

Webb coming home to play for Mustangs

Written by Jim Ecker

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Aaron Jennings finally got his man. And he's a good one.

RoyShawn Webb, who played his prep basketball at Cedar Rapids Jefferson, will be joining the Mount Mercy men's basketball program after spending two years at Iowa Central Community College.

Webb, a versatile 6-foot-4 guard, averaged 15.2 points and 5.7 rebounds at Iowa Central this past season as a sophomore.

"I've been recruiting him since he was in high school," said Jennings, the head coach at Mount Mercy. "I told him when he committed to Iowa Central that I'd be recruiting him in a couple of years again.

"He's a high-level, high-character guy."

LJ Harris, a high-scoring guard from Ellsworth Community College, also has committed to the Mustangs. He averaged 19.9 points and 4.8 rebounds this past year, giving Mount Mercy a pair of talented high-scoring guards who can shoot and handle the ball.

Jennings also has received commitments from seven Iowa high school players, including Chandlir Haug from Cedar Rapids Washington, Cody Westcott of Center Point-Urbana, Jarrett Kruse of Waterloo Columbus, Kobe Grieder of Belle Plaine, Andrew Stewart of Tipton, Ryle Koenig of Burlington Notre Dame and Zach Bieri of Louisa-Muscatine also plan to join Mount Mercy.

Bieri graduated from Louisa-Muscatine in 2018, when he averaged 13.4 points, 4 rebounds, 3 steals and 2 assists as a senior. He is not attending college this year and will be a freshman at

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Mount Mercy.

Jennings likes his new class of nine players. “We’re pretty excited,” he said, “and we’re still working.”

Mount Mercy suffered heavy graduation losses after posting a 16-15 record this past year, with six seniors finishing their playing careers. All nine of the new players are 6-foot-5 or shorter, and Jennings said he hopes to add some taller players in the weeks and months to come.

Webb announced his commitment to Mount Mercy on his social media account.

“Just wanna fulfill my dream of playing college basketball,” he wrote. “Get a degree, make moms proud, and continue to do the things they said I couldn’t do.”

Jennings said Webb has developed into a terrific college basketball player who can score, defend and handle the ball.

“Even at Jefferson, he was such a good athlete,” said Jennings. “He’s added so much strength. He’s so strong and he’s got great hands.

“He’s got a chance to come in and put his stamp on this team. He’s going to make us so much better defensively. Being able to coach a player like that is going to be a lot of fun.”

Harris, who is 6-feet tall, is an explosive scorer and combo guard. “What guys like to say, he’s a walking bucket,” said Jennings. “He can put the ball in the basket every way.”

Harris is from Kankakee, Ill. and enrolled at Ellsworth to play football, then switched to basketball. “He loves contact, he has great hands, he’s strong,” said Jennings, who likes the

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way Harris can attack the basket and create his own shot. "He'll help make us dangerous."

Jennings can see Webb and Harris thriving in the same backcourt at Mount Mercy, sharing the ball and guarding multiple spots on the floor.

Several of the high school recruits also know how to score the basketball. Grieder averaged 18.6 points at Belle Plaine, Stewart averaged 16.9 at Tipton, Koenig was good for 15.0 points at Burlington Notre Dame, Westcott averaged 14.1 points at Center Point-Urbana and Bieri averaged 13.4 points as a senior at Louisa-Muscatine in 2018.

Haug averaged 7.6 points and 4.8 rebounds at Cedar Rapids Washington this year.