

Dellamuth gets green light at Prairie

Written by Jim Ecker

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Madison Dellamuth is an excellent ballhandler, passer and on-ball defender for the Cedar Rapids Prairie girls basketball team.

Now Coach Steve Doser wants the 5-foot-6 point guard to think more about putting the ball in the basket on a regular basis.

Dellamuth, who has committed to Bradley University, averaged 11.6 points last season when the Hawks won the first Mississippi Valley Conference division title in school history. Doser wants to see that number get bigger.

"I think you'll see Madison take more of a scoring role this year, which will help us," Doser said Monday on the first day of practice. "She knows she has to score more, so we're seeing it now. Before we didn't see it as much as we'd like. We think she'll look to attack and score more."

Dellamuth has started for Prairie since was a freshman.

"I've seen her grow as a leader, I've seen her grow maturity-wise," Doser said. "She understands what she needs to do for us this year."

Dellamuth is a clever passer who sees the floor extremely well. Many of her turnovers are the result of teammates not expecting the ball.

"The more they play with her, it's getting easier for them," Doser said. "They just know they have to look 100 percent of the time she has the ball. She is a tremendous talent."

Prairie finished with a 15-7 record last season with a balanced attack. Courteney McCrary (11.9

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ppg) is now playing for Coe College and Alisa Weiland (11.8) is playing at Mount Mercy, but the Hawks have two more college-bound players on the roster with Dellamuth and Cyerra Hutchins (9.1.). Hutchins, 5-foot-10, has committed to Kirkwood Community College.

Doser expects to get a boost this season from 5-foot-9 junior Emilie Rotter, who missed all of last year with a torn ACL.

"She would have started for us last year. Now she's back healthy," Doser said. "I think Emily is going to be a surprise for everybody. They didn't see her last year. I think she'll help us in many ways. She's so active with the ball.

"I'm happy for Emily," the coach said. "It's exciting for her. That will be fun."

The Hawks also feature Olivia Usher, a versatile 5-foot-9 sophomore who averaged 5.6 points last season. Doser said Usher can play any of four positions, shifting all the way from point guard to power forward when needed.

Doser said Chrisanda Freeman, a 5-10 senior, has made great strides and could make important contributions this season. "She's really come a long way and will really have a big impact for us," he said.

Taylor Moenk, Rachel Shelangoski, Makenzie Stoffer and Grace Gudenkauf also saw considerable action on last year's MVC division champs.

"I think we have a really good bunch of girls," Doser said. "They're really nice kids. They all get along. That will help us.

"I think we're going to be competitive. I think we have a chance to do some nice things."

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Doser said depth could be an issue, with a few sophomores needing to develop and make a contribution.

He said the Hawks could be a stronger team near the basket this year. "I think we'll be pleasantly surprised with our post play this year," he said.

Larry Niemeyer, the former Hall of Fame coach at Cedar Rapids Jefferson, was a guest instructor at practice Monday as the Hawks worked on their post offense.