

Wilson helps Eagles dunk Statesmen

Written by Jim Ecker

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Doug Wilson made a big splash in college basketball last season when he led the nation in field-goal accuracy and was named a Junior College All-American for the Kirkwood Eagles.

He's even better this year.

Wilson dunked the ball four times and powered in 26 points Tuesday night as the fifth-ranked Eagles defeated the William Penn junior varsity, 92-72, at Johnson Hall.

Wilson, a 6-foot-7 forward from Des Moines, is averaging 20.1 points and 10.1 rebounds, along with 2.4 assists, 1.7 blocks and 1.3 steals every time on the floor.

He made 12 of 15 shots Tuesday for 80 percent and appears even more explosive than a year ago. He missed a dunk on a breakaway in the first half, but it's hard to criticize a guy who tries so hard.

"He affects the game in a lot of ways," said KCC Coach Bryan Petersen. "We still get on him for a lot of stuff, but he's a heck of a player and he plays really hard. That's what's fun about coaching him."

Wilson can be unstoppable around the basket with his strength and great leaping ability, but he's branched out from there.

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"He's matured in a lot of ways," said Petersen. "From an offensive standpoint, he's added to his game with more perimeter skills. He's shooting the free throws better."

Petersen described Wilson as "an elite on-ball defender," capable of guarding anyone on the floor, regardless of size or position. Petersen also used him at the top of a 1-3-1 halfcourt zone Tuesday night to create havoc with his long arms and quickness.

"I think I've improved a little bit, like being more aggressive," Wilson said, assessing his overall contributions. "Athletically I've gotten better. I think I play with more energy, but there's still a lot to improve on."

Wilson has gotten stronger in the weight room and is able to use his additional strength to move people around in the post. When he gets the ball near the basket, it usually takes two defenders to slow him down.

"I think a lot has to do with me being a sophomore now," he said. "I've matured a lot from my freshman year. I know how these games are and I can play up to my full potential. I know I can."

Wilson has signed a national letter-of-intent to play at South Dakota State, an NCAA Division I school that competes in the Summit Conference.

"I fell really good getting to be in that program," he said. "I love the coaching staff and it makes me want to be around them every day."

Kirkwood (6-1) got a big boost off the bench Tuesday from Niko Gosnell, a 6-foot-7 redshirt freshman who was a phenomenal multi-sport athlete at Lone Tree High School. Gosnell scored 16 points in 21 minutes and was a big part of the victory.

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"I thought he was really good," said Petersen. "He gave us a huge lift off the bench tonight and hopefully he can keep coming."

Connor Kasperbauer made three 3-pointers and scored 13 points for Kirkwood. He also grabbed seven rebounds. Seybian Sims finished with nine points and 10 rebounds. Allante Pickens also scored nine points.

Wilson likes the ingredients on this year's club.

"We can accomplish a lot," he said. "We have the potential to be the top team in the nation. Guys like Niko are stepping up every day."

The William Penn varsity basketball team is ranked No. 2 in the nation in the NAIA ranks and has plenty of good players on its junior varsity as well. Demarius Bonds, a 6-1 freshman from Jackson, Tenn., poured in 35 points against Kirkwood.

WILLIAM PENN (72): Freeman 1 0-3 2, Landers 1 5-6 7, Bonds 12 8-9 35, Moise 3 2-2 10, Henderson 1 5-6 7, Hackett 1 0-0 2, Urquizo 0 0-0 0, Gleason 0 0-0 0, Clinton 2 4-4 8, Holman 0 1-2 1, Weaver 0 0-0 0, Galbreath 0 0-0 0. Totals 21 25-32 72.

KIRKWOOD (92): Sims 2 3-6 9, Pickens 2 3-5 9, Kasperbauer 5 0-0 13, Wilson 12 2-3 26, Appel 2 1-1 5, Thedford 3 2-2 8, Sartorius 3 0-0 6, Dee 0 0-0 0, Clark 0 0-0 0, Biernacki 0 0-0 0, Gosnell 6 4-8 16. Totals 35 15-25 92.

Halftime - Kirkwood 49, William Penn JV 34. 3-point goals - William Penn 5 (Bonds 3, Moise 2), Kirkwood 7 (Kasperbauer 3, Sims 2, Pickens 2).