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SHG graduate Nevins to play basketball at UIS

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Sacred Heart-Griffin High School graduate Cristina Nevins will play for the University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars women's basketball team next season after starting for the Parkland College women's basketball team that reached the National Junior College Athletic Association Division II National Tournament in March.

Nevins, the 2008 State Journal-Register Central State Eight Conference Female Athlete of the Year, expects to sign a NCAA Division II letter of intent this weekend.

UIS' other spring signees are Virginia/A-C Central's Megan Bergerud, Normal University High's Alyssa Palmer and a junior college transfers Bailey Beale and Sadie Gann.

Nevins picked the Stars over the University of St. Francis, Iowa Wesleyan and Robert Morris in Chicago.

At UIS, Nevins will reunite with former SHG teammate Mallory Beck, who signed in the fall as did Kankakee Community College transfer Khassandrae Brown and Bloomington's Amanda Hainlen.

Nevins was the starting point guard and averaged three assists for Parkland, which placed sixth at the national tournament. It was the second straight sixth-place finish at the national tourney for Parkland. Nevins started some her freshmen year at Parkland.

"I know how to win, and other people coming from good jucos know how to win," Nevins said. "Playing with those girls can help the program out a lot."

Gann played for Bartonville Limestone High before she played for Kankakee Community College, which took fourth at the Division II national tourney.

Beale, a native of Independence, Mo., was a NJCAA all-region selection at Cottey College. She averaged 12 points and shot 35 percent from 3-point range.

Palmer led U-High in scoring, assists and steals this past season.

Seven players have signed with UIS. The addition of Nevins will make it eight.

UIS coach Marne Fauser kept just three players from the Stars' nine-player team that produced a 3-24 overall record and 0-18 Great Lakes Valley Conference record during the 2009-10 season. She chose not to renew the athletic scholarships for six players.

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