

## Goods finds right fit with No. 1 Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 19 January 2017 06:03 -

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When Simone Goods decided to leave Western Kentucky last season after one year with the Hilltoppers, she reached out to a former high school teammate from Omaha to talk about life and basketball.

That former high school teammate was her "best friend," Deleyah Harris, who spent last season playing for the Kirkwood Eagles.

During their conversations, they talked about the possibility of Goods joining Harris in Cedar Rapids.

"We just talked about it and said, 'What if?,' Goods related Wednesday night. "It kind of just happened."

"What if?" has turned into "Wow!" for Goods and Harris as two of the stars for the top-ranked junior college basketball team in the country.

Goods scored 19 points Wednesday and Harris collected a double-double with 11 points, 11 rebounds and six steals as the Eagles topped Ellsworth, 68-44, for their 18th straight victory.

Goods is a powerful 6-foot-2 center who also has good skills on the perimeter. Harris is a 5-foot-9 guard who can do just about anything on the floor.

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They starred at Omaha Benson High School, where they went 26-1 as seniors in 2015, and now they are 18-0 as teammates again at Kirkwood. They also played together on the AAU circuit in high school.

Goods gives the Eagles a strong presence near the basket, but she's also capable of leading a fast break.

"She's just a different dimension," said Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl. "She's a kid with skills.

"She can bring it up the floor, she can shoot it on the perimeter. Her skill set is really good.



"And people have to prepare against her in different ways," he said. "That's what she brings to the table."

Goods appeared in 19 games at Western Kentucky last season as a true freshman, averaging 2.6 points and 2.3 rebounds, but she was not happy with the Hilltoppers.

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"It just wasn't a good fit for me," she said. "And me and the coaches didn't really see eye to eye, so it was best for me to just leave."

This will be her only year of eligibility at Kirkwood. She's been contacted by several colleges for next season, but said it's "confidential" for the time being.

"I'm not really focused on that right now," she said.

Right now the Eagles are focused on trying to win the national title, but Muhl was not happy with his team's effort against Ellsworth despite the 24-point victory.

Kirkwood has pulverized most of its opponents this season, but the Eagles led by only seven points at halftime (33-26) and did not perform at a high level much of the night.

The Eagles led 53-40 early in the fourth quarter before cementing the game with a 13-0 spurt to make it 66-40. Goods scored nine points during the 13-0 spurt with her best segment of the game.

"We didn't come ready to play," said Muhl. "The effort was bad. We didn't guard. Pick and choose.

They didn't want to play hard. It's just not good enough. The group has to get better and come ready to go."

Goods saw it the same way.

"I agree completely," she remarked. "There were a lot of us that weren't ready to go. I definitely wasn't ready to go."

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The Eagles have rarely been challenged this season, which may have been part of the problem against Ellsworth.

"I think it's hard to stay on edge. I really do," said Muhl. "They read scores, they read records, all that wonderful stuff. But if we play like this, we'll get beat.

"I thought we were very lethargic, very passive and not intelligent with how we played. Hopefully we'll learn from this and get better."

Too many easy victories can lead to bad habits, which is something the Eagles hope to avoid as the season moves along.

"It's hard to keep pushing," said Goods, "just because you come in every day and blow people out.

"We just have to keep getting better in practice every day and just go at each other."

Tay Wilson contributed 13 points for Kirkwood.

The Eagles shot only 37.1 percent from the floor and were just 3-for-24 on 3-pointers. They also struggled at the foul line, making 13 of 30 for 43.3 percent.

Ellsworth had only eight players in uniform and two of them fouled out, leaving only six eligible players at the end. Antoinette Williams led the visitors with a game-high 20 points.

**ELLSWORTH (44):** A.Williams 7 5-5 20, Tramble 0 0-0 0, Hart 3 0-0 6, Brown 5 1-2 11,

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J.Williams 1 0-2 2, Helldorff 0 0-0 0, Deng 1 0-0 2, Turner 1 0-0 3. Totals 18 6-9 44.

**KIRKWOOD (68):** Harris 4 3-8 11, T.Wilson 5 2-2 13, Watkins 3 1-6 7, Goods 8 3-5 19, Usher 0 0-0 0, Puok 0 0-0 0, Axccl 0 2-2 2, Ajak 3 0-1 7, Taylor 0 0-0 0, Voss 1 0-0 2, Cotton 2 2-4 7, Achenbach 0 0-2 0. Totals 26 13-30 68.

Halftime - Kirkwood 33, Ellsworth 26. 3-point goals - Ellsworth 2 (A.Williams 1, Turner 1), Kirkwood 3 (T.Wilson 1, Ajak 1, Cotton 1)