

No. 5 Kirkwood women look strong again

Written by Jim Ecker

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The women's basketball team at Kirkwood Community College has depth, talent, size, good shooters and an exceptionally successful head coach.

Good luck, opponents.

Coach Kim Muhl plans to put five experienced sophomores in the starting lineup when the fifth-ranked Eagles open the season Friday afternoon against Highland (Ill.) Community College at the Southeastern Classic in West Burlington.

"We should be pretty good with as many sophomores as we have," he said Thursday before practice at Johnson Hall.

Muhl begins his 24th season at Kirkwood with six national titles in his back pocket and a career mark of 681-123, including an amazing record of 288-25 at home.

The Eagles finished 32-4 last season, won their 16th straight conference title and placed sixth at the national tournament with a fairly young squad.

Muhl likes this team's blend of size, quickness, experience, depth and ability. "I think we're pretty balanced, in and out," he said.

The Eagles have good size with 6-foot-2 Friday Chuol, 6-foot Kianna Jacobs and 5-11 Whitney Rohrbach in the starting lineup, with 6-2 Sierra Chambers, 6-foot Krissi Tow, 6-foot Whitney Henderson and 6-0 Haley Faber off the bench.

Alexis Fitzpatrick, a transfer from Cincinnati State Junior College, is the new point guard, with Bianca Dufelmeier at off-guard. Shahana Williams, who helped Iowa City West win the Class 4A state title last year, is the backup point guard.

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Tow is from Xavier and Chambers prepped at Iowa City High.

The Eagles plan to use lots of players to stay fresh and keep the pressure on opponents. "When we sub, we want the team we're playing to have the fear of god still in them," said veteran assistant coach Joe Hruska.

Jacobs, from Milwaukee, averaged 10.9 points and 5.8 rebounds last season. Dufelmeier, from Australia and a foreign exchange student at Ames, averaged 9.3 points last year, hit 76 3-pointers and had 115 assists. Aisle Quinlan, from Dowling, scored 7.8 points last year and made 73 3-pointers.

Kirkwood won national titles in 1997 and 2002 and enjoyed a four-year run of championships in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Three players from last year's team are now playing at four-year schools with Teasha Harris at Stony Brook, Kate Hartman at Winona State and Shantel Lehmann at Wayne State.

ROSTER

SOPHOMORES

Aisle Quinlan, 5-10, Dowling Catholic; Bianca Dufelmeier, 5-7, Canberra, Australia (Ames H.S.); Tara Gray, 5-10, Toledo (Iowa); Kianna Jacobs, 6-0, Milwaukee; Whitney Rohrbach, 5-11, Metamora, Ill.; Alexis Fitzpatrick, 5-9, Cincinnati; Whitney Henderson, 6-0, Cahokia, Ill.; Krissi Tow, 6-0, Xavier; Friday Chuol, 6-2, Des Moines East.

FRESHMEN

Shahana Williams, 5-7, Iowa City West; Mikayla Fallon, 5-9, East Moline, Ill.; Lexi Hobbs, 5-9, Peoria, Ill.; Jerica Hawkins, 5-9, Decatur, Ill.; Haley Faber, 6-0, Dowling Catholic; Sierra Chambers, 6-2, Iowa City High.