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Illinois Wesleyan Division III Tournament

Game Notes, March 4, 1999

TITANS VS. FIELD: IWU has wins over four teams of the other 47 in this year's Division III tournament: Washington U., Wheaton, Nebraska Wesleyan, and Pomona-Pitzer.

CLOSE LOSSES: The Titans lost one game by three points (to Benedictine) and four games by two points (Chicago, Wheaton, Millikin, Augustana). One of IWU's other losses was to Hawaii Pacific, an NCAA Division II tournament entry with a 22-7 record.

IWU IN POSTSEASON PLAY: This is the Titans' 13th appearance in the NCAA Division III tourney in the 16 years since dropping out of NAIA competition (after 1982-83 season). . . This is the sixth year in a row and the ninth time in the 1990s for IWU to make the Division III tournament. . . In 1996 and 1997, IWU advanced to the final four teams (finishing third in 1996 and winning the title in 1997) and the Titans have been in the tourney's "Sweet 16" nine times. . . On four occasions IWU has lost in the tourney to the eventual champion - to Wisconsin-Whitewater (1984), to North Park (1987), to Ohio Wesleyan (1988), and to Rowan (1996 in the semifinals) - and three other times lost to eventual runner-up (LeMoyne-Owen in 1986, DePauw in 1990, and Manchester in 1995). . . Illinois Wesleyan has a 25-12 record in Division III play (.711 winning percentage) and is 55-31 overall (.655) in postseason competition (including NAIA district and national play) since 1948-49. . . IWU made eight trips to the NAIA national tourney in Kansas City from 1961-80.

THE CCIW IN THE NCAA: Teams from the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin have an NCAA Division III tournament record of 77-39 (.670). . . The Titans were 1-1 last year, 6-0 in winning the 1997 championship, and 5-1 in finishing third in 1996 . . . CCIW teams have accounted for six NCAA Division III championships (IWU in 1997 and North Park in 1978, 1979, 1980, 1985, and 1987), two second-place finishes (Augustana in 1981 and 1993), and three third-place finishes (1975, 1976, and IWU in 1996). . . Prior to being in Division III, Wheaton won the Division II title in 1957 and finished fourth in 1958.

HEAD COACH DENNIE BRIDGES: Has been at Illinois Wesleyan most of his adult life and has been a member of the staff for 35 years. . . In 34 seasons as head coach, he has a career record of 626-303 (.674 winning percentage) overall, including NCAA Division III championship in 1996-97. . . He is 402-120 (.772) in College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin games with 17 league championships. . . He is the winningest coach in Division III with 626 victories and is one of only 31 other coaches (regardless of division) with more than 600 wins. . . Has taken teams to the quarterfinal round of the NAIA two times and to the NCAA quarterfinals five times, but 1996 and 1997 marked his first trips into the last four teams of any national tournament. . . Bridges has coached in the CCIW longer and has won more titles than anyone in league history. . . Bridges is just the 73rd coach in college cage history, regardless of classification or association, to capture 500 victories. . . Bridges was a Titan letterman in football, basketball, and baseball. . . Played on two CCIW basketball championship teams.

CCIW "PLAYER OF THE YEAR": Korey Coon, a 6-foot junior guard from East Peoria (HS), was the co-winner of the "Fred Young Most Outstanding Player" award in the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin. He shared the recognition with Wheaton senior forward Rob Hamann, marking the first time in the 32 seasons of the honor that two players have shared the award. It is the third straight year and the fifth in the last six seasons that an IWU player has won (or shared) the honor.

It is the 13th time since the honor was started in 1968 that an IWU player has claimed the award. Other winners were Brent Niebrugge (1998), Bryan Crabtree (1997), Chris Simich (1995), John Lipic (1994), David Caldwell (1991), Jeff Kuehl (1989), Blaise Bugajski (1984), Greg Yess (1982), Jack Sikma (1975, 1976, 1977), and Tom Gramkow (1970).

It is only the ninth time in 32 seasons that the award did not go solely to a member of the league championship team and the first time a junior has won the award since Wesley Pitts of Wheaton in 1996. IWU's Jeff Kuehl was also a junior when he won the honor in 1989.

The award is named for 1915 IWU graduate Fred Young, who was the conference's first commissioner and served in the position 17 years. He was a longtime sports editor and columnist at The Pantagraph and starred at IWU in basketball (all-state four years), baseball and tennis.

MORE KOREY COON: Coon was also elected to the first team of the all-conference squad for the second straight year after being named to the third team as a freshman. This year he led the conference in scoring with a 19.1 average and in 3-point shooting with a .487 percentage (38 of 78). He was second in the league with an .890 free throw percentage (65 of 73) and 10th in field goal percentage (.488, 82 of 168).

Coon has moved up to No. 21 in career scoring at IWU with 1,221 points. He has made 286 free throws, good for No. 10 in IWU history, and his .885 free throw percentage (286 of 323) is a school career record. He is also in a second-place tie with 179 career 3-point field goals. His 122 free throws this year is the ninth best in a single season and his 73 3-pointers is second.

JOSTENS TROPHY CANDIDATE: Coon is one of 10 finalists for the 1999 Jostens Trophy, recognizing the outstanding student-athletes in Division III basketball. The Jostens Trophy was a joint creation of Jostens, Inc., of Minneapolis, Minn., and the Rotary Club of Salem, Va. The purpose of the award is to honor the true Division III student-athlete the athlete that shows excellence in the classroom, on the playing court, and in the community.

A national selection committee consisting of college coaches, former athletes, college administrators, and selected members of the media chooses the winners of the Jostens Trophy. Nominations were submitted by chief executive officers of the participating NCAA Division III colleges and the national committee votes on the players based on three criteria basketball ability, academic prowess, and extra-curricular and/or civic activities exemplifying the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self."

A second team GTE® Academic All-American in 1998, the East Peoria High School product has a 4.0 grade-point average as a risk management and history major. A member of the IWU

Economics Society, he is the author of "Macroeconomic Effect of the GM Strike" paper for economics journal. Coon is a volunteer for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, was a Relay for Life Walk participant, and Kiwanis Club guest speaker. On campus, he is a member of the Titan Law Club, treasurer of the Risk Management and Finance Society, and president of the Phi Eta Sigma scholastic honorary.

NATHAN HUBBARD: A 6-foot-4 guard from Normal (U High), he was named to the second team of the all-CCIW squad for two straight seasons. This season he was sixth in the CCIW in assists (3.8), fifth in steals (1.8), and ninth in 3-point shooting percentage (.385). Hubbard scored 13.7 points and got 5.9 rebounds in 12 conference games. . . Hubbard, who has 853 career points, ranks No. 7 in both assists (334) and 3-point field goals made (109) in an Illinois Wesleyan career.

ANDREW BOYDEN: A 6-foot-9 center from Galesburg (HS), he was a second team all-CCIW player this year after being named third team last season. In 14 CCIW games this year he tied for fifth with 6.4 rebounds per game and was third in field goal shooting (.603, 88 of 146). He averaged 14.6 points against league opponents. . . He is No. 25 in both all-time scoring (1,185 points) and rebounding (440) in IWU history. His 248 free throws ranks 18th all-time at the school and his field goal percentage of .586 (468 of 799) in second best in an IWU uniform.