

Edwardsville's Martin heading to Iowa to play for Hawkeyes

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Kate Martin has Iowa in her blood.

“My family lives around there, my mom is from there – it's just a great place,” Martin said at a ceremony Wednesday night at Edwardsville High School where Martin signed to play women's basketball for the Hawkeyes beginning in the fall of 2018.

“It's a great place, a great atmosphere,” Martin said about her choice of the Big Ten school.

Before Martin arrives in Iowa City, however, there's still some unfinished business to attend to from last season.

Last year's Tigers reached the IHSA Class 4A state final at Redbird Arena in Normal, where a last-second shot gave Geneva a 41-40 win over EHS. “We didn't have the outcome we wanted last year, but we're going to use it as motivation this year to go back to state,” Martin said. “We'll keep working hard; it's never easy, but with hard work and dedication, it'll pay off in the end.”

“Kate's a great kid to be around,” said Tiger girls basketball coach Lori Blade. “They've (her parents, Jill and EHS football coach Matt Martin) done a great job raising her; she makes good decisions, but Kate's one of those kids who has just enough rebel in her that you've got to keep an eye on her, but that's a good thing – you say that and some kids will cross that line.

“Kate goes to the line, but she doesn't cross it. But she's not going to back down from anybody and that's the part of the rebel in her you've got to love.”

Being the daughter of a coach may well have helped in her development. “I don't know about that, but that's what probably makes her hard-nosed and a gritty-type kid,” Blade said of Kate Martin. “She's special in many, many facets of not just the game, but in her mentality and not backing down.

“She's grown a lot from last year maturity-wise where she's coming in an being a lot more vocal than what she's been in the past, which she also knows she's also going to have to do that at the next level. She's going to need to be our leader this year without (Makenzie) Silvey (who is now at SIU-Carbondale); she's going to be very important for that.”

Martin was a major contributor to the Tigers' 32-1 run to the final last year, averaging 12.9 points per game and 5.2 rebounds per game and 2.9 assists a game while shooting 45.4 percent from the floor and 83.5 percent from the free-throw line while connecting on 36.7 percent from three-point range.

“What a wonderful opportunity for her,” said Matt Martin of his daughter. “It's a good school to go to; I grew up an Illinois fan, so I guess I'll have to adjust,” he said with a laugh.

If there's one thing that makes Martin stand out, “she has a passion,” Matt Martin said. “She has a passion for competing and she loves basketball and works hard at it; she's going to do everything she can to be the best player she can be. I'm proud of her for that – she works hard.”

Blade is proud of Martin for the opportunity before her at Iowa City. “I'm proud of her, but I'm proud she's getting the opportunity to go to a school where she is so very interested in,” Blade said. “She's going to defend well because of her length and her athleticism; she's going to be tough to guard because of that. She's quick enough, she can be a tough matchup for some people; I think we'll see a much more mature, under control Kate this year because she's a lot more confident than what she was and everything.”