



After missing out on most of her junior year, Katie Donahoe has returned to pace Minford this season. The senior leads the 12-3 Lady Falcons in scoring and rebounding.

Follow the leader

Katie Donahoe has taken charge to guide Minford

By JOSH HICKLE

PDT Sports Writer

MINFORD — It wasn't the hardest hit Katie Donahoe has taken on the basketball court.

It may have been the toughest, though.

In a game against Wheelersburg last season, the then-junior landed awkwardly after going for a rebound during a foul shot. Instead of starting the fast break, Donahoe fell to the floor in pain.

The result was a torn ACL, and an early end to her junior season at Minford.

"When she went down and didn't get right back up, because she is usually quick to respond, my heart dropped to my feet," said Lady Falcons coach Kim Conley.

As did the hearts of many in the Minford community. A threat to score in double figures on any given night, Donahoe would not see time on the basketball court for close to a year. Instead, she would spend most of that time in rehabilitation.

That rehabilitation is over, Donahoe is back, and the Lady Falcons have been the recipients of the progress. Since returning,

the senior has been averaging around 15 points and eight rebounds per contest. That's good enough to put Minford into the elite of the SOC II with a 12-3 record overall, 8-3 in conference play.

"The injury motivated me to want to get back on the court," said Donahoe, who returned in time for volleyball this past season. "I am usually laid-back and quiet, but I have been a little more competitive this season. I knew that I could be a leader on the team to help everyone play to the best of their ability."

That competitive streak shines through. At 6-feet tall, Donahoe is one of the taller players on the Lady Falcons' squad. That size has allowed her to crash the

See LEADER, B2

Leader

From Page B1

boards against many other players in the conference, with Donahoe getting the upper hand a lot of the time.

Of course, you wouldn't hear Donahoe talk about her exploits in basketball that much. Extremely humble, Donahoe prefers to lead more by actions than words, and so far, such an approach has led to success.

"She's the type of person where it's not 'What can I do for Katie,'" said Conley, "it's 'What can I do for this team.' I know that she sets individual goals like everyone else on the team. However, the primary objective is the team. They all go into it the same way, and I attribute that to the senior leadership."

That attitude has also made life easier for Conley. Now in her second year at Minford, Conley returned to the sidelines

in 2004 after successful campaigns at Western Pike and Picketon high schools. Conley took over for former coach Jim Parkes, who had retired.

A stranger in a new place, Conley admits her job was made easier because of the fact that Donahoe was on the team.

"It wasn't really so much her playing ability as it was the personality," she said. "I was the foreign object that came into this program, and they had been here. They could have made it

tough on me, but with their personalities, they just persevere over everything. Any coach would like to go into a lot of talent, but I am not one that looks for that."

It's that personality that Conley will miss the most. Donahoe will graduate after this season and take with her the talent and attitude that has made a difference for the Lady Falcons. In fact, it's something that Conley doesn't really want to think about.

"Because of all her hard work, we are absolutely going to miss her on the floor," she said. "Anyone that knows anything about basketball knows it is going to be very difficult to fill her shoes."

Before that can happen, though, Minford has more pressing matters — namely the postseason. Tournament draws are slated for this weekend, and teams around the state will get into full gear for the tournament.

Like most of her peers, Donahoe is expecting this final postseason to be a successful one. And — in what may be an indication to future opponents — the Lady Falcons may just be getting warmed up.

"State is definitely a goal that we have for the team," said Donahoe. "I believe that we do have the ability to achieve that, along with the talent and the hard work."

JOSH HICKLE can be reached at (740) 353-3101 ext. 241.