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First athlete signs intent to play for Cougars

athletics

April 28, 2011

KOKOMO, Ind. – Tri-Central High School senior Jake Robertson this week became the first student athlete to sign a letter of intent for Indiana University Kokomo Cougars men’s basketball team.

A point guard for the Tri-Central Trojans, Robertson will attend IU Kokomo this fall, majoring in business management and playing on the men’s basketball team. IU Kokomo has announced Jace Thompson was selected as the program’s first coach.

“I’d heard IU Kokomo was going to start a men’s basketball program, but I wasn’t sure about whether or not it would be in place before my graduation from high school,” said Robertson. “As it turned out, IU Kokomo was able to get the program together and it turned into a golden opportunity for me. It seems crazy IU Kokomo has athletic teams now. I’m going to be able to play basketball with friends, and on top of that I get an IU education.”

For Robertson’s family, his decision to choose a university close to home was more than welcome.

“I was happy when he told me,” said Robertson’s mother, Teresa Long, at the letter signing. “I like the fact he will be local, able to play basketball with kids he knows, and will be enrolled in a good program. He’s been talking about going to IU Kokomo ever since he’d seen in newspapers it was going to have a basketball team.”

IU Kokomo, however, wasn’t the only school eyeing the Tri Central student, said his father, Brad Robertson, noting his son had also been considering some other area colleges.

“I’m very proud and excited for him,” said Brad. “I’m glad he’s going to be staying nearby, but I think the best part of his signing with IU Kokomo is that he’s going to be getting an IU degree close to home. When I first heard IU Kokomo was going to have a basketball program, the thought that Jake would play for them was always in the back of my mind.”

Trojan Coach Kyle Zahn added Robertson will be an asset for the new IU Kokomo team.

“I think he has a very unique opportunity and will definitely be able to bring a lot to the team, especially leadership,” said Zahn. “Jake is extremely competitive and his passion has a tendency to spread to the other team members. He makes it hard for other teams to beat him. He’s going to be hard to replace. He has a rare ability to inspire others because when he’s on the floor, everyone else is better for it.”

Thompson agreed, noting Robertson has a keen understanding of playing basketball.

“Jake has an understanding of how to win,” said Thompson. “I’m looking at having a roster of 10 to 15 guys and not all of them will be local kids. Right now, I have three other commitments, but Jake is the first to officially sign.”

In February, IU Kokomo announced competitive club sports- men’s basketball and women’s volleyball – will be added to student activities this fall semester with an eye on joining the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) by fall 2012.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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