

Fuller leads No.16 Eagles by John Wood

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 06 November 2013 22:39 -

Two members of the Sioux City East basketball team that placed second at the Class 4A state tournament in 2012 moved to Eastern Iowa to play college basketball last year.

Adam Woodbury, a 7-foot-1 center, enrolled at the University of Iowa and has become an important part of the basketball resurgence in Iowa City.

J.C. Fuller, a 6-foot-4 guard, enrolled at Kirkwood Community College last year and has become an important player for the Eagles.

Fuller poured in 24 points and grabbed seven rebounds Wednesday night as the 16th-ranked Eagles spanked John Wood Community College, 77-57, in the home opener at Johnson Hall.

Fuller enjoyed playing with Woodbury in high school.

"He was great. He made the game a lot easier for me," said Fuller, who was the point guard on that club. "He attracted a lot of defenders. He sometimes got double- and triple-teamed, so it opened the game up a lot for me."

Fuller and Woodbury play for colleges that are located less than a half-hour apart, but they both have busy schedules and their own careers to pursue. "I'm friends with him," said Fuller. "I see him when I get back to Sioux City and stuff like that. We keep in contact a little bit."

Kirkwood (3-0) used a 22-0 run to grab a 24-point lead at 39-15 late in the first half, but John Wood (1-1) pulled within 10 points at 45-35 with 10:49 left in the game. Fuller stemmed the tide when he drove to the basket, scored, got fouled and completed a three-point play for a 48-35 edge.

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"He's a guy that can make a play for us," said Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen. "We're working with him on a lot of other things - on his rebounding and defense. To be honest, I don't care about the points. The seven rebounds - that's what he can bring to the table."

Fuller has gotten the message.

"That's something that him and both of the assistant coaches have been talking to me about," he said. "With my size, I should be able to get a lot of boards, and I just worked on that tonight, just going to the boards hard and trying to improve my game any way I can."

John Wood pulled within 10 points again at 48-38, but Taylor Olson hit two free throws, Fuller made a pair of free throws and Fuller nailed a 3-point shot for a 55-38 advantage.

Kirkwood opened a 26-point lead at 77-51 late in the game before settling for the comfortable 20-point victory.

"I was really pleased with how we guarded in the first half," said Petersen. "I liked our energy. We came out and were focused. For the most part, I was pretty pleased with what we did."

The Eagles did not shoot well from the field, hitting just 32.3 percent overall and 23.8 percent on 3-pointers, but they dominated the backboards (56-35) and cashed 32 of 40 free throws.

Olson went 13 for 13 at the foul line and finished with 15 points. John Wood was called for three technical fouls and Olson made all six of those free throws.

Joe Tagarelli grabbed 11 rebounds for Kirkwood and Jalen Currie had 10 boards.

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The Eagles play at Lincoln (Ill.) on Saturday and will return home next Tuesday night to host the Grand View junior varsity.

JOHN WOOD (57): Johnson 1 6-9 8, Toang 2 1-2 6, Hines 5 3-4 16, Tisdell 3 2-3 8, Dorema 2 0-0 4, Main 0 0-0 0, Baldrige 2 0-0 6, Harmon 2 2-6 6, Shofner 0 0-0 0. Totals 17 12-18 54.

KIRKWOOD (77): Lawton 2 0-0 5, Fuller 7 7-8 24, Currie 2 2-3 6, Olson 1 13-13 15, Tagarelli 1 7-11 9, Atwater 2 0-0 5, Gibson 0 0-0 0, Lassen 0 0-0 0, Swank 0 0-0 0, Weeks 0 0-1 0, Bussell 1 0-0 2, Batie-Gaddy 3 0-0 6, Ward 1 3-4 5. Totals 20 32-40 77.

Halftime - Kirkwood 39, John Wood 19. 3-point goals - John Wood 8 (Toang 1, Hines 3, Baldrige 2, Harmon 2), Kirkwood 5 (Fuller 3, Lawton 1, Atwater 1). Fouled out - Tisdell, Dorema. Technical fouls - Tisdell, John Wood bench 2.