

Black River senior to play on OSU women's ice hockey team



Contributed Black River senior Becky Allis, center, signed on Nov. 18 to play with Ohio State University's women's ice hockey team.

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By **ALAN BABBITT**
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Holland, MI — Black River doesn't field an ice hockey team, but one of its students will skate for Ohio State University soon.

Senior Becky Allis has landed a scholarship from the Buckeyes. She signed her national letter of intent Nov. 18.

It's a dream come true for Allis, a 17-year-old defenseman.

"Ever since I was playing Squirt hockey, I wanted to play Division I," Allis said. "I'm definitely going in the right direction."

Allis, who's considering studying physical therapy in college, relied on club teams to draw interest from recruiters.

Ohio State competes in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association, the premier major college league in the United States. WCHA teams have won all nine NCAA Division I national championships.

Allis currently skates for the Chicago Mission Under-19 team in the Tier I Elite Hockey League.

The Mission travel all over the country and reached the national championship game for two consecutive years. They won in 2008 and

finished runner-up in 2008.

Allis, who stands 5 feet, 8 inches, earned a spot on the team after trying out, Mission coach Tony Cachey said.

"I was blown away. I had never heard of her," he said. "She came out and just stood out the minute she stepped on the ice. She's a really strong two-way defenseman who can score goals and also keep the puck out of her own (net)."

Making a team such as the Mission isn't easy, considering the success they've had.

The courage Allis showed by simply trying out is impressive, Cachey said.

"That speaks to her character," Cachey said. "She strolled into a tryout with a team for two years that played in a national championship. She just shows up, doesn't talk, ask questions — just goes out there and makes the team."

Allis began playing hockey at Edge Ice Arena in Holland. She played on boys teams from the Mites level up to Bantam A.

In 2006, she started playing against girls. She earned a spot in the Under 19 league in the Little Caesar's Amateur Hockey League.

Two years later, she moved up to the Grand Rapids Griffins Under 19 team of the Tier 1 Elite Hockey League.

"I have this love of the game," Allis said of her commitment to youth hockey, which can be expensive with the costs for ice time in particular and time-consuming traveling to the tournaments.

"I've always enjoyed being on the ice, going to practice, which is funny because a lot of people kind of dread practice. I definitely want to become the best defenseman I can be."

Allis credits the support she has received at Black River for helping her land this opportunity from Ohio State.

Her commitment to her club team in Chicago takes her out of town on weekends and some school days.

Staff at Black River, including Register Jen Wise and Curriculum Director Ronda Pardue have worked with Allis, so that she can meet all her academic requirements, her mother Jean Walsh-Allis said.

The schedule includes three Advanced Placement classes.

"They've been a huge help this year," Becky Allis said. "This is the first year I've missed so many classes. They have been accepting and encouraging me to reach for my dreams."

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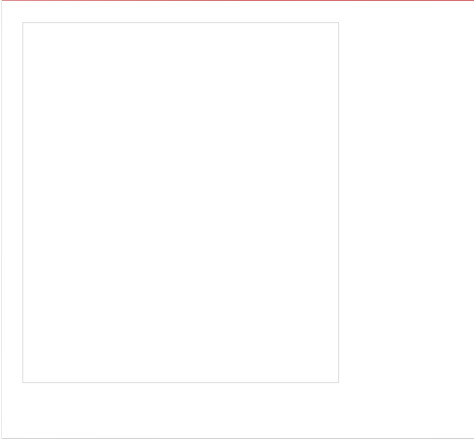
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