

Tia Dawson headed to Dartmouth

Written by Jim Ecker

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Cedar Rapids Washington senior Tia Dawson has accepted an offer from Dartmouth College to pursue an Ivy League education and play NCAA Division I basketball.

Dawson struggled with the decision, uneasy with the notion of going so far from home, but finally decided the offer was too good to refuse. Dartmouth is located in Hanover, N.H.

"I had to decide by Friday, but they gave me until Monday because I was still on the edge of whether I should go or not," Dawson said Tuesday. "So last night (Monday night) they called and I made up my mind I was going to go there."

Dawson said she actually reached her decision Saturday night, but kept it a secret until Monday. "I didn't tell anybody," she said.

"I didn't tell my mom until I was on the phone with the coach," she said. "I wanted it to be a surprise for her. She was kind of scared that I was going to say no."

Ivy League schools do not offer athletic scholarships, but they can provide academic scholarships and need-based grants in their financial package. It costs approximately \$55,000 per year to attend Dartmouth, and Dawson said the school will cover about 95 percent of her costs.

Dawson, a 6-foot-2 senior, is averaging 11.5 points, 10.6 rebounds and 3.8 blocks for Washington, which is ranked No.6 in Class 4A with a 17-3 record heading into postseason play. She holds the career record for blocked shots at Washington.

Dawson said she's never been away from home for an extended period of time, which was part of her reluctance to go to school in New Hampshire.

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"That was probably one of the main factors," she said. "The distance is really far away. I'm still kind of iffy about that, but I guess I can get over it."

Dawson is a 4.0 student who wants to study engineering. She visited Dartmouth recently and was impressed.

"They have a really good engineering program," she said. "They showed me around the building and talked to me about the program. Not a lot of athletes do engineering."

Dawson had not been thinking about an Ivy League education until recently. "I really was just looking at the schools in Iowa," she said.

Washington Coach Frank Howell encouraged Dawson to accept the offer from Dartmouth. He initially thought Dawson had declined, but was delighted to learn otherwise.

"She came in here and told me she had accepted," Howell said Tuesday. "She looked really happy about it."