

## Muhl has normal worries at Kirkwood

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 27 October 2015 21:12 - Last Updated Tuesday, 27 October 2015 21:17

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Kim Muhl has a few complaints about his women's basketball team at Kirkwood Community College on the eve of the 2015-16 campaign, but it's probably nothing to get too concerned about.

He always worries about his team this time of year. More often than not, everything turns out OK.

Muhl thinks the Eagles need to get tougher, play better defense, communicate better, play harder and listen more to the coaches.

"I think we have a little ways to go," he said Monday. "We have some nice kids and we could be pretty good, but I think it's going to be awhile."

Defense. Toughness. Intensity.

"It's got to be important to them," Muhl said. "Execution to me is important. Guarding somebody is important. We should be able to guard, but it's not important to them yet. What's important to them is scoring.

"It's just Basketball 101, sometimes, and buying into how we want it done."

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Muhl normally figures it out and gets the message across to his players, sometimes by benching them until the light goes on. He's rolled up a glittering record of 765-141 in 26 years with six national titles and 16 trips to the national tournament, sometimes with terrific players and sometimes with a bunch of over-achievers, but the Eagles normally get it done.

Kirkwood opens the season this weekend at the State Fair Classic in Sedalia, Mo., with tough games against State Fair Community College on Friday and Moberly Community College on Saturday, a pair of junior college Division I powers. Kirkwood plays a notch below at the D-2 level.

The Eagles also will have difficult early-season tests with John Wood Community College, Parkland College and Illinois Central College to get ready for the conference campaign later on. They might get off to a relatively slow start this year -- just like a year ago -- but Muhl is confident the rugged competition will pay dividends in the conference.



"A lot of people don't understand that concept, I guess," he said. "We have always played a fairly difficult preseason. It makes them tougher."

Kirkwood finished 31-6 overall, including 13-1 in the conference, and placed fifth at the national tournament. The Eagles graduated a lot of their top players with Taylor Silva, Kirsten Larson, Anna Martenson, Cassidy Clark, Ariel Sneed, Aliyah Issac and Peyton Bockholt, so they have a few holes to fill to build another cohesive unit.

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Casey Miles, A.J. Downs, Addie Oberman, Caitlin Sudduth, Cyerra Hutchins and Madison Wood are back from last year's club. None of them have gaudy statistics next to their names, but they all showed flashes last season and are capable players.

There are eight freshmen on the squad, although Lyric Douglas will be red-shirted. Deleyah Harris, a 5-foot-9 guard from Omaha, was the only freshman in the starting lineup Monday night for Kirkwood's scrimmage against Mount Mercy and Muhl likes what he's seen so far.

"I like how she plays," he said. "I'll tell you what, she has proven how tough she is. She is a tough kid."

Harris averaged 15 points, 9 rebounds, 5 assists and 2 steals at Burke High School in Omaha last season, helping her team finish 26-1. She had a career-high of 36 points.

Rylee Voss, a 6-foot-1 post player from North English, averaged 20 points and 10.6 rebounds last season. She scored 1,362 points in her career and was named all-state, but she won't play this weekend while recovering from an illness.

Dominique Jennings, a 6-foot post player from Cahokia, Ill., averaged 15.9 points and 15.1 rebounds as a high school senior. Chazney Jones, a 6-foot post from Brownsburg, Ind., averaged 15 points, 11 rebounds and 4 assists last season.

Amber Lemons, 5-foot-10, averaged 12 points, 10 rebounds and 5 assists as a high school senior in Chicago. Mesha Wheatly, a 5-5 guard from Chicago, averaged 16 points, 6 rebounds, 5 steals and 3 assists.

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Kirkwood has a bunch of players who scored a lot of points in high school, but Muhl doesn't think anyone will emerge as a consistently big scorer on a daily basis.

"I think it will go from night to night, I really do," he said. "I think we're going to be pretty balanced. I don't think there's going to be one kid."

The Eagles have decent size, but Muhl does not anticipate pounding the ball into his post players. He thinks his guards and wing players will be the strength of the overall team.

"Our athleticism on the wings is as good as we've ever had," he declared.

## **2015-16 ROSTER**

### **Sophomores**

Casey Miles, 5-8, Hudson

A.J. Downs, 5-5, Merrillville, Ind.

Addie Oberman, 5-9, Clinton

Caitlin Sudduth, 5-8, Country Club Hills, Ill.

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Cyerra Hutchns, 5-9, C.R. Prairie

Madison Wood, 6-3, Waterloo

### **Freshmen**

Deleyah Harris, 5-9, Omaha

Amber Lemons, 5-10, Chicago

Mesha Wheatly, 5-5, Chicago

Rylee Voss, 6-1, North English

Ariana Dampier, 5-9, Glenwood, Ill.

Lyric Douglas, 6-1, Memphis

Dominique Jennings, 6-0, Cahokia, Ill.

Chazney Jones, 6-0, Brownsburg, Ind.