

Edwardsville Girls Basketball Star Sydney Harris Officially Signs With Central Michigan University, Looks Forward To Playing With Chippewas

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - After announcing her commitment to Central Michigan University on Twitter a week-and-a-half ago, Edwardsville girls basketball forward Sydney Harris, one of the top players in the St. Louis area, made it official and signed with the school from Mt. Pleasant, Mich., in a ceremony at Edwardsville High Wednesday evening.

Harris, a senior who will be a very important player for the Tigers this coming year, signed with the Mid-American Conference school after bonding very well with head

coach Heather Oesterle and her staff, along with the rest of the Chippewa players during her visit.

"I fell in love on my visit, the coaching staff was awesome, I bonded with the team well, and I really liked the campus, and I really saw myself fitting in the program right away," Harris said.

The Mid-American Conference has some very good schools that play in the league, such as Eastern Michigan, Western Michigan, Akron, Kent State, Ohio University, Ball State, Bowling Green State, Buffalo, Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, Toledo and Northern Illinois. The league's teams also play against Power Five schools, and Harris is looking forward to the opportunity.

"Yeah I am," Harris said. "And on top of the great conference they play in, they also play other big Power Five schools, which is a great opportunity to showcase myself against other bigger schools."

In the end, Harris also considered Cleveland State, but chose CMU after taking to a former Edwardsville basketball star who played for the Chippewas' men's team.

"Really, just everything," Harris said. "And also, Shawn Roundtree, he played there and he gave me, like, insight, and just having that other thought of they're a great program, that's awesome."

Harris did have a big 2020-21 season despite it being abbreviated because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She averaged a team-leading 19.8 points and 7.7 rebound-per-game, to go along with 34 assists and 30 steals in helping Edwardsville go 16-1 and win the Southwestern Conference championship.

Tigers head coach Caty Happe also believes that Harris will be a big contributor to the Chippewas right away.

"Oh, absolutely," Happe said. "I think she's going to thrive going up there, too. The coach has been awesome, really made her feel like that was home, and the team up there. So she's going to continue to play with kids who are at a high level, and improve and be a great team player."

Playing in the MAC will also provide Harris with more great opportunities as well.

"It is for sure," Happe said. "I mean, our schedule this year, and every year, they've had to compete against good kids, so I think that can only help them at the next level."

Harris is undecided about her major as of now at Central Michigan, and as far as her senior year with the Tigers, she's got her sights set on big things ahead.

"Honestly, I'm hoping for state," Harris said. "A big run, especially since we were coached for it last year, so I know it's a goal for me, Macy (Silvey) and Elle (Evans) and hopefully the rest of the team just to go all the way and play our hearts out."

Hopefully, bring back the Class 4A state championship to the southern part of the state as well.

"Yep, right where it belongs," Harris said with a laugh and smile.

As far as personal goals, Harris is hoping to move up on the school's all-time points list, possibly breaking the record, and is using the limited COVID season from last year as motivation for this season.

"Well, my goal, I'm trying to beat the scoring record, personally," Harris said. "I was cut short last season with only so many games, but it's just more drive to push harder."