

Kim Muhl has another strong basketball team at Kirkwood Community College this season.

The Lady Eagles are ranked eighth in the nation, boast a 14-3 record and are averaging 73.4 points per game, but there's something a little odd about this year's club.

Tay Wilson is the only player on the team who has a scoring average in double figures, and she was averaging 9.94 points before raising it to exactly 10.0 Thursday night in an 89-63 victory over the Loras junior varsity at Johnson Hall.

Awal Ajak is averaging 9.6 points, Leah Robinson 8.7, Megan Axcell 8.2, Olivia Usher 7.5 and Arika Wooldridge 6.5. All of them are capable of scoring a lot more on any given night - and most of them have - but Muhl likes to rotate a dozen players and share the wealth.

That was the story again Wednesday.

All 14 Eagles got into the game and 12 of them saw at least 10 minutes of court time. Twelve players got into the scoring column, but nobody had a monster game.

Axcell led the way with 13 points. Wilson and Ajak netted 11 apiece, but nobody else reached double figures.

When Kirkwood won the national title last year with a 37-0 record, the Eagles had three players in double figures with Simone Goods at 16.2, Deleyah Harris at 13.3 and Shaneequah Watkins at 10.0. Good and Harris were All-Americans and Goods was named the National player of the Year before all three of them moved to four-year schools.

Muhl, who has captured seven national titles during his Hall of Fame career, has won more than 800 games with all kinds of teams and all kinds of scorers, but this year it's been mix-and-match.

He's not sure who is going to score a lot of points in a particular game, but collectively they are doing just fine.

"You have to get a feel for who's having a good game," he explained. "We've got enough stuff (offensive plays) that we can call something and somebody is going to get a look.

"Last year everyone remembers Simone, but there were a lot of games where Simone was in foul trouble and we did it by committee, too."

Kirkwood has enjoyed some lopsided victories where individuals could have scored a lot more points, but Muhl likes to cultivate a deep team that can run opponents into the ground. That tends to depress the scoring averages a bit.

All is well, though. Kirkwood defeated a pair of top-10 teams at the Illinois Central holiday tournament last week and Muhl is confident his club will be successful once the conference race begins next week.

"You're gradually seeing the results of getting better," he said. "We still have a long ways to go with some of the kids coming off the bench, in terms of getting things done. But the effort is good and we're getting better.

"We're ready to go and see what happens."

LORAS JV (63): Prososki-Gree 3 2-2 10, Brown 3 3-3 11, Brooks 1 1-2 4, Moriarty 5 1-2 14, Friend 5 2-2 15, Murray 1 0-0 2, Clark 1 0-0 2, Zellman 2 0-0 5, Bruenig 0 0-0 0. Totals 21 9-11 63.

KIRKWOOD (89): Wilson 5 0-0 11, Puok 4 0-0 8, Axcell 4 3-3 13, Ajak 5 0-0 11, Usher 2 0-0 4, Jenkins 3 1-2 7, Brown 1 1-2 3, Hurst 1 0-0 3, Taylor 3 0-0 7, Robinson 4 1-2 9, Mullinnix 0 0-0 0, Mensen 2 1-2 6, Coleman 0 0-0 0, Wooldridge 2 3-4 7. Totals 36 10-15 89.

Halftime - Kirkwood 52, Loras JV 36. 3-point goals - Loras JV 12 (Moriarty 3, Friend 3, Prososki-Gree 2, Brown 2, Brooks 1, Zellman 1), Kirkwood 7 (Axcell 2, Wilson 1, Ajak 1, Hurst 1, Taylor 1, Mensen 1).