

Kasperbauer triples his fun with Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

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Connor Kasperbauer is one of the sweetest 3-point shooters in junior college basketball this season and he's been a sweet, sweet addition to the Kirkwood Eagles.

Kasperbauer popped in seven 3-pointers Saturday and scored 23 points as the fourth-ranked Eagles topped Little Priest Tribal College, 82-64, in an ICCAC conference game at Johnson Hall.

Kasperbauer, a 6-foot-4 redshirt freshman from Ankeny, is 39-for-77 on 3-pointers this year for 50.6 percent. That's the highest percentage of any NJCAA Division II player in the country who has made at least 3 1/2 triples per game.

He tossed in eight 3-pointers against Morton College last month and has hit at least two triples in all 11 games.

"I've always been told, 'Shooters shoot,'" he remarked. "Every time I'm open I step up with confidence and I know there's a pretty good chance it's going in.

"A lot of times I don't look," he said. "It just feels good."

Kasperbauer normally sets up in the corner and his teammates do a good job of finding him.

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"He's a great shooter, a really high IQ, a really great teammate," said Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen. "There's a lot of great things to say about Connor."

Kasperbauer made 115 3-pointers during his prep career at Ankeny Centennial and set the school record for most triples in one season. He made third team all-state and spent one year at Truman State University, where he was red-shirted last season and moved to Kirkwood.

Truman State changed coaches this season, with former University of Iowa star Jeff Horner succeeding former UNI player Chris Foster, and Kasperbauer will be returning to Truman State next season.

"Why I left? I'd like to keep that between me and my family for now," he said. "Going back, I felt it was the most comfortable for me and the best decision for me and my family moving forward. I love Kirksville, Missouri."



Ankeny Centennial Coach Bob Fontana, who previously coached at Cedar Rapids Kennedy, contacted the Kirkwood coaches when Kasperbauer decided to transfer and helped steer him to Cedar Rapids.

Kasperbauer is averaging 14.5 points for Kirkwood, shooting 53 percent overall from the field and 83.3 percent on free throws in addition to his uncanny work behind the 3-point line.

"He's shooting the ball at a really good level for us," said Petersen. "But probably more important for us, he's kind of the coach on the floor. Having that part of his game added to our roster this year has been huge."

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Kirkwood raised its record to 10-1 overall Saturday and has been playing good basketball all season.

"I like our team, I like the kids we have in this group," said Petersen. "They're working pretty hard."

Seybian Sims collected 18 points and seven rebounds for Kirkwood (10-1, 2-0). Doug Wilson scored 12 points, Allante Pickens 11 and Jamal Stephenson 10.

Tyriek Railey scored 20 points for Little Priest Tribal College (4-5, 0-2).

LITTLE PRIEST (64): Railey 8 3-3 20, Hawk 2 2-5 7, Laurent 2 1-2 5, Gresham 6 2-6 14, Fields 5 7-8 17, Galbreath 0 0-0 0, Innocent 0 0-0 0, William-Knight 0 0-0 0, Mitchell 0 0-0 0, Brown 0 0-1 0, Miller 0 0-0 0, Denney 0 1-2 1. Totals 23 16-27 64.

KIRKWOOD (82): Sims 5 8-10 18, Pickens 4 0-0 11, Kasperbauer 7 2-2 23, Wilson 2 8-11 12, Appel 0 1-2 1, Thedford 1 0-0 2, Dee 0 0-0 0, Clark 0 2-2 2, Stephenson 4 0-0 10, Biernacki 0 0-0 0, Gosnell 0 0-0 0, Arrington 1 1-1 3. Totals 24 22-28 82.

Halftime - Kirkwood 37, Little Priest 20. 3-point goals - Little Priest 2 (Railey 1, Hawk 1), Kirkwood 12 (Kasperbauer 7, Pickens 3, Stephenson 2).