19-11, 7-7).

The regional tournament will be played on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The highest seeds will host their own games, so Kirkwood would be home all week as the No. 1 seed if it keeps winning.

In recent years the site for the tournament finals was pre-determined and rotated among the schools, but Muhl helped lead the campaign to reward teams for what they did in the regular season.

"I think that's the way it should be," he said. "You've earned the right to host."

IOWA CENTRAL (48): Anaya 0 0-0 0, Wiseman 1 2-2 5, Ray 52-3 16, Royster 1 2-7 4, Mericle 3 3-10 9, Henderson 0 0-0 0, Silliman 3 7-8 14, Altman 0

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0-0 0. Totals 13 16-30 48.

KIRKWOOD (63): Silva 2 6-7 11, Larson 2 0-0 6, Hutchins 1 0-0 2, Martense 4 2-2 10, Clark 34-5 11, Sneed 50-0 11, Miles 1 0-0 3, Downs 1 0-0 2, Isaac 0 1-2 1, Oberman 0 0-0 0, Sudduth 0 0-0 0, Bockholt 1 22 4, Kallenberger 0 0-0 0, Wood 10-0 2. Totals 21 15-18 63.

Halftime - Kirkwood 41, Iowa Central 27. 3-point goals - Iowa Central 6 (Ray 4, Wiseman 1, Silliman 1), Kirkwood 6 (Larson 2, Silva 1, Clark 1, Sneed 1, Miles 1).