

No. 9 Eagles crush Iowa Central by 50

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 28 February 2015 20:23 - Last Updated Sunday, 01 March 2015 22:18



The Kirkwood men's basketball team will be riding a wave of confidence into the regional tournament after crushing Iowa Central, 95-45, in the final game of the regular season at Johnson Hall Saturday.

It was Kirkwood's most lopsided victory in the ICCAC conference this season and lifted the ninth-ranked Eagles to a 23-6 overall record heading into the postseason. The Eagles finished second in the league with a 9-3 record behind DMACC.

Kirkwood will host Iowa Lakes (16-14) in the quarterfinals of the Region XI NJCAA Division II tournament Tuesday at 7:30. The Kirkwood women will meet Ellsworth in the first tournament game Tuesday at 5:30.

"It was a fun win, a good win" said Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen after the easy 50-point victory on Sophomore Day.

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Jordan Ashton popped in four 3-pointers and led Kirkwood with 16 points. Jacob Olson, a Cedar Rapids Jefferson grad, pitched in 14 points and grabbed seven rebounds off the bench. Matt Lassen hit three triples and scored 13 points and Hunter Rhodes had 11 points.

Marcus Baldwin scored 19 points for Iowa Central (16-14, 4-8). Jefferson grad Ky Kramer had seven points and four rebounds for the visitors.

Kirkwood will host a semifinal game in the regional tournament on Thursday if it defeats Iowa Lakes on Tuesday, but the Eagles might have to defeat second-ranked DMACC on the road Saturday to win the regional title and reach the national tournament.

The Eagles lost both of their regular-season games to DMACC, falling 88-87 in overtime at home and losing 66-60 at DMACC this past Thursday night.

Petersen ascribes to the "one game at a time" approach to coaching, but he knows what it would take to knock off DMACC should they meet in the regional finals on Saturday.

"A great effort," he said. "It's going to take an all-in, one-team, one-focus effort for 40 minutes. We haven't played 40 minutes of quality basketball against that group yet. And that's why we lost both games, because they're a very good basketball team and to beat them that's what you've got to do."

"We've got the pieces to do it, we just have to go and prove it."

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Kirkwood's goal for the regular season was to win the league title and claim the No. 1 seed for the tournament. Nonetheless, Petersen is proud of the 23-6 record and No. 2 seed.

"Like any coach in our program (at Kirkwood), the standards are set pretty high and that's where it should be," he said. "For the most part, it's been a good year, but this is only one phase.



"I told the guys, the second season is starting and nothing is guaranteed to us after Tuesday. The second goal of our team is to win the regional championship and that's what we're going after."

Kirkwood was hot from the field Saturday, hitting 35 of 59 overall (59.3 percent) and 13 of 27 on 3-pointers (48.1 percent). The Eagles held Iowa Central to 25.8 percent from the field on 16 of 62, which was Kirkwood's best defensive effort of the season.

IOWA CENTRAL (45): Kramer 3 0-0 7, Wright 2 3-4 7, Sarver 0 0-0 0, Moaku 2 0-0 4, Baldwin 7 3-3 19, Petzenhauser 0 1-1 1, Harper 0 0-0 0, Laycock 1 0-1 2, Hemphill 0 2-2 2, Hogarty-Doyle 1 1-3 3, Hunt 0 0-0 0, Bartnett 0 0-0 0. Totals 16 10-14 45.

KIRKWOOD (95): Singleton 3 1-1 7, Lawton 2 1-2 6, Lassen 5 0-0 13, Ashton 6 0-0 16, Tagarelli 3 3-4 9, Richards 0 0-0 0, Bartlett 0 0-0 0, Rhodes 4 1-3 11, Weeks 0 0-0 0, Olson 6 0-0 14, Cowser 1 2-2 5, Martin 2 0-0 4, Ukah 2 0-0 4, Hyberg 1 4-4 6. Totals 35 12-16 95.

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Halftime - Kirkwood 41, Iowa Central 24. 3-point goals - Iowa Central 3 (Baldwin 2), Kramer 1), Kirkwood 13 (Ashton 4, Lassen 3, Rhodes 2, Olson 2, Lawton 1, Cowser 1).