

News Tribune

Wojciechowski to be a Prairie Star

Thursday, September 10, 2009

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La Salle-Peru senior right-side hitter Brittnee Wojciechowski literally found the perfect fit when looking for a college to attend next year.

Wojciechowski, one of the many talented front-row players on the Lady Cavaliers, felt at home when she visited the campus of University of Illinois Springfield.

And as it turns out, the Prairie Stars will have an opening for a right-side hitter.

It's a perfect fit, indeed. So much in fact, Wojciechowski verbally committed to become a Prairie Star volleyball player next fall.

"When I stepped on campus at UIS, I was like, 'Oh, this feels like home,'" Wojciechowski said. "I like it already. Then I went around the campus with the girls who took us around, and they were just cracking me up. It was just amazing. I really like the college a lot."

According to Wojciechowski, the Prairie Stars currently lack a right-side hitter, and they were forced to move one of their middles to the right side this year.

That problem could be solved next year when Wojciechowski comes to town to play for UIS head coach Angie Riggle.

"She wants to move that middle back into the middle," Wojciechowski said of Riggle. "So she said I have a great opportunity to come in and play and earn my position. It's really a good opportunity, and I can't wait to see what it brings."

Along with senior middle hitters Kalli Herron and Alyssa Tomaszewski and senior setter Heather Smith, Wojciechowski is a member of a strong front line for the Lady Cavaliers.

She is a three-year starter for L-P, earning third-team NewsTribune All-Area honors as a junior to go along with honorable mention all-conference honors in the NCIC Lincoln Division.

This year, La Salle-Peru head coach Mark Haberkorn has seen a big progression in Wojciechowski's game at the net.

"(Wojciechowski) has been getting better all the time," Haberkorn said. "Last year, she was more of a spot hitter. She could hit any spot. This year, she is more of a power hitter who can hit the spots. She has really improved her hitting game."

She could improve an already strong hitting game for the Prairie Stars, who are off to a strong 5-2 this season under Riggle, who is in her first year as head coach at UIS after taking the job on May 21.

Riggle spent one season as the head coach at Springfield's Sacred Heart-Griffin High School, and she spent three seasons as the Lincoln Land Community College head coach. The Loggers totaled a 107-53 record under Riggle's tutelage, including the 2003 Mid West Athletic Conference championship.

Riggle was a big reason Wojciechowski made the decision to come to Springfield. "I was looking at other ones, and I visited a lot during the summer and I talked to a lot of coaches. A lot of them, I was like, 'OK, I like the coach. It felt all right, but it just didn't fit,'" Wojciechowski said. "Then when I went to UIS, it just clicked. I knew from the very beginning that I wanted to go there."

Wojciechowski will also see a face from the Illinois Valley on the Prairie Stars' team next year. LaMoille graduate Laura Lovgren transferred from Illinois Valley Community College to UIS before this season. Lovgren will be a junior next year.

Wojciechowski chose UIS over the University of Indianapolis and the University of Missouri-St. Louis among others.

She is just glad the search is over.

"There were long hours put into that," Wojciechowski said. "I am so excited that I can just relax my senior year and play volleyball and not worry about where I am going."