

Zach Bohannon will not join his brother at UNI

Written by Jim Ecker

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Zach Bohannon is looking forward to being a regular college student and a regular college basketball player after two years of a strict military regime at the Air Force Academy.

He's leaving the academy and will transfer to another Division I school, but said Wednesday night he will not be joining his brother Matt at the University of Northern Iowa.

Bohannon was interested in playing his final two years for Northern Iowa, but his parents have learned that UNI does not have any scholarships available for him.

"I can tell you that is not a possibility. I will not be playing with my brother," he said. "They don't really have a spot for me."

Matt Bohannon will be joining UNI as a freshman next season after helping Linn-Mar win the Class 4A state title this year. Zach Bohannon helped Linn-Mar win a state title in 2007.

"I have talked to a few schools and I have a couple of options," Bohannon said. "I haven't narrowed it down at all, except that I'm going to go Division I. I've had a lot of D-II interest, but I just felt I want to stay at this level."

Bohannon, a 6-foot-8, 205-pound forward, averaged 4.3 points and 2.0 rebounds for Air Force this season. He played in 22 games and averaged 13.5 minutes with one start. He missed the first 10 games of the season following thumb surgery.

Bohannon had offers from Albany (N.Y.), Vermont, Rice, Denver, Cornell and other Ivy League schools in high school, and Wisconsin wanted him as a walk-on. His older brother, Jason, played at Wisconsin and graduated in 2010.

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"There is a chance I will be revisiting some of those, or more," he said. "Right now, it's just so wide open that I can't really narrow it down."

Two new possibilities are Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Illinois-Chicago, the Metro Sports Report has learned.

Bohannon said he'll consider joining a team as a walk-on for the 2011-12 campaign, with the thought of earning a scholarship for his final two years.

"That's definitely something I'm looking at, just to keep all my options open," he said. "I'm definitely looking at paying for a year and walk on somewhere to earn a scholarship."

However, he said that will not be happening at UNI.

Bohannon said he hopes to narrow his list to a few schools in about a week. He'll have to redshirt next season due to NCAA transfer rules.

Bohannon decided he was not interested in pursuing a military career. If he had stayed at the Air Force Academy, he would have faced an eight-year military commitment following graduation.

"I kind of saw what it was all about and decided it wasn't what I wanted to do," he remarked. "It was a long and complex decision, but I figured this was something I had to do. I felt it was the best decision for me."

Bohannon described a strict schedule at the Air Force Academy that included days crammed with classes, military training, basketball practice, games and homework.

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"It feels like it's go, go, go," he said. "They prepare you a bit, and they put you through four years of complete hell, for lack of a better word, to make you ready (for a military career).

"I know what I've done, but I can't even comprehend how fast it's gone. It's flown by, because of how active you are and how much stuff they put you through. You have quite a bit of stuff on your plate during the academic year. It's a pretty well-structured program. You become really time-crunched."

The Air Force basketball team plays in the Mountain West Conference and has long road trips, resulting in missed class time. "It puts you so far behind, it's almost a hole you get into," he said. "It's so hard to get caught up."

Bohannon got to pilot a glider plane for 10 minutes during basic training, but never aspired to be a pilot. He said he was more interested in the business side of the Air Force.

He said he benefitted from his two years at the academy, despite his decision to leave. "I'll be a better person for what I've been through here," he said.