

Wes Washpun gets offer from Missouri State

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 22 February 2011 19:38 - Last Updated Tuesday, 22 February 2011 19:42

Cedar Rapids Washington senior Wes Washpun has been offered a scholarship to play basketball at Missouri State.

Washpun said Tuesday he is seriously considering the offer, but wants to visit Missouri State and possibly other schools in the next few weeks before making a decision.



Missouri State Coach Cuonzo Martin called Washpun Monday night and made the offer, shortly after Washpun had scored 21 points and helped Washington beat Clinton in the quarterfinals of the Class 4A substate tournament.

"I just thought it was another call, and to get the offer like that was pretty exciting," he said. "It's definitely exciting news and I'm very appreciative of the offer."

Washpun, a 6-foot-1 point guard, is averaging 17.7 points, 5.7 rebounds, 4 assists, 3.4 steals and 2.2 blocked shots for the Warriors (15-8).

Washpun also has offers from North Dakota, North Dakota State and South Dakota State. "I'm still thinking I'm going to wait and take all my visits after the season is over before I make my decision," he said.

The Iowa Hawkeyes have expressed interest, but have not offered a scholarship. Northern Iowa offered Washpun a scholarship that would have started in 2012 instead of 2011, meaning Washpun would have been a walk-on next season, but UNI withdrew its offer last fall after Washpun said he was not ready to decide.

Missouri State, located in Springfield, Mo., is currently tied for first place in the Missouri Valley Conference standings at 13-3 in the league and 21-7 overall. The Bears are in the same league with UNI and Drake and would make two trips to the state each season.

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Washpun is academically eligible to compete in NCAA Division I basketball as a freshman next season, according to Washington Coach Brad Metzger.

Metzger said he is confident Washpun will have a successful college career.

"Athleticism like that can't be taught," said Metzger. "The things he needs to develop, he can get in a gym and do that. But how fast he is and how he can move laterally, anticipate, his arm length, his vertical leap ... those are things you can't teach."

Washpun shoots 55.3 percent from the field, but has struggled at the foul line at 52.2 percent this season.

Washpun said Martin has watched the Warriors practice this season and attended Washington's game against Waterloo West this month. He said there is no deadline for accepting the offer. High school seniors can sign letters-of-intent in April.

"No, he didn't give me a deadline at all," said Washpun. "They still want me to take my official visit. They want me to visit down there and see the campus. He didn't really pressure me or extend me a deadline or anything like that."

Washpun said he has watched Missouri State games on television.

"They're a really good team," he said. "They play hard defense and they really get up and down the court. They said that's what they like about me and my game. So I'll go down there and check them out."

Washington plays in the substate semifinals at Dubuque Senior Friday night.

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