

Tagarelli helps Eagles tag Parkland

Written by Jim Ecker

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WEST BURLINGTON - Joe Tagarelli thinks he's going to have a lot of fun playing basketball for the Kirkwood Eagles this season.

It sure looked that way Friday.

Tagarelli poured in 26 points and snared 13 rebounds as the Eagles topped Parkland College, 78-62, at the Southeastern Classic in West Burlington.

The rugged 6-foot-5 sophomore from Bayside, Wis., hit 10-of-13 shots from the field and cashed all six of his free throws in the season opener.

"I can't thank the guards enough for setting me up perfectly," said Tagarelli. "They were putting it in my hands for easy layups.

"When you have point guards that are going to attack hard like that, it's pretty easy to get those numbers."

Tagarelli was being a little too modest, because he had to work hard for several of his buckets with strong post moves. But Kirkwood guards Ajay Lawton, Jordan Ashton, Hunter Rhodes, Jacob Olson and Matt Lassen definitely did a nice job of getting the ball where it belonged.

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"I thought for the first game it was a good win, especially when you're playing a tough team," said Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen. "Parkland is a good program."

Lawton and Ashton scored 12 points apiece for the Eagles. Lawton had a good year for Kirkwood last season. Ashton, a former Class 3A Player of the Year at Mount Pleasant, transferred to Kirkwood this year from Northwest Missouri State.

Petersen used 13 players and got contributions up and down the lineup. The Eagles appear to have more depth than last season and more athletic ability with players who can move.

"We have way more guys coming off the bench who can score and just know

how to play," said Tagarelli. "Last year we had it, too, but we didn't

mesh as well as we're going to mesh this year."

Kirkwood shot only 4-for-19 on 3-pointers, but Petersen thinks it will be a good shooting team. The Eagles let Parkland get 14 offensive rebounds, but Kirkwood finished with a 39-37 edge in caroms.



Overall, Petersen was happy with his club's performance.

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"We did a nice job. Rebounding, obviously, is a big thing we have to talk about and get better at," he remarked. "Our bench really came in and helped us out, especially in the second half."

Petersen gave his club a solid "B" for its first test of the season. "Maybe a high 'C'," he said, backing off a bit. "Our expectations are pretty high here. We've got a nice team."

Tagarelli had a solid campaign for Kirkwood last year and is off to a fast start.

"He did some nice things for us," said Petersen. "He still has to get better on his defense, but obviously he rebounded the basketball really well for us and made some key buckets."

Kirkwood will face St. John's Academy in the second round of the Southeastern Classic Saturday.

PARKLAND (62): Shasi 1 0-0 3, Russell 0 0-0 0, Watson 3 0-0 8, Salinas 2 0-0 4, Bryant 3 0-1 7, Sweatt-Washington 2 1-2 5, Gary 4 2-2 12, Butler 5 2-2 12, Stewart 0 1-2 1, Cantinol 1 0-4 2, Phillips 3 2-2 8, Steen 0 0-0 0. Totals 24 8-17 62.

KIRKWOOD (78): Singleton 1 0-1 2, Lawton 4 3-5 12, Richards 0 3-4 3, Lassen 1 1-2 4, Amos-Mays 1 0-0 2, Rhodes 3 2-2 9, Weeks 0 0-0 0, Olson 0 4-4 4, Ashton 5 1-1 12, Martin 0 2-2 2, Ukah 1 0-0 2, Tagarelli 10 6-6 26. Totals 26 22-28 78.

Halftime - Kirkwood 38, Parkland 32. 3-point goals - Parkland 6 (Watson 2, Gary 2, Shasi 1, Bryant 1), Kirkwood 4 (Lawton 1, Lassen 1, Rhodes 1, Ashton 1). Fouled out - none.