

Tagarelli helps Eagles top Coe JV

Written by Jim Ecker

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Most of the basketball players at Kirkwood Community College dream about joining an NCAA Division I team some day.

Joseph Tagarelli has been there and hopes to get back.

Tagarelli spent the 2012-13 campaign as a walk-on at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, but things did not work out for him and he transferred to Kirkwood this year.

From the look of things so far, he might get another shot at a D-I school in the future.

Tagarelli scored 18 points in 15 minutes Wednesday night as the 16th-ranked Eagles bopped the Coe junior varsity, 99-62, at Johnson Hall.

Tagarelli, a rugged 6-foot-5 forward, is averaging 13 points and 7.6 rebounds for Kirkwood (5-2) while shooting a healthy 61.5 percent from the field.

He averaged 19.9 points as a senior at Waunakee (Wis.) High School in 2011-12 and made the Division 2 all-state team. He went to Wisconsin-Milwaukee with high hopes, but the club struggled through an 8-24 campaign and he decided to leave.

"It just didn't work out," he said. "Me and the coaches didn't get along too much. There was just too much turmoil and stuff.

"I wanted to continue my career, so I thought this (Kirkwood) would be a good fit for me. They

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have a great winning history, so I thought it would be a great place to continue my career."

Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen is glad to have him.

"He's been pretty consistent," Petersen said. "He's probably been one of our most consistent guys on the offensive and defensive side. He's been kind of a bright spot for us in the post. He's pretty crafty down there. He knows how to play; he has a good feel."

Tagarelli scored 12 points in the first 5 1/2 minutes Wednesday with his work around the basket. He had 14 points by halftime and made two more baskets in the early stages of the second half before yielding his spot to other players.

Tagarelli finished 8 of 11 from the field and contributed five rebounds, two assists and a steal.

Myzeah Batie-Gaddy collected 15 points and nine rebounds for Kirkwood in 17 minutes off the bench. Taylor Olson scored 12 points for the Eagles and J.C. Fuller netted 11.

Tagarelli feels rejuvenated after enduring a long season at Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"We had a pretty tough year and it was pretty hard," he said. "I almost got too comfortable there in Milwaukee. I felt like my game got affected by it a little bit.

"I felt coming here would help me a little. It's kept me a little more humble and kept me back in the gym and gotten me back to working harder than I was at Milwaukee."

Tagarelli does not know how much time he'll spend at Kirkwood. He could leave after this season if he gets an attractive offer from a Division I college or he could return next year.

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"I'm just looking to see where it takes me, to be honest. I'm not really sure," he said. "I'm trying, obviously, to get back to another Division I school. So if that takes one year or two years, I'll just play the game and see what happens."

Tagarelli gives Kirkwood a strong player near the basket.

"I like to play physical. I like to bang with guys," he said. "I like to get a lot of offensive rebounds. I feel like that is a big part of my game."

Kirkwood hosts Lincoln College (Ill.) this Friday at 7 p.m.

COE JV (62): Geske 1 2-2 5, Jirak 6 1-1 14, Blumberg 3 1-2 7, Pflughaupt 2 0-0 5, Shedeck 6 1-1 14, Wagner 0 0-0 0, Alvarez 3 0-0 8, Johnson 3 1-2 9. Totals 24 6-8 62.

KIRKWOOD (99): Lawton 1 0-0 2, Fuller 4 0-0 11, Currie 3 2-2 8, Olson 4 2-2 12, Tagarelli 8 2-2 18, Gibson 3 0-2 6, Lassen 1 0-0 3, Swank 1 2-2 5, Weeks 1 3-3 5, Bussell 1 0-0 3, Batie-Gaddy 6 2-3 15, Ward 3 0-2 6, Bennett 0 0-0 0, Uwadiae 2 1-2 5. Totals 38 14-20 99.

Halftime - Kirkwood 49, Coe JV 32. 3-point goals - Coe JV 8 (Alvarez 2, Johnson 2, Geske 1, Jirak 1, Pflughaupt 1, Shedeck 1), Kirkwood 9 (Fuller 3, Olson 2, Lassen 1, Swank 1, Bussell 1, Batie-Gaddy 1). Fouled out - Shedeck.