

Maddie Koolbeck will play ball at Coe

Written by Jim Ecker

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It pays to be smart, talented and energetic.

Maddie Koolbeck is a prime example.

Koolbeck has been an all-state basketball player during her career at Cedar Rapids Jefferson, but she's been much more than that.

She carries a 4.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale with numerous Advanced Placement classes, serves as editor of the school newspaper, is vice president of the senior class, vice president of the National Honor Society, a member of the Service Club and plays softball.

Colleges drool over student/athletes like that.

Koolbeck sifted through her offers and narrowed the choices to Coe and Luther before electing to stay in Cedar Rapids and play ball at Coe.

"It was a very difficult decision, because I like the academics at both schools and the coaches at both schools," she said.

NCAA Division III schools like Coe and Luther cannot give athletic scholarships, but they can give major grants based on academics and other factors. The Kohawks made an offer she could not refuse.

"I ended up receiving a full tuition scholarship to Coe," she said. "I like its location close to home, and I felt like I had a really good relationship with Coach (Randi) Peterson, so it just seemed like it was the right decision."

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Koolbeck, a 5-foot-11 post player at Jefferson, averaged 14.2 points and 6.2 rebounds as a junior and was named third team all-state.

She averaged 12.4 points and 4.0 rebounds this season and was named first team all-Metro and first team all-Mississippi Valley Conference. She had to carry more of a scoring load as a junior due to injuries to other players, which explains why her numbers dipped a little this year.

Koolbeck made 58.1 percent of her shots from the field this season, hit 48.1 percent of her 3-pointers and made 73.9 percent of her free throws.

Koolbeck said she's like to major in environmental studies at Coe. She said she'll need to pick a "collateral" major as well, but is undecided at this point.

Koolbeck said she's managed to juggle a heavy load of academics and extracurricular activities through careful planning.

"I concentrate on certain things at certain times," she said. "It's really just a lot of time management that allows me to do all the activities I want to be involved in."

Koolbeck said she's glad she's made a decision and picked a college. Now she can focus on the rest of her senior year and the softball season.

"It's nice to know that it's over with," she said. "I'm excited to attend Coe, because I think it's the right school for me."

"It's a nice feeling that I don't have to worry about it or think about it anymore. I have the decision made."

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Koolbeck played most of her basketball career at Jefferson for Larry Niemeyer, then played her final year for Jason Edwards.

"I think it was a good career," she said. "It was a lot of fun and I really enjoyed the girls that I played with.

"Even though the season never ended up how I hoped, it was a good experience and I had many good years playing for Jefferson."