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Jefferson star working on her own legend

Zastrow called best player in Wisconsin

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Three posters of an NBA legend grace the walls of Jefferson senior Lin Zastrow's bedroom.

Surprisingly, this player retired before Zastrow could make a basket on a regulation 10-foot hoop.

"We have a Larry Bird tape, and it's so much fun to watch," said the 6-foot-3 Zastrow, who will play next year for the University of Wisconsin. "He showed that even if you're big you can still pass, dribble and play defense well. I wish I could play like that."

Actually, at the high school level, Zastrow has done a pretty good Larry Bird impression.

She is averaging about 19 points, 11 rebounds, three blocks and three assists per game. The Eagles, who won the Division 2 state championship two years ago, sport a 14-1 record and are 8-0 in Lakeshore Conference play.

Zastrow is much more than a stationary post player. She can take the ball up, pass on a dime and shoot three-point baskets.

"She's probably the best player I've had in my coaching career as far as knowing the game," Jefferson coach Dena Smith said. "She sees the floor so well and anticipates what's going to happen next."

Playing point guard on her fifth- and sixth-grade teams helped Zastrow's all-around game. When her growth spurt came before high school, her coordination and guard skills stayed with her.

"Lin is a very unique player," said John Waring, the president of Pacesetter Basketball, a company that helps prepare elite high school players for the college game. "You rarely see a kid that size with her talent. She is skilled enough to play any position on the floor."

Zastrow is as tough as she is skilled. She had practiced for less than a week before last Friday's game against Elkhorn, as a flu and fever prevented her from logging much court time.

There was no way, however, that Zastrow would miss the Elkhorn game.

"I told (coach) unless I'm dying, don't take me out," she said. "We were not losing to Elkhorn."

Zastrow made sure of that by pouring in 25 points to lead Jefferson to a 43-38 victory. Zastrow is less than 100 points away from surpassing current University of Wisconsin center Caitlin Gibson and becoming the school's all-time leading scorer.

Zastrow will be reunited with Gibson next year.

"I'm really excited to play with Lin again," said Gibson, a sophomore with the Badgers. "She'll bring a lot of ability to our team."

If there was any question as to where Zastrow ranked in the state of Wisconsin, she's answered it this season.

"She's the best player in Wisconsin," Waring said. "There's not even a close second. She's in a class by herself."

Come March, Zastrow hopes the same be said about the Eagles.

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