

Linn-Mar welcomes Sommer twins to team

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 13 November 2013 23:04 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 November 2013 00:59



Linn-Mar girls basketball coach Michael Brandt knows he's a lucky guy.

The top seven scorers from last year's team graduated, leaving Aryn Jones as the top returning scorer at 1.8 points per game, but a gift came down from heaven and landed in the coach's lap.

Actually it was two gifts - the talented Sommer twins - and they came down from Dubuque Senior as welcome transfers for their senior year in high school.

Their mother changed jobs and her daughters, Kristie and Katie, became Linn-Mar Lions for the 2013-14 school year.

Katie Sommer, a 5-foot-4 point guard, averaged 15.5 points last season at Dubuque Senior. Kristie Sommer, a 5-foot-7 off-guard, averaged 13.9 points. Suddenly, a starting backcourt that averaged 29.4 points in the Mississippi Valley Conference changed uniforms and probably helped change Linn-Mar's fortunes this season.

They've certainly bolstered Linn-Mar's backcourt.

"How could it not? They're very nice players," Brandt said before practice Wednesday. "Obviously they've proven what they can do."

Brandt's teams played against the Sommer twins the past few years, so he's gotten to admire them as players. Now he's developed an admiration for them as good people as well.

"I'll tell you, they're hard workers," he said. "They work extremely hard. They get after it every

Linn-Mar welcomes Sommer twins to team

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 13 November 2013 23:04 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 November 2013 00:59

day in practice. I really love that about them."

The twins came down from Dubuque during the summer to attend open gyms at Linn-Mar and participate in team camps whenever possible. They also are outstanding softball players and played for Dubuque Senior this past summer before moving to the area.

"That really helped a lot," Brandt said of their willingness to make the trip from Dubuque to Marion.

Brandt heard last spring that the sisters might enroll at Linn-Mar. He was excited for the school, but sad for the girls.

"I felt really bad for them, their senior year to have to uproot from where they're from and their friends," he said. "I don't think people realize how hard that is for a senior to have to move. But I think they've really fit in well."

Brandt thinks he might be able to build a good team this year, especially with the Sommer twins here to help. Jones is a 6-foot-1 center, giving the Lions a big player in the middle, and junior Lannie Nietert has returned to action after missing the entire 2012-13 campaign with a knee injury.

Niertert was promoted to the varsity during the 2011-12 season as a freshman, but suffered a knee injury during the summer of 2012.

"She's back full-go, ready to go," Brandt said. "She's going to help us in the post area."

Graduation claimed Mykaela Brandt, Courtney Major, Sara Strauel, Kristen Eiles, Alexis Libenguth, Hannah Yearling and Jenna Harms from a club that finished 10-13.

Linn-Mar welcomes Sommer twins to team

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 13 November 2013 23:04 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 November 2013 00:59

Brandt thinks junior Olivia Montague, senior Taylor Robertson and senior Emily Makinster could be ready to help take their place. He also has three sophomores on the varsity with Alie Akers, Brittney Lancial and Claire Larson.

Brandt likes the chemistry on the club and credits the upperclasmen with making the Sommer twins and everyone else feel comfortable. "A lot of our veteran players that have been around have really done a nice job of embracing everyone," he said, "whether it's the young kids or the new kids coming in."