

MEL's Coddington signs letter with Fontbonne

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Noah Coddington played a key role in Metro East Lutheran's run to this year's IHSA Class 1A Okawville Sectional, where the Knights, after being mired in a nine-game losing streak that saw them fall to 4-10 at one point, saw them win nine of their last 11 regular-season games to recover to 13-12 and win the Mount Olive Regional and finish 15-13.

Coddington became the latest Knight to head off to the next level as he signed a letter of intent with Clayton, Mo.-based Fontbonne University to play basketball beginning next season. The NCAA Division III Griffins are a member of the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference along with schools such as Blackburn College in Carlinville, MacMurray University in Jacksonville, Webster University in nearby Webster Groves, Mo., and Westminster College in Fulton, Mo.

“I really thought it was a good fit both academically and athletically,” Coddington said. “I really enjoyed my visit over there and talked to the coach (Lance Thornhill) and everything. It's only about 30 minutes from my house so my family can come out and watch.”

Coddington has been playing basketball since he was in kindergarten; his dad, one-time East Alton-Wood River basketball standout Dan Coddington, has been a big help with him. “He's (Dan Coddington) been helping coach me, other than high school, my whole life,” Coddington said. “He coached me all the way through grade school; he definitely showed me a lot.”

“It's awesome to be able to see kids get that opportunity to play at the next level,” said MEL basketball assistant Joel Rempfer. “Kids put in so much work – there's so many hours spent practicing, playing, stuff that goes on behind the scenes; it's such an awesome, rewarding experience for them to see all that pay off and get the opportunity to play at the next level.

“It's great when it works out for kids to stay close and have the opportunity to see them, but my biggest thing for kids is that they find a program that's a good fit for them; if it happens to be local, that's great. You just want them to go somewhere where they will have the chance to excel and succeed.”

Coddington's basketball background does help him. “He comes from a good basketball family,” Rempfer said. “I don't even know what our record would have been if we hadn't had him this year; he was such a good leader for us on and off the court. His ability to play wherever we needed him to play – if we needed him to be down on the block, he could do that; if we needed him to be outside as a guard – even as a point guard handing the ball – he could do that too.

“He's a great pure shooter; there were times he was just a nightmare for other teams to try to match up with because they would put a little guy on him, we could put him down low. If they tried to put a big guy on him, he could take them outside where the big guy wasn't quick enough to guard him.”

“It was a fun time playing here at Metro East,” Coddington said. “It's kind of sad that it's over. I'll make some more memories when I'm up there (at Fontbonne) and have some fun over there.”

Coddington has not decided on a major but is leaning toward a business-related major.