

Wirth siblings share more than Coe

Written by Kelci de Haas

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Andrew and Allie Wirth are closer than your average siblings in college. Closer geographically, that is.

The Wirth siblings, from Cedar Falls, both play basketball for Coe College.

Their mother, Carol Wirth, said Andrew could shoot a basketball when he was two years old, and Allie started playing because she “always liked to do whatever her brother did.”

Through the years the siblings learned more about basketball watching their father, Dave Wirth, as he played.

“When I was younger my dad was my coach, for a little bit,” Allie said. “So it was nice that I got to go bond with him at practice.”

Coming to Coe together wasn’t a plan from the beginning. After Andrew had already been at Coe for two years, Allie was debating between Wartburg and Coe and knew the decision was important to her parents.

“I actually wrapped it up for them for Christmas, that I was going to Coe. Big Christmas present of the year,” she said.

Their parents, who attend their games as often as possible, were worried they would have to split up to see both kids in college. “When Allie decided to go to Coe along with Andrew we were just thrilled,” Carol Wirth said.

Thrilled isn’t the word Andrew would use, according to Allie. “He was mad, at first,” she said. But Andrew described his reaction as a little different, saying “At least it wasn’t Wartburg. Best of two evils.”

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The two don't always bicker. They agree that basketball has shaped their relationship through the years, allowing them to grow closer now that they're in college.

"I think we were always pretty close, we were just always opposite of each other," Andrew said.

Andrew, a 6-foot guard, leads Coe in scoring at 13.5 points per game. Allie, a 5-foot-10 sophomore, has started 14 games for the women's team and is averaging 2.6 points.

The Wirth siblings both attribute much of their success to closeness with family. Andrew spoke of what has influenced him the most, saying, "Parents, I think. Just their support. It keeps me going no matter what I'm doing."

While their parents have a large presence at the Coe doubleheaders, it's something Andrew said he'd been "taking for granted."

There was a day they remember that their mother could not attend and they weren't the only ones who noticed. "My whole team was like 'Oh my gosh, where's Carol? I can't believe your mom isn't here,'" Allie said. "That's when it kind of struck me that it is kind of cool that everyone knows that they will be here every game."

All the travel that comes with their level of dedication doesn't faze their parents. "We think it's awesome," Carol Wirth said. "We just couldn't be more proud of what they have accomplished on and off the court."