

Hobbs glitters with Kohawk women

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 19 December 2015 21:16 -



If the Iowa Conference selected a pre-holiday MVP for women's basketball based on what's happened so far, Aleena Hobbs would be the easy winner.

She led the league in scoring and ranked third in rebounding heading into Saturday's game against Wisconsin-Eau Claire and twice has been named to the D3hoops.com National Team of the Week.

Hobbs had a fairly quiet game Saturday with 13 points and four rebounds for Coe, but the Kohawks did not need Super Hobbs in this contest and cruised to an 86-67 victory at Eby Fieldhouse.

The Kohawks (6-2) opened a 30-point lead in the second half and broke the school record with sixteen 3-pointers, including six more triples by sharpshooter Mickey Hansche.

Hobbs averaged 13.6 points and 6.9 rebounds last year as a freshman, but the Cedar Rapids Washington grad has raised her marks to 20.4 points and 8.4 rebounds after eight games this year.

Hobbs said there have been two keys to her success so far: She's playing for a team with lots of talented players, making it impossible

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for opponents to focus their defense on her, and she's versatile enough to hurt teams from a variety of spots on the floor.

"I can shoot, I can drive," she said. "Coach tells me before almost every game, it's going to be hard for teams to stop me if I'm shooting well from the outside because they can't take away both things."

Hobbs has canned sixteen 3-pointers to keep the defense honest, and when they guard her closely on the perimeter she puts her shoulder down and heads to the basket. If they cut her off, she'll find an open teammate for a shot.

"Her ability to shoot it, her ability to drive it, her ability to post up, her ability to pass it out of that, it really makes everybody better," said Coach Nate Oakland. "And she has a really high basketball IQ."

"You're talking about a kid that watches a ton of basketball, whether it's the NBA or whether it's what we're doing. And she's a sponge. She's really coachable."

"She's always going to be a nightmare match-up because of her versatility," said Oakland. "I think she's just scratching the surface, to be honest, which is scary. The sky's the limit for her."

The Kohawks got major contributions from a variety of players Saturday. Hansche finished with 20 points and Hobbs had 13 to lead the way, but Jenna Lehman, Jordan Holmes and Jenna Power all tossed in nine points and Courteney McCrary had eight. Allie Wirth and Shelby Lehmann contributed six points and Lakyn Boltz chipped in with five.

"Anyone can be on, on any night," said Hobbs. "It's crazy. And it's pretty cool."

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Hansche moved into third place in school history with 172 3-pointers.

Ashley Stulken scored only one point for Coe and fouled out in 10 minutes, but Oakland is happy to have the 6-foot-1 junior from Xavier on the floor again following a knee injury.

The Kohawks plan to be a contender for the Iowa Conference title when they begin diving into league games in January.

"For sure," said Hobbs. "I really think so."

EAU CLAIRE (67): Lichtfuss 5 2-2 12, Johnson 4 4-5 12, O'Toole 8 10-14 26, LaCroix 2 0-0 6, Becker 0 0-0 0, Dunathan 2 2-2 7, Kroll 1 0-0 2, Meier 1 0-0 2, Boles 0 0-0 0, Hanley 0 0-0 0, Voigt 0 0-0 0. Totals 23 18-23 67.

COE (86): Wirth 1 4-4 6, Hobbs 2 8-8 13, Lehmann 2 2-4 6, Hansche 7 0-0 20, Lehman 3 0-0 9, Holmes 3 2-2 9, Anderson 0 0-0 0, Boltz 2 0-0 5, Power 3 0-0 9, McCrary 3 1-2 8, Robinson 0 0-0 0, Stulken 0 1-2 1. Totals 26 18-22 86.

Halftime - Coe 42, Eau Claire 30. 3-point goals - Eau Clair 3 (LaCroix 2, Dunathan 1), Coe 16 (Hansche 6, Lehman 3, Power 3, Hobbs 1, Holmes 1, Boltz 1, McCrary 1).

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