

Braden Kline Has Strong Holiday Tourney, Is One Of Jeff Lauritzen-Country Financial Marquette Catholic Male Athletes of Month

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON – Marquette Explorers basketball season is underway and sophomore guard Braden Kline has been a big contributor.

Kline had nine points in Marquette's 44-24 win over Waterloo on Monday in the Columbia-Freeburg Holiday Tournament. Kline had 12 points in the 63-38 Explorers' win over Valmeyer and 6 points in the 39-25 loss to Columbia in the championship game of the Columbia-Freeburg Tournament. The Explorers now stand 8-8 overall and have high expectations the rest of the season.

Kline and the Explorers started their season with Roxana's Hoopsgiving Classic and the sophomore and the team continues to improve. Kline is one of the Jeff Lauritzen Country Financial Male Athletes of the Month for Marquette Catholic.

Despite not being able to play his freshmen year due to an injury, the talented sophomore is getting a chance to contribute to the varsity team.

"It's a great feeling," said Kline after being asked how it feels to start for a strong Explorers team. "Not many underclassmen get to start varsity. Last year I did not get to play at all because I broke my wrist. It's great to have a full season this year."

A common theme in sports is veteran players helping young talent and the Explorers are no exception. Marquette Catholic has one senior on their team, Owen Williams, and Kline says Williams has helped him grow as an Explorer basketball player. "Owen has helped with my development. He teaches me the ways of the system."

Kline and the Explorers look to be one of the strongest teams in the Prairie State Conference. It is apparent Kline has been playing basketball long before and outside of high school. When asked where Kline honed the skills to be a varsity Explorer basketball player, he said, "I play AAU in the summer. I play for a good program called the Southwestern Illinois Jets. Playing for them during the offseason helps prepare me for school ball."

Now that Kline has made the team, he says he is happy to be a part of Explorers basketball and credits Coach Steve Medford for pushing him and the team. "I wouldn't want to be in any other system. Coach Medford pushes us and makes everyone a better player."

With Kline just starting his first year of basketball for the Explorers, he finally got to experience Marquette's state-award-winning fan section, the Blue Crew. The Blue Crew brought the energy for the Hoopsgiving Classic and several other games and especially for the game versus the Wood River High School Oilers. Kline says the Blue Crew is a difference-maker. "They are great." "I could not ask for better fans to cheer us on."

Kline said the key is simple for the Explorers: "We have to keep competing every night. We work hard in practice and Coach Medford gets us prepared for every game."

