



# **Elle Evans Signs With North Dakota State University For Women's Basketball, Looks Forward To Making Contributions To Bison Program**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville girls basketball player Elle Evans, a forward, signed a letter of intent to attend North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D. for the 2022-23 season in a ceremony at the high school held Wednesday evening.

Evans, a six-foot-three forward, will be playing for the Bison and head coach Jory Collins in The Summit League, and cited her bonding with the NDSU coaching staff as a major factor in her decision to sign with the school.

"I've been building a great relationship with the whole coaching staff since spring," Evans said during a post-ceremony interview, "so that was a major part of it for me. My visit up there, I was able to spend a great time with the girls, and it was just somewhere I could definitely see myself, and the program has really turned around in the last couple of years."

The Summit League, formerly known as the Mid-Continent Conference until 2007, has schools such as Western Illinois, Denver, Kansas City, Nebraska-Omaha, North Dakota, Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., St. Thomas of St. Paul, Minn., South Dakota and South Dakota State, and is considered a very good mid-major conference. Evans is looking ahead to the competition and challenges that lie ahead in the league.

"Yeah, they have some great teams," Evans said. "They have USD, who is a top-25 team, and SDSU, who made the NCAA tournament. For NDSU, that's something that we want to be able to do."

Evans also considered a very eclectic list of schools that included South Dakota, Loyola of Chicago, Virginia Tech University, the University of Colorado, Rice University in Houston.

"So they were kind of all over," Evans said. "North, South," she said with a laugh. "Fargo, as a town, is the cutest thing I've ever seen. It was not what I expected at all, in a good way. It was just somewhere I could totally see myself in a good place where I could flourish as a student-athlete."

Evans will bring much to the table for the Bison program.

"Six-three, a long guard who can take it to the basket and shoot," said Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe of Evans. "I think she's somebody who can make an immediate impact. She's going to help any program she goes to, but more importantly, North Dakota State, I think, she's got a good opportunity to help right away."

Evans is undecided on a major as of now, but is leaning towards accounting for the moment. And as far as this coming season with the Tigers, she's looking ahead to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

"I'm feeling great," Evans said. "I'm super excited. This year's the first normal season in a while. We have a great team, we've been practicing great. I just think if we keep doing the things, the little things, we'll be able to go make a long run in the postseason, which is obviously our goal."

And possibly bring back a state championship?

"Yes," Evans said with a smile and laugh. "Hopefully, yes!"

No matter what, Evans will enjoy the season and have fun with it as well.

"Make the most of it, yep," Evans said with another smile.

The signings of Evans, along with Sydney Harris to Central Michigan and Macy Silvey to SIUE, was a red-letter day in the history of the Tigers' program, and one that Happe was very proud of.

"Proud as I can be," Happe said. "They have their college paid for, they've got limitless opportunities at the next level, connections they're going to have and friends and family they're going to have for the rest of their life now."

Happe is looking forward to coaching all three players this coming season, and also hopes for a big run in the IHSA Class 4A state playoffs next March.

"For sure," Happe said. "It's a great group of kids to lead us, whatever happens, this season, so I'm excited to work with them and for them to lead our group."

And possibly a state championship for Southern Illinois as well.

"Hey, we'll do everything we can," Happe said with a laugh and smile.