

Nearad picks Cyclones, Carter joins Indiana St.

Written by Jim Ecker

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New Iowa State softball coach Jamie Trachsel has landed one of the top prospects in the nation after just three weeks on the job.

Taylor Nearad, who was named the National Junior College Player of the Year this season at Kirkwood, committed to Trachsel and the Cyclones Wednesday morning after a quick recruiting process.

Gabi Carter, an All-American shortstop for Kirkwood this season as a freshman, has signed with Indiana State and plans to join the Sycamores for the coming school year.

Nearad plans to return to Kirkwood for her sophomore campaign in 2017 before enrolling at Iowa State for the 2017-18 school year.

"I'm very excited," Nearad said. "They contacted me probably two weeks ago. Jamie actually came and saw me at Kirkwood and we visited for about an hour.

"I went on a visit there and I just felt like I was supposed to be there."

Nearad, from Solon, hit .602 with 30 home runs and 129 RBIs this season. She was a consensus first team All-American and was named the National Player of the Year for all divisions of junior college softball.



"I was surprised by it. I did not see that coming at all," she said about the postseason accolades. "But then after the season, once I saw all my stats and everything, I was like, 'Wow, I actually did very well this year.'"

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Nearad and the Eagles finished fifth at the NJCAA Division II national tournament with a 58-6 record.

"I plan to keep pushing myself harder," said Nearad. "I do expect myself to do as well, but it's not always guaranteed."

Carter, a Cedar Rapids Prairie grad, hit .442 with 21 home runs and 84 RBIs this season. She played shortstop for Kirkwood due to an injury to the regular shortstop, but her natural position is third base.

Maddie Hansen, an All-American catcher for Kirkwood this year as a freshman, has signed with Ball State and plans to enroll there later this summer.