

Kirkwood lands big man from Sweden

Written by Jim Ecker
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Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen has not had a chance to watch Martin Hyberg play basketball in person, but he's studied film of the 6-foot-10 center from Sweden and likes what he's seen.

Hyberg comes highly recommended from a friend of Petersen's in the coaching business and has good credentials, having played for the U20 Sweden National Team.

"We've watched film on him, but we haven't seen him in person," Petersen said Friday. "So you don't really know until they get here, but we're expecting him to come over and impact our team right away."

Petersen has landed a big recruiting class with 11 new players, including nine scholarship players and two walk-ons. He needed a big class, because only five players will be returning from the unit that went 21-10 this season.

The Eagles have signed three lowans with Jacob Olson of Cedar Rapids Jefferson, Chike Ukah of state champion Iowa City West and Jordan Ashton of Mount Pleasant, the Class 3A Player of the Year in 2012 when Mount Pleasant won a state title.

Ashton spent two years at Northwest Missouri State, an NCAA Division II school, and will have one year of eligibility at Kirkwood.

"He has experience and maturity, knows how to play the game, can shoot the basketball," said Petersen. "So we're very excited to add him."

Petersen also signed Hunter Rhodes of Canton (Ill.), Earnest Cowser of Waukesha West (Wis.), Javairius Amos-Mays of North Chicago, Mike Davis from Fort Wayne Northside (Ind.) and

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Ronald Singleton of Milwaukee, a transfer from Cochise Junior College.

Eric Porter of Chicago Tilden and Josh Bartlett of Lincolnway North (Ill.) will be joining the Eagles as walk-ons.

"I feel good about it," Petersen said of the new class. "We've added a lot of talented players. A lot of guys that fit our program and what we needed to add.

"I would say we probably have more firepower, just based on what these kids did on their high school teams. A lot of them scored a lot of points.

"We've got a pretty talented class here," he said. "They're going to have to battle it out. They'll have to blend together and mesh as a team, but I'd like to think some of these guys will be able to come in and give us some of that firepower right away."

The Eagles will have two returning starters next season with Joseph Tagarelli and Ajay Lawton. Matt Lassen and Joseph Weeks got significant playing time as reserves and Austin Swank also played as a reserve.

Seven freshmen on this year's team will not be returning next season. That list includes Myzeah Batie-Gaddy, Chris Ward, Tyler Bussell, Dominique Gibson, Brayton Bennett, Jamaree Atwater and Kenny Ejim.

Rhodes, a 6-foot point guard, averaged 23.2 points, 4.5 rebounds and 4.1 assists as a senior at Canton High School and was named the Daily Ledger Player of the Year.

Cowser, a 6-2 guard, averaged 20.4 points, 4 rebounds and 4 assists at Waukesha West. Amos-Mays, 6-3, averaged 16 points and 5.1 rebounds at North Chicago.

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Davis, 6-5, averaged 18 points and 8.1 rebounds at Fort Wayne Northside. Ukah, 6-6, averaged 9 points, 5.2 rebounds and 2.1 blocks at Iowa City West.

Olson, 6-0, averaged 20.7 points and 3.2 steals at Jefferson. Singleton, 6-6, averaged 9 points and 6 rebounds at Cochise Junior College.

Ashton, 6-4, averaged 18.4 points and 2.5 assists as a senior at Mount Pleasant two years ago. Hyberg averaged 8 points and 5 rebounds for the Sodertalje Basketball Club in Sweden.