

## Prairie girls have short team and high hopes

Written by Jim Ecker

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Steve Doser has searched all over Ely, Swisher, Shueyville and parts of southwest Cedar Rapids for basketball players who are taller than 5-foot-9.

Finding none, he's happy to coach the hard-working girls he's got at Cedar Rapids Prairie.

"It's been fun," Doser said. "We have a nice young team. We have kids who can put the ball in the hole this year. They're just going to get better and better."

"We're young, but it's a team that can score and a team that can press and they have great team chemistry."

Prairie struggled through a 4-and-18 campaign last year, but the Hawks are looking to climb the ladder with an extremely young squad. Doser started one senior, two juniors and two sophomores in the jamboree at Kennedy Friday night, and his first two subs off the bench were freshmen.

Prairie opens the 2011-12 campaign at 6:30 Saturday night by hosting Muscatine.

The tallest player on the team is freshman Emilie Rotter, who stands 5-foot-9. Cyerra Hutchins,

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Courteney McCrary, Mackenzie Serbousek and Josie Wagner are 5-foot-8.

The Mississippi Valley Conference is filled with players who stand 6-feet and taller, so the Hawks will have to be pesky, quick, fearless and determined.

"My first six years here we had at least three 6-footers or more," Doser said. "In the last four years we haven't found any. It makes us have to be more aggressive at every other position."

Doser accepts the challenge. He has a spirited bunch that likes to play the game.

"I'll tell you what, they'll compete and they're going to be fun to watch," he said. "They're a basketball-smart team. This team is more basketball oriented. They understand, they're smart."

Prairie lacks height, but the Hawks don't lack ability. The attack starts with sophomore Madison Dellamuth, a point guard who led Prairie in scoring last year as a freshman at 9.7 points.

Dellamuth is a slick passer, but Doser wants her to try and score more points this season. Sometimes, she's too unselfish.

"We've had a talk," Doser said. "Colleges are already interested in her and they want to see her become more of an offensive presence, and that's what we've been talking about. She will.

"I think you'll see her shooting more and more, which will help the team. She's extremely generous, and at times too generous, but she's working on that."

Dellamuth sees the whole floor and makes terrific passes to her teammates, but sometimes they don't see it coming and the pass leads to an undeserved turnover.

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"She's the best passer I've seen in 18 years," Doser said. "A great passer, but she's also a great scorer. We want to see that part of her game develop and I think it will."

Kaitilyn Yanecek (5-7), Alisa Weiland (5-4), McCrary (5-8), Hutchins (5-8) and Dellamuth (5-6) started for Prairie in the jamboree. Rotter (5-9) and Serbousek (5-8) were the first two subs, followed by Abby Ganske (5-7).

"We just want to compete. We really want competitors out there," Doser said. "We want to compete to win, and I think you'll see better play this year."