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Area colleges: Area trio signs with UIS softball team

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Williamsville High School shortstop Lauren Hollinshead, Petersburg PORTA left-handed catcher/designated hitter Chelsea Minor and Taylorville outfielder Shannon Mitchell have all signed a letter of intent to play softball for the University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars.

Hollinshead carried a .343 batting average last season and had 22 runs batted in.

Minor hit a school-record nine home runs and tied the PORTA single-season mark for triples with nine. She had a .494 batting average and 23 RBIs. She had just two errors at catcher.

The left-handed Mitchell had a team-leading batting average of .426 and team-high 22 stolen bases.

Parkland College sophomore centerfielder Samantha Inman and Chicago Marist High catcher Alyssa Sierzega have also signed with the Stars.

Inman was named to the National Junior College Athletic Association Division II All-American second team after hitting .386, 13 home runs, driving in 64 RBIs and stealing 23 bases.

Sierzega comes from a program that has won seven straight regional titles, including three consecutive Class 4A championships.

Benedictine signs Californian

Rob Handy was named coach of the Benedictine University-Springfield Bulldogs softball team in April, and he already has assembled two recruiting classes.

Handy signed 10 players for the upcoming season and three more for the 2011-12 campaign.

The newest player who will play for Benedictine this spring is sophomore pitcher Kayla McDonald from Sacramento, Calif. The North Platte Community College transfer was named the Region IX Division II Freshman of the Year and compiled a 17-5 record earlier this year.

"She's a ton," Benedictine coach Rob Handy said. "She's the real deal. In one game, she struck out of 18 of 21 batters. She pitched a no-hitter in regionals with a sore shoulder.

Morrisonville pitcher/second baseman Cassie Osterholt will play for the Bulldogs in 2012 along with Danville catcher Logan Taylor and Bismarck-Henning outfielder/pitcher Frankie Shoaf. Taylor hit a two-out grand slam in a 6-5 win over Sacred Heart-Griffin in the title game of the Class 3A Mount Zion Sectional in June. Shoaf hit three of her six home runs last season in one contest.

Volleyball

Jokisch headed to UIS

Taylor Jokisch, an outside hitter on the A-C Central/Virginia High School volleyball team, will play for the University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars next year.

Jokisch had 11 kills in her final match for A-C Central, which fell in two sets to Lutheran in the championship match of the Class 1A Jacksonville Routt Sectional.

Lincoln Land Community College sophomores Beka Pruemer and middle hitter Megan Vlacic have also signed with the Stars.

Women's basketball

Blackburn falls to North Park

CHICAGO — Rashonda Willis and Sierra Shipley each scored a team-high 16 points, but it was not enough as Blackburn fell to North Park 73-53 on Wednesday.

The Beavers committed 24 turnovers in the game and were outscored 40-26 in the second half.

Blackburn falls to 0-4 on the season, and North Park improves to 2-2.

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