

Kasey Semler picks Kirkwood

Written by Jim Ecker

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Kasey Semler likes the tradition, coaching staff and location of Kirkwood Community College, so he stopped sifting through his college offers on Friday and picked the Eagles.

Semler also likes what might happen if he continues to improve and has a good career at Kirkwood. He'd like to play for an NCAA Division I school some day, and he thinks Kirkwood Coach Doug Wagemester can help him get there.

"That was a big part of it," Semler said Sunday. "I could have gone to a Division II or an NAIA school, (but) I was told by a lot of people that I had the chance to play at the Division I level and it kind of excited me.

"Coach Wags seems to think the same, and he'll do everything he can, he said, to help me reach my full potential, wherever that may take me."

Semler, an all-state guard, enjoyed a successful career at Marion High School. He set the school record for career 3-pointers (137) and finished fourth in career scoring (1,122 points). The Indians compiled a 56-17 record during his three years on the varsity and made two trips to the Class 3A state tournament in 2009 and 2011.

Semler will be joining one of the top junior college basketball programs in the country at Kirkwood. Wagemester has compiled a 360-88 overall record in 13 seasons with the Eagles, including a 169-22 mark in conference games with 10 league titles.

"He's a great guy," Semler said. "I've heard a lot of good things about him and I'm excited to get the chance to play for him. It's a good opportunity for me to reach my full potential."

Kirkwood has played in nine national tournaments during the past 13 years under Wagemester,

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including a fifth-place finish this season and three second-place showings.

"They always compete for a national title. That's pretty cool, something that would be fun to be a part of," Semler said.

Semler said he picked Kirkwood over Mount Mercy University, an NAIA school, and DMACC, a junior college.

Semler plans to play baseball for Marion High School this season before enrolling at Kirkwood. He also plans to work on basketball this spring and summer.

"I think the big thing is getting my shot shot quicker, because obviously in college ball, wherever you play you have to have a quick jump shot. I plan on getting my jump shot a lot better," he said.

"Defensively, I need to improve that big-time. I'm really excited for that, actually. It's kind of cool to know you have a lot of room for improvement. I'm just really excited to get started on it."