

Wentzien helps KCC sink Iowa Lakes

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Kirkwood Eagles were sorely disappointed when Miles Wentzien decided to begin his college career somewhere else last year, but they were delighted to get him on the rebound.

The 6-foot-3 guard from Fort Madison has been a key ingredient for the 16th-ranked Eagles this season after transferring here from Missouri Western University.

Wentzien stuffed the stat sheet again Saturday with 24 points, nine rebounds, four assists and three steals as Kirkwood buried Iowa Lakes, 97-66, in an ICCAC conference game at Johnson Hall.

Wentzien leads Kirkwood in three major departments at 13.4 points, 6.3 rebounds and 1.6 steals per game. He's also third on the club in assists.

"There's a lot to like," said Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen. "First of all, he's a great kid. He's very coachable, he works extremely hard on his game, and he's very versatile.

"He can do a lot of different things on the court. He can score, he can rebound, he can defend and he can really pass."

Wentzien enjoyed a terrific prep career at Fort Madison, which is the school that sent Ryan Bowen to the Iowa Hawkeyes and the NBA. He averaged 21.6 points, 8.3 rebounds, five steals

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and three steals as a senior two years ago and broke the career scoring record with 1,570 points.

He was named all-state in basketball, all-conference in baseball and academic all-conference in golf and was heavily recruited by Kirkwood, but picked Missouri Western instead.

Wentzien averaged 6.9 points and 3.4 rebounds as a freshman at Missouri Western, which is an NCAA Division II school, but he wanted more and wanted a crack at a Division I scholarship.

"I wanted to go on to something I could be successful at," he said.

Wentzien contacted Kirkwood as a possible step toward a major college and was welcomed with open arms after initially breaking their hearts two years ago.

"We obviously liked him a lot out of high school and when the opportunity came for him to join our program this year, we obviously jumped all over it," said Petersen.

Wentzien has been a great fit at Kirkwood, which has four players in the starting lineup who all played point guard in high school with Wentzien, Chris King, Byron Harp and Ethan Meeker.



It's a fast-paced, high-tempo attack.

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"It's great," said Wentzien. "We really spread the floor. Everybody can shoot it, drive it and we're all unselfish. We all drive, kick it and everybody has open looks. It's really fun."

Kirkwood (18-4, 5-1) has an incredibly balanced attack with five players averaging in double figures with Wentzien (13.4), Chris King (12.6), Kaliph Fagan (11.2), Da'Rion King (10.9) and Harp (10.3).

There's additional firepower with Al'Tavius Jackson (7.4), Meeker (7.3), Carlo Marble (5.8), Shakur Triplett (5.3) and Elijah Henry (4.0) on the 10-man roster. All together, the Eagles are averaging 85.3 points as they try to defend their national crown.

Kirkwood led 48-36 at halftime Saturday and punished Iowa Lakes 47-17 in the first 14 minutes of the second half to open a 42-pound advantage at 95-53.

"We were just rolling offensively and defensively," said Wentzien. "We were getting stops that led to transition and everybody was getting open shots."

Kirkwood shot 53.1 percent for the game and hit fifteen 3-pointers.

Meeker popped in 20 points, Fagan scored 17 points off the bench in 17 minutes, Chris King netted 11 and Harp had 10. Fagan also contributed six rebounds and four steals.

Wentzien and Meeker hit four 3-pointers, Chris King had three and Harp splashed a pair.

Kirkwood will host top-ranked Southwestern next Saturday at 3 p.m. in a showdown for the conference lead. Southwestern handed the Eagles their only loss in the league last month.

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Tywon Bressler scored 18 points for Iowa Lakes (13-7, 3-3). Cody Cox, a 6-foot-6 sophomore who averages 14.8 points and 6.2 rebounds, did not play Saturday due to an injury.

IOWA LAKES (66): Bressler 5 7-8 18, McIlravy 0 0-0 0, Beisch 1 0-0 3, Keller 3 1-2 7, Tapplar 2 3-3 7, Rogers 0 0-1 0, Binyoti 5 0-0 13, Joiner 4 2-3 13, Fuller 0 0-0 0, Conley 1 0-0 3, Robinson 1 0-0 2. Totals 22 13-17 66.

KIRKWOOD (97): Triplett 2 0-0 4, Harp 4 0-0 10, Wentzien 8 4-4 24, Meeker 7 4-5 20, C.King 4 0-0 11, Jackson 2 0-0 5, Fagan 5 6-7 17, Marble 0 0-0 0, Henry 1 0-0 2, D.King 1 2-2 4. Totals 34 14-15 97.

Halftime - Kirkwood 48, Iowa Lakes 36. 3-point goals - Iowa Lakes 9 (Binyoti 3, Joiner 3, Bressler 1, Beisch 1, Conley 1), Kirkwood 15 (Wentzien 4, Meeker 4, C.King 3, Harp 2, Jackson 1, Fagan 1).