

Goods was great story for Kirkwood

Written by Jim Ecker

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Simone Goods admits she was scared.

She played basketball at Western Kentucky last season as a freshman, but did not feel comfortable there and transferred to Kirkwood this season for the next step in her career.

All of a sudden, she went from an NCAA Division I basketball program with all expenses paid to a junior college. It helped that Deleyah Harris, one of her best friends from Omaha, was already playing at Kirkwood, but there were some anxious moments.

"I was definitely scared," Goods said Saturday night, "but I just had a lot of support."

That support came from her family, her new teammates and from Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl and his entire staff.

"Coach Muhl always talks to me about how I've blossomed," she said, "because when I first got here he always tells me I was like a sad little dog."

Goods laughed when she made that last remark, because it came shortly after the 6-foot-2 center helped the Eagles win the NJCAA Division II national title in Arkansas Saturday night.

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Goods had a big double-double in the championship game with 19 points and 17 rebounds against Johnson County, despite being double-teamed most of the night. She was named the MVP of the national tournament, adding to her collection as the league MVP and regional MVP this season.

Goods averaged 16.2 points and 8.2 rebounds this season and likely will be named a first team All-American when the postseason honors are announced. Keep in mind, she compiled those numbers despite playing only 21.7 minutes per game on a team that won all 37 of its games by more than 30 points per contest.

Goods shot 67.5 percent from the field, a mark that led the nation, and also displayed a fine touch at the foul line, hitting 76 percent of her free throws.

Now that the season is over, Goods plans to focus on where she might play next season as a junior. Her one season at Kirkwood is over and she helped the Eagles win their seventh national title.

"We really bought into everything Coach Muhl taught us," she said. "We trusted his coaching and we worked hard in practice and believed in each other and trusted each other. And it all paid off."

Goods is a powerful force near the basket, a southpaw with strong moves to the basket. She was double-teamed quite a bit this season, but did a good job of finding open teammates and averaged 1.5 assists.

Johnson County sagged all over her in the championship game, but Muhl cleverly found ways to get her the ball in addition to using her as a decoy to open the floor for the rest of the Eagles.

"My whole career, I've kind of been doubled," she said. "At times it gets frustrating, but I also have to be positive because I know when two people are coming at me, that means somebody

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is open.

"It's a hassle in the heat of the game. You get tired and you get banged up, but you have to lock in and buy in to what's going on and be a threat for your teammates.

"I feel like I take a lot of the pressure off of everybody else so they can feel more comfortable scoring and doing what they have to do."

The Eagles had terrific chemistry this season, and that "sad little dog" from Omaha had the time of her life at Kirkwood.

"It's amazing," Goods said late Saturday night. "I've got amazing people around me. I have amazing teammates and coaches.

"Everything about it is just flawless," she remarked. "An undefeated record, a national championship, Coach Muhl's 800th win, his seventh title. Everything about it is just flawless.