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It's Wenig's team now

West senior ready, willing and able to take on leadership role

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When it comes to being the best basketball player she can be, Megan Wenig leaves nothing left to chance.

She does everything in her power to make sure that she'll be a pain in the you-know-what for every team she plays against.

She'll lift weights, she'll work on her shooting and she'll play as much offseason basketball as she can, because she doesn't know any other way to do it.

Good thing, too.

This season, the senior guard from Oshkosh West will be front and center for each of the 20 regular-season opponents West faces. Wenig is coming off a brilliant junior campaign where she averaged 14.8 points per game, was a unanimous first-team Fox Valley Association selection and helped lead the Wildcats to the WIAA Division 1 state championship game against Milwaukee Vincent, where they lost, 49-37.

Wenig is in the forefront alone because her running mate since grade school, Krista Pelky and her 16.2 ppg., graduated. Now it's up to Wenig to lead West this season to what she hopes is another deep tournament run.

She's ready.

"I'm looking to play the same role as last year," Wenig said. "I have to pick up some slack because Krista's gone. I have to be more of a vocal leader, directing the younger kids around like people did to me when I was that age."

Wenig is entering her third season as a starter and each year she has taken a step. She acknowledges this season will be a stiff test, but she's a gamer and has no plans in backing down.

In fact, she relishes opponents targeting her.

"It's going to be harder," Wenig said. "I think it'll be more fun. When it's harder to score you feel better about yourself that you can do that."

"It'll open other people a lot. It'll be hard, but I'm up for it."

Wenig has an unusual and impressive game for a point guard. About 5-foot-7, Wenig has the range to bury a 3-pointer, but she has the uncanny ability to score inside.

While Wenig will use a spin move to get by a defender on the way to the basket, she also has an up-and-under move that seems impossible to stop.

But there's one area she looked at in the offseason as the No. 1 spot to get better at.

"I worked on my mid-range (jumper) a lot," Wenig said. "I've always taken it all the way or shoot a 3, so I really tried to improve my mid-range (jumper)."

If she has improved that part of her game, then her offensive game becomes a nightmare to deal with on defense. Because she has so many ways to score, her offensive game is best described as resourceful.

And she better be if defenses go after her like coach Niki Sutter thinks they will.

"Obviously teams can lock down easier on one person," Sutter said. "We're going to see a lot of box-and-ones or a lot of zones. It's tough to prepare for, but Megan's such a good scorer, she can score from anywhere on the floor and she can create her own shot."

Sutter said she'll use Wenig in more than one position to give her chances to score and set others up. Her preference, on a team with no other returning player who averaged more than six points per game last season, will be to get the ball in Wenig's hands a lot.

"We can have her bring the ball the down if we want her with the ball right away," Sutter said. "We can run her off screens. I still think Megan will score. She just works hard and never stops moving. She's that great of a player."

Sutter even suggested Wenig can go down on the blocks because of the variety in her game.

"She can make post moves," Sutter said. "She finds a way to get it done."

As important as Wenig is to the team's success, everybody knows she can't do it alone. In addition to Pelky, West lost three other seniors who contributed offensively at different times last season — Chloe Kierszh, Kristie Cowling and Abby Kirchenwitz.

Wenig will need help from new starters Lauren Probst, Katie Luethe and Chelsea Kierszh, who each played off the bench last season.

"They're going to have to step up," Sutter said. "I'm expecting great things from Tatum, Chelsea, Katie and Lauren. They have to relieve some of that pressure off Megan or we're not going to be putting many points up."

Pressure on Wenig? If there is some, that smile on her face when asked about pressure sure doesn't give you any indication it bothers her.

Kind of like the defenders she faces, no matter what she's up against, she proves time and time again she can get the job done.
