

The players on the Kirkwood women's basketball team like to tease Coach Kim Muhl and call him "The Man, The Myth, The Legend" when he's conducting a post-game interview and they pass him in the hallway.

"The Man, The Myth, The Legend" got even bigger Saturday.

The top-ranked Eagles spanked NIACC, 90-61, in the championship game of the regional tournament at Johnson Hall and will carry a glittering 33-0 record to the national tournament.

Muhl has captured six national titles during his Hall of Fame career and thinks he has the ingredients for Lucky No. 7.

"Oh yeah. We're capable," he said. "We have to stay healthy and get a few breaks."

The NJCAA Division II national tournament will be played in Harrison, Ark., from March 21-25.

NIACC popped in ten 3-pointers in the first half and was within 48-44 at intermission, but the

Eagles destroyed the visitors in the second half and won easily.

Muhl has coached a lot of outstanding teams at Kirkwood, but he's never had a club that went undefeated for the regular season and regional.

"Pretty special. Pretty special," he said before the Eagles cut down the championship net. "Great group. We'll see who we've got (at nationals) and go from there."

Simone Goods, a two-time National Player of the Week this season, scored 18 points and grabbed seven rebounds and was named the MVP of the all-tournament team, much to the delight of her teammates.

"It means a lot," Goods said about her special award, "but I wouldn't be able to do it without my teammates and coaches."

Goods transferred to Kirkwood for her sophomore campaign and leads the Eagles in scoring and rebounding. Now she'll be heading to the national tournament with her new friends.

"It's amazing. There's no feeling like it," she said. "I can't really say anything. You just have to take it in."

Deleyah Harris led the Eagles with 21 points. Shaneequah Watkins scored 14 points and Tay Tay Wilson had 10. Harris and Wilson joined Goods on the all-tournament team.

NIACC poured in 44 points in the first half, but the Eagles held the Trojans to only four points in the third quarter to take control at 63-48 and expanded the lead from there. NIACC made only one 3-pointer in the second half after sinking 10 in the first half.

Morgan Cuffe scored 20 points for NIACC, which finished the season with a 19-13 record. The Trojans gave Kirkwood two tough games during the regular season, losing by just six and 12 points, but the third meeting turned into a rout in the second half.

Kirkwood has outscored its 33 opponents by nearly 32 points per game this year and the Eagles nearly did it again Saturday.

Now "The Man, The Myth, The Legend" will be gunning for his seventh national title.

NIACC (61): Laabs 1 0-0 3, Longs 3 1-1 9, Cuffe 7 4-6 20, Stewart 3 0-0 8, Holloway 3 0-0 7, Galvin 1 0-0 3, Larson 0 0-0 0, Stanciel 0 3-4 3, Willert 0 2-3 2, Wolters 1 0-0 3, Davidson 1 0-0 3, Dove 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 10-14 61.

KIRKWOOD (90): Harris 6 8-8 21, T.Wilson 3 3-3 10, Watkins 5 4-6 14, Goods 7 4-4 18, Usher 2 0-0 4, Puok 1 0-0 3, Hedges 0 0-0 0, Axcell 2 1-2 6, Taylor 2 1-2 5, Voss 1 0-0 3, Cotton 3 0-0 6, C.Wilson 0 0-0 0, Achenbach 0 0-0 0. Totals 32 21-25 90.

Halftime - Kirkwood 48, NIACC 44. 3-point goals - NIACC 11 (Longs 2, Cuffe 2 Stewart 2, Laabs 1, Holloway 1, Galvin 1, Wolters 1, Davidson 1), Kirkwood 5 (Harris 1, T.Wilson 1, Puok 1, Axcell 1, Voss 1).