

DARK HORSE COMMITMENT REPORT

The story behind the commitment of one of Illinois' top perimeter threats

Written by Brandon Ruggles January 23rd, 2018



South Bend, IN: When University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh (D3) Head Coach Pat Juckem hosted Zach Robinson and his AAU teammate Eric Peterson for an unofficial visit in July between the pair's AAU games in Milwaukee, he indicated his willingness to invest in both young men for the long haul of their recruitments. On Monday night, that long-term investment paid dividends in the form of Zach Robinson's commitment to play his college basketball career for Juckem and his Titan squad, which is currently ranked #19 in the country. This is the story behind the commitment of one of Illinois' top perimeter marksmen:

Zach Robinson: Coming off a junior year that saw Robinson shoot an even 50% from beyond the three-point arc, he entered the travel circuit with a well-deserved reputation as an elite shooter. However, as more and more college coaches traveled to watch Robinson compete with his Tri-City Thunder team throughout the spring and summer, it became abundantly clear to them that he was far more than a shooter, and his recruitment evolved accordingly. Though multiple schools inquired about Zach, most of them could not offer him a balance between two of his top priorities: playing college basketball and attending a school with a sizable student population.

Then came Oshkosh. With a basketball team that has been consistently ranked among the top-20 schools in the nation during the 2017-2018 season and an undergraduate student body approaching 13,000, Oshkosh offered Robinson an opportunity to play at the highest level of division three basketball while participating in a student body roughly the size of that of an average ACC school. The school quickly picqued Robinson's interest, and after he visited for a second time to watch Oshkosh take down then-top-5-ranked Augustana, they solidified their standing at the top of his list of basketball options. It didn't hurt that the Oshkosh coaching staff invited Robinson into the Titans' locker room for the team's post-game celebration that day, which is the point at which Robinson says he realized "(Oshkosh) could be a great fit". But even still, when Robinson returned home, he continued weighing the option of passing on basketball altogether in favor of attending a large school as a non-athlete.

As Zach's senior season progressed, he watched as his high school rival and former AAU teammate Eric Peterson announced his commitment to Oshkosh following the holidays. While Robinson and Peterson are good friends, Peterson's commitment was not a deciding factor in Zach's ultimate decision. Rather, it was the continuous contact from the Oshkosh coaching staff and the impactful memory of the family-like culture Robinson had seen in the Oshkosh locker room after the team's win over Augustana that eventually led to his final commitment. "When I visited, the team was like a family" Zach shared after announcing his intention to play for Oshkosh. "The coaches are super energetic and welcoming. And while playing with Eric wasn't a big part of my decision, I'm thrilled that we're going to continue playing together". The two have already been granted permission from the coaching staff to room together next fall.