

Wilson helps No. 8 Eagles top DMACC

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 03 February 2018 21:51 -



Doug Wilson used to treat visits to the free throw line like he was going to the dentist.

Now it seems like he's going to the candy store when he gets fouled. And he's taking the Kirkwood Eagles along for the goodies.

Wilson made DMACC pay at the foul line Saturday as the eighth-ranked Eagles beat the Bears, 83-73, in an ICCAC conference game at Johnson Hall.

Wilson cashed 8 of 10 foul shots at key times and scored a game-high 20 points as Kirkwood maintained a two-game lead in the conference at the halfway point of the campaign.

This past Wednesday night, Wilson was 8 for 11 at the charity stripe and poured in a career-best 34 points as the Eagles won a big game at Ellsworth.

Adding those numbers together, the 6-foot-7 freshman from Des Moines is 16 for 21 at the foul line the last two games for 76.2 percent. Prior to that, he was a poor 20 of 55 for 36.4 percent.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

"Just getting in extra shots, extra free throws every day," he explained. "Coach Petersen has

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worked with me a lot on my form and stuff. I've just worked on it and worked on it every day and perfected it, pretty much."

Wilson is using a one-handed set shot at the foul line now. He softly pushes the ball toward the basket, without a guide hand. It looks unusual, but it's working.



Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen said they've made some "subtle changes" in Wilson's form, but insisted Wilson was never as bad as he looked in earlier games.

"He's starting to come around and starting to knock them in for us," the coach remarked.

Wilson had never made more than three free throws in a game all season, but now he's made eight foul shots in two straight games.

Kirkwood led by 17 points with two minutes left in the first half at 44-27, but DMACC finished the stanza on a 9-0 spurt to pull within 44-36 at intermission.

The Bears whittled the deficit to four points at 52-48 with their slashing moves to the bucket, but Carlo Marble popped off the KCC bench to hit a pair of 3-pointers and make it 58-48.

The Bears rallied again, pulling within 60-55 midway through the second half, but that's when

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two things happened.

First of all, Petersen switched from a man-to-man defense to a zone in an effort to keep DMACC's players away from the basket and force them to take more outside shots.

Secondly, Petersen saw a matchup he liked and told his players to keep feeding Wilson near the basket. The lanky big man delivered and the Bears could not stop him.

Wilson posted his man and scored. He got fouled and hit both free throws. He scored again inside. He got fouled again and cashed two more foul shots and suddenly it was 70-56 on the strength of a 10-1 run.

Wilson hit two more foul shots with 3 minutes left to make it 74-64. His free throw made it 77-66, then his rousing dunk with a feed from Bailey Kale made it 79-66 with 1:46 left.

That gave Wilson 13 points in about eight minutes and sealed the deal. He loved getting the ball with the game in doubt.

"It feels good to know my coaches and teammates have that confidence in me to be able to throw the ball in and expect me to go score," he said.

The Eagles kept feeding Wilson and he kept producing.

"We had a lot of confidence throwing the ball into him," said Petersen. "We just felt like they couldn't guard him one-on-one down there."

The Eagles have lots of good shooters and were 12 of 23 on 3-pointers Saturday, so DMACC was leery of double-teaming Wilson and leaving the other Eagles free on the perimeter.

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Wilson finished with 20 points, six rebounds, two blocked shots and a steal. He made 6 of 12 shots from the field and leads NJCAA Division II in field goal percentage at 69.4 percent.

His foul shooting percentages, once mired at 36.4 percent, have risen to 47.4 percent for the season.

Wilson had lots of help in the scoring department. Marble swished five 3-pointers and finished with 17 points. Chris King hit four triples and scored 16. LJ Stansbury also netted 16 points and had six rebounds. Kale contributed nine points and six assists.

Marble and Stansbury did their damage off the bench to give the Eagles a big boost in that department to help Kirkwood (17-4) win its ninth straight game.

The Eagles don't play a lot of zone defenses in most games, but KCC assistant coach Ben Jacobson suggested they try the maneuver with DMACC's players having a lot of success driving to the basket.

"They were really hurting us getting to the rim and they'd only made two 3-point shots, so we just needed to switch it up," said Petersen. "They were driving on us and we were in a little bit of foul trouble with a couple of guys. Just trying to change the look and force them to take more perimeter shots.

"It was a big help for us in the second half," he remarked.

Wali Parks, an Iowa City West grad, scored 20 points for DMACC (15-7, 2-4).

Kirkwood has a 6-0 record in the conference, good for a two-game lead over Iowa Lakes and Southwestern with six games left.

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DMACC (73): Parks 7 5-8 20, Higgins 2 4-4 8, Locke 4 1-2 9, Ward 5 1-6 11, Madison 0 0-0 0, Miller 1 2-4 4, Zoss 0 0-0 0, Davidson 4 1-2 9, Prince 4 3-6 12, Lawani 0 0-0 0. Totals 27 17-32 73.

KIRKWOOD (83): Kale 2 4-4 9, Meeker 1 0-0 3, King 5 2-4 16, Wilson 6 8-10 20, Arrington 1 0-0 2, Stansbury 4 7-8 16, Small 0 0-0 0, Ross 0 0-0 0, Marble 5 2-2 17, Johnson 0 0-1 0. Totals 24 23-29 83.

Halftime - Kirkwood 44, DMACC 36. 3-point shots - DMACC 2 (Parks 1, Prince 1), Kirkwood 12 (Marble 5, King 4, Kale 1, Meeker 1, Stansbury 1).