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Immediate Release : First Trip to Quincy Holiday Tourney since 1975-76

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oct. 4, 1983

BLOOMINGTON, ILL.--Games against Iowa and Northwestern of the Big Ten Conference and the first trip to the Quincy Holiday Tourney since 1975-76 are highlights of the Illinois Wesleyan University basketball schedule announced today by basketball coach and athletic director Dennis Bridges.

The Titans will open their schedule Nov. 26 at Iowa and will play Northwestern in the Wildcats' remodeled McGaw Fieldhouse Dec. 5. Neither contest is Wesleyan's first against that school. Wesleyan lost at Iowa in 1977-78 and lost at Northwestern in 1979-80 and 1981-82, but the 1981-82 contest was tied with less than eight minutes to play.

Others in the Quincy Tourney, possibly the nation's toughest small college tournament, will be the host school, Midwestern State of Texas, Westmont of California, Kearney State of Nebraska, Central Arkansas, Lincoln of Missouri and Carson-Newman of Tennessee.

Bridges can produce ample evidence that the Titans play the toughest schedule in the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin--and possibly the toughest in all of Division III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

"When you consider that we also play in the toughest Division III conference in the country, meet a Division II school in Indiana Central, play Wabash, which won the 1982 Division III championship, and will meet Quincy and other small schools that offer athletic 'rides,' I have to think we might have the toughest Division III schedule," Bridges said.

"We use the tough schedule in December as a tool to get ready for the conference race, when nothing will come easy. The best way to find out how good you are is to play good opponents. Some of our better teams have not come out of December with winning records," Bridges said.

The Titans will have 11 home games, meeting DePauw Nov. 30, Wabash Dec. 7 and Olivet Nazarene Jan. 5 before settling into the conference race that begins with a home game Jan. 7 against North Central, which is expected to be one of the leading contenders for the crown won by Millikin last season in a five-way race with IWU, North Central, North Park and Augustana.

CONTINUED ON REVERSE SIDE

Bridges believes a similar race could develop this year. Included on the home schedule will be 3 p.m. games against Carthage Jan. 14 and Carroll Feb. 18.

Other home games are against North Park Jan. 12, Augustana Jan. 18, Millikin Jan. 23, Wheaton Feb. 4 and Elmhurst Feb. 11.

Bridges, who will start practice Oct. 17, is not without ammunition as he plans for his 19th year as coach.

Captain Blaise Bugajski and junior Tom Baffes return to the starting forward berths and senior Gary Judson returns to a guard. Other returning lettermen are senior front-liner Doug Thomas, senior guard Mike Wall, junior forward Jeff Hoerr, 6-9 sophomore center Ron Ekstrand and sophomore forward Dwight Zivo. Several members of a strong freshman group, also should be contenders for playing time.

Finding a replacement for four-year point guard Brad Gregurich will be a major pre-season project. Ekstrand will get first crack at the center job vacated by the graduation of Joel Freundt.

This will be the first year that Wesleyan hasn't opened its season with the hope of making a trip to the 32-team National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics tournament in Kansas City. The Titans dropped out of the NAIA. Now, the CCIW champion will receive an automatic bid to the Division III playoffs.

The schedule:

Nov. 26	At Iowa, 1:15 p.m.	Jan. 18	Augustana, 7:30 p.m.*
Nov. 30	DePauw, 7:30 p.m.	Jan. 21	At Elmhurst, 7:30 p.m.*
Dec. 3	At Indiana Central, 6:30 p.m.	Jan. 23	Millikin, 7:30 p.m.*
Dec. 5	At Northwestern, 7:30 p.m.	Jan. 27	At Carroll, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 7	Wabash, 7:30 p.m.	Jan. 28	At Carthage, 7:30 p.m.*
Dec. 10	At Quincy, 7:30 p.m.	Feb. 1	At North Park, 8 p.m.*
Dec. 27-30	At Quincy Tourney	Feb. 4	Wheaton, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 5	Olivet Nazarene	Feb. 7	At North Central, 7:30 p.m.*
Jan. 7	North Central, 7:30 p.m.*	Feb. 11	Elmhurst, 7:30 p.m.*
Jan. 10	At Wheaton, 7:30 p.m.*	Feb. 15	At Augustana, 7:30 p.m.*
Jan. 12	North Park, 7:30 p.m.*	Feb. 18	Carroll, 3 p.m.*
Jan. 14	Carthage, 3 p.m.*	Feb. 25	At Millikin, 7:30 p.m.*

*--CCIW game.