

Kirkwood falls to Iowa Western in OT

Written by Jim Ecker

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These rematches are killing the Kirkwood men's basketball team.

It happened again Saturday when the eighth-ranked Eagles blew a 16-point lead and lost to Iowa Western, 82-76, in overtime at Johnson Hall.

This is the third time Kirkwood (10-3) has lost a rematch with an opponent after beating them the first time around.

The Eagles topped John Wood 84-63 in their first meeting this season, then dropped the rematch 75-65. They beat Southeastern 72-63 the first time, then got hammered 95-66 in the rematch.

And now it's happened with Iowa Western.

Kirkwood poured in nineteen 3-pointers when it defeated the Reivers 95-82 two weeks ago, but the Eagles hit only three triples Saturday and let things slip away.

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"Defense and rebounding," said Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen, pointing to the two main culprits in the second half. "When you're up 15 at halftime, all you have to do is guard and rebound and you should win the game. We just didn't do those things."

Kirkwood led 40-25 at intermission and made it a 16-game early in the second half, but the cushion disappeared in a hurry as Iowa Western crashed the offensive boards and kept attacking. The Eagles had to scramble to force overtime after falling behind 64-58.

Kirkwood trailed 70-69 when freshman guard Jacob Olson was fouled with 8.6 seconds left in regulation. Olson is normally an excellent free throw shooter and could have given the Eagles a 71-70 edge by cashing both shots, but he missed the first free throw and made the second for a 70-70 tie.

Iowa Western (10-4) missed a 3-pointer in the final seconds and they headed to overtime.

The game was tied, 76-76, heading into the last minute of overtime, but sophomore guard Rico Thompson took matters into his own hands for Iowa Western with the final six points of the game on a basket and four free throws.

Iowa Western hurt Kirkwood on second-chance points with offensive rebounds, 25-10. That was the difference in the game.

"We knew they're capable of doing that," said Petersen. "We're undersized compared to those guys. We know we're not going to get a bunch of those (offensive rebounds), and we can't allow them to get them. And we did."

Deshawn Munson, a strong 6-foot-3 guard from East Saint Louis, Ill., destroyed the Eagles with 24 points and 14 rebounds. Thik Bol, a 6-foot-7 center, collected 12 points, 12 rebounds and five blocked shots. Thompson

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finished with 15 points off the bench.

Joe Tagarelli returned from a two-game suspension and led Kirkwood with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Jordan Ashton scored 15 points, Hunter Rhodes 11 and Ajay Lawton 10.



The Eagles began the season with nine straight victories, but they have lost three of their last four games heading into a three-week break for the holidays.

Iowa Western has won seven straight games since losing to Kirkwood two weeks ago.

IOWA WESTERN (82): Jackson 3 0-0 7, Donlan 1 0-0 2, Wallace 4 0-1 9, Munson 12 0-1 24, Bol 6 0-1 12, Thompson 5 4-4 15, Evans 0 0-0 0, Carr 4 0-0 9, Tyner 1 2-2 4. Totals 36 6-9 82.

KIRKWOOD (76): Lassen 3 0-0 6, Rhodes 2 7-8 11, Ashton 4 6-6 15, Martin 4 1-1 9, Ukah 1 1-2 3, Singleton 1 0-0 2, Lawton 4 0-1 10, Olson 1 1-2 3, Tagarelli 7 3-3 17. Totals 27 19-23 76.

Halftime - Kirkwood 40, Iowa Western 25. Regulation - Kirkwood 70, Iowa Western 70. 3-point goals - Iowa Western 4 (Jackson 1, Wallace 1, Thompson

1, Carr 1), Kirkwood 3 (Lawton, 2, Ashton 1).