

Zach Bohannon will walk on at Wisconsin

Written by Jim Ecker

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Zach Bohannon declined an offer to join the University of Wisconsin basketball program as a walk-on several years ago when they recruited him at Linn-Mar High School.

This time he said yes.

Bohannon told the Metro Sports Report on Monday that he's accepted an offer to finish his college basketball career with Coach Bo Ryan and the Badgers.

Bohannon, a 6-foot-8 forward, spent two years at the Air Force Academy before deciding he did not want to pursue a military career. He said he'll join Wisconsin this season as a walk-on with a chance to earn a scholarship the following two years.

Bohannon will have to redshirt this season due to NCAA transfer rules, then will have two years of eligibility with the Badgers in 2012-13 and 2013-14.

"This was something I couldn't turn down a second time, because I turned them down initially out of high school," he said. "I thought this was a great opportunity."

Jason Bohannon, Zach's older brother, had a distinguished basketball career at Wisconsin, graduating in 2010 as a third team all-Big Ten guard and the 21st member of the school's 1,000-point club with 1,170. Zach checked signals with Jason before committing to the Badgers and received a full endorsement.

"I tried to have Jason stay as unbiased as I could," Zach said. "He told me everything I needed to know."

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Jason Bohannon played briefly for the Iowa Energy in the NBA Development League this season, then played pro basketball in Germany for two months before returning home.

Air Force did not play in the NCAA tournament during Zach Bohannon's two years with the Falcons, but he's joining a program at Wisconsin that has made 10 straight trips to the NCAA tourney under Ryan.

"That was one of my dreams, to play in the NCAA tournament," he said.

Bohannon said Wisconsin was the first school to contact him after he gained his release from the Air Force. He considered the offer for several weeks, not wanting to rush into a decision, then decided to accept the offer.

"I feel relieved," he said.

Bohannon is finishing his final exams at Air Force this week and plans to be home in Marion on Thursday.

Bohannon will be the second Metro player at Wisconsin next season. He'll join Cedar Rapids Jefferson senior Jarrod Uthoff, a 6-foot-8 forward who was Iowa's Mr. Basketball this year. By coincidence, Bohannon and Uthoff are approximately the same size and same weight.

Matt Bohannon, Zach's younger brother who helped Linn-Mar win the Class 4A state title this year, will be a freshman at the University of Northern Iowa this season.

Zach Bohannon averaged 4.3 points and 2.0 rebounds for Air Force as a sophomore this past season, playing an average of 13.5 minutes per game.