

Medunjanin Schoolcraft's 5th Division I signee

BY BRAD EMONS
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It's quite an odyssey for Schoolcraft College basketball player Emir Medunjanin, who left war-torn Bosnia six years ago to come to the U.S.

On Wednesday, the 6-foot-6 swingman realized a personal dream when he signed a Division I scholarship to play at Sacramento State (Calif.), which is coming off a 9-19 season and a 3-13 record in the Big Sky Conference.

Medunjanin, who turned down several offers from Division II schools, has two years of eligibility left. He made an official visit to the California school on Wednesday and immediately

signed a National Letter of Intent.

"The reason why I signed with Schoolcraft was to go to a Division I school," said Medunjanin, who averaged nearly nine points and five rebounds for the 35-1 Ocelots. "There are only eight teams in the conference (Big Sky) and there's a good chance to make the (NCAA) tournament."

"I fell in love with it, the campus, the weather, the people. It's a beautiful area."

Medunjanin shot 54 percent from the field, including 49 percent from three-point range as Schoolcraft finished third in the NJCAA Division I tournament last March in Hutchinson, Kan.

"He averaged over 10 points per

game in four games in the nationals, including a team-high 19 points in a quarterfinal victory over Itawamba (Miss.). He also improved defensively, normally guarding the opposing team's top scorer.

As a freshman, Medunjanin was a backup forward for the 32-4 Ocelots, who made their first appearance in school history in the NJCAA Tournament.

He came to Schoolcraft after making first-team All-Observer at North Farmington where he played the center position for coach Tom Negus.

"It took me two years to adjust to the perimeter game because I played the five position (center) in high school," Medunjanin

said. "Coach (Briggs) gave me the biggest boost of my basketball career. I learned a lot from that man and I think him a lot along with coach (Steve) Norrgrove, who worked me hard in practice every day."

Medunjanin plans to study German at Sacramento State. Ironically, he spent four months in Germany with an uncle after leaving Bosnia with his parents, his brother and aunt.

Medunjanin first began to learn the game at age 14 when he played at a German sports club.

"My mother played and my brother also played some basketball in Germany," said

Medunjanin, who eventually wound up with relatives in Michigan.

Medunjanin is the fifth Ocelot player to sign with a Division I program this year. He is joined by Mike Williams (Western Michigan), Rulon Harris (Detroit Mercy), Delvar Barrett (Ohio University) and Westland John Glenn's Yaku Moton-Spruill (Canisius).

Sacramento State, coached by Jerome Jenkins, has now four recruits in the fold for the 2002-03 season including 6-10 junior college player Djibril Diop, 6-4 guard Jameel Pugh, a transfer from Massachusetts; and DeShawn Freeman, a guard from Sacramento.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DREXLER

Pitcher relief: Mercy's Megan Fediuk gets a post-game massage on her pitching arm from assistant coach Nancy Malowski.

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"Unfortunately, the one play at second base hurt them, although (Smalley) made an excellent throw," Falvo said. "If they had gotten the out there, it would have been a different game."

"I think softball is always a game of inches and mistakes. We try to keep ours to a minimum and try to force others to make mistakes."

Mercy had just three players on base in their last three at-bats, and nobody advanced beyond first base.

But that wasn't really a problem for the Marlins, not with Fediuk on the mound.

Flushing had two runners aboard with two outs in the first inning, and Fediuk ended the threat with a strikeout.

The Raiders got a runner to second in the sixth and seventh, but Fediuk got out of the inning each time with a ground ball back to her and a strikeout.

"I had confidence in my team today," Fediuk said. "We knew, if we came to play, we'd pull together and, hopefully, win — and we did."

"Megan has been our pitcher for four years," Falvo said. "It's no secret the success of the program has parallel to Megan's pitching. She's a bulldog; she plays tough."

"She has been pretty effective at keeping teams down. She's not the fastest pitcher in the state, but, mentally, she may be one of the toughest in the state."

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