

Howell impressed with Hawks' effort

Written by Carl Gonder

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Tia Dawson sure knows how to fill out a stat line. And the record books.

The 6-foot-2 Washington senior became the school's all-time leader in blocked shots Tuesday night and dominated Prairie in a 67-51 win at the Hawks' gym.

Dawson passed Kayla Pirtle (1991-95), who had 231 blocks during her Washington career. Dawson now owns the single-season, single-game and career records. She needed just two rejections to break the record, but had four to give her 234.

"I didn't know that," Dawson said of the record. "That feels amazing."

Fueled by a loss and poor performance against Linn-Mar's Kiah Stokes last week, Dawson had her best all-around game of the year with 19 points, 13 rebounds and four rejections. She altered another 10 shots or so and was a dominating presence inside against the smaller Hawks.

"We knew that we had a height advantage," Dawson said. "We wanted to come back after the Linn-Mar loss."

The Warriors moved to 11-2 overall and 8-2 in the Mississippi Valley Conference. Prairie dropped to 3-10 and 2-8.

Dawson, now in her fourth year as a varsity regular, already owns several other school records including single-game rebounds (22), single-season rebounds (272) and rebounding average (11.3). She is 85 rebounds shy of Pirtle's career rebounding total of 795.

"We still have a chance of Tia being the all-time career rebounding leader as well by the end of the year," Coach Frank Howell said. "Setting the shot-blocking record was a pretty cool thing for

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her to achieve tonight.”

Howell added, “It also makes you wonder how many shots she has altered in her career.”

Dawson had 49, 55 and 88 blocks her first three varsity seasons. She has 45 blocks so far this year.

Dawson set the record with a monster swat job with 7:10 to play in the second quarter, igniting a fast break that ended when she was fouled while hitting a tough baseline turnaround. She missed the free throw.

Howell was impressed with Prairie's effort and skill.

“Prairie is probably only one player away from being the type of team that will be able to compete with the best teams in the conference night in and night out,” he said. “The only thing they are lacking is a little bit more size inside.”

The Hawks made the game interesting and kept it close for three quarters. They fought back from a 13-point hole to make it 36-28 at the half.

The Warriors couldn't shake the hosts in the third frame until Janay Pritchett hit a 3-pointer and layup on back-to-back possessions. Dawson's layup just before the period ended gave the Warriors a 52-36 cushion. The largest lead was 20 points three times in the final frame.

Mackenzie Blaha scored 14 points for Prairie and Madison Dellamuth had 12. Washington held a commanding 50-28 edge in rebounding.

A showdown with Iowa City High (12-3) looms on Friday night for the Warriors at Washington.

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"They have a lot of length and play a great 1-3-1 zone and have one of the best players in the country in Virginia Johnson," Howell said. "It will be a big challenge for us."

The Warriors were without assistant coach Jason Edwards, who flew to Ohio to be with his ailing father.

WASHINGTON (67): Jazz Royster 3 7-10 13, Tia Dawson 9 1-3 19, Jordon Pilcher 2 0-0 4, Alissa Oney 1 0-0 2, Ashley Piper 3 4-4 11, Janay Pritchett 4 0-0 9, Madison Kramer 1 1-2 3, Tasha Roundtree 1 0-0 2, Layloni Beard 0 1-2 1, Gail Barnum 0 0-0 0, Jordan Carr 0 1-2 1, Kelli Klaus 0 0-0 0. Totals 23 15-24 67.

PRAIRIE (51) Katie Carver 1 1-3 3, Shelby Crist 3 0-2 6, Alisa Weiland 3 0-0 9, Brittney Tonyan 1 1-2 3, Courteney McCrary 2 0-0 4, Mackenzie Blaha 4 2-3 14, Madison Dellamuth 5 1-1 12. Totals 19 5-11 51.

Halftime – Washington 36, Prairie 28.