

Franklin, Hobbs lead Warriors into season

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 14 November 2013 22:14 -

Franklin and Hobbs sounds like a television show about two female detectives, but that's not it.

Dani Franklin and Aleena Hobbs are two of the premier basketball players in the Metro area, giving Cedar Rapids Washington a strong 1-2 punch.

Franklin, who has signed an NCAA Division I scholarship with Valparaiso University, averaged 17.0 points and 7.5 rebounds last season. She's a versatile 6-foot-1 player who can hurt opponents near the basket and from the 3-point line.

Hobbs, who is drawing interest from Division II colleges, averaged 11.7 points and 4.9 rebounds last season when the Warriors finished 17-7 and reached the Class 5A state tournament.

Franklin and Hobbs are good players and good leaders, according to Coach Frank Howell.

"They don't have to worry about stepping on anybody's toes now, because they're not juniors," he said. "Now they're seniors and they can kind of tell everybody what they need to do. The first thing they do so well, they both lead by example really well."

Howell called them "low-maintenance kids" who are easy to coach. "They don't complain, they do what you ask them to do, they don't butt heads with you," he remarked.

Washington lost Abby Herb, Madison Kramer, Colby Bjornsen, Devin Glenski and Sophia Malcolm to graduation, leaving some big holes to fill. The Warriors also are missing Callie Cook, a post player who chipped the bottom of the fibula bone on her right leg last week and will be sidelined for six to eight weeks.

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MJ Kamin, who has signed to play golf at Iowa State next year, appears ready for a prominent role on the basketball team.

"A very good athlete. A very good kid, very smart," Howell said. "Sometimes people don't think golfers are athletes, but this one definitely is."

Howell said he's looking at several candidates at point guard, including Jasmyne Jones. He also mentioned Kiki West, Kandis O'Donnell and several new players as candidates for playing time in Washington's up-tempo attack.

"We'll try to get it going up and down as much as we can," he said. "I don't really have a whole lot of patience. I think it's good for us."