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## Camardella “MVP” of Titan Basketball Squad

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- John Camardella's knack for providing baskets and rebounds when they were needed most paid off in him being named the “Most Valuable Player” of the 2002-03 version of the Illinois Wesleyan men’s basketball team.

Camardella, a 6-foot-4 senior forward from **Arlington Heights (Hersey HS)**, earned second team all-College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin honors after averaging 13.2 points on .564 shooting from the field, .473 shooting from 3-point range and .825 shooting from the free throw line. He led IWU with 7.5 rebounds and 1.0 blocks per game.

"I think John brought a lot to our team other than just his physical abilities," said IWU coach Scott Trost, whose second IWU team was 22-6 overall, advanced to the final 16 of the NCAA Division III tournament, and shared the league title with an 11-3 record. "He is a great leader. He has great respect from his teammates. In my years of coaching, I don't know if I've been associated with a young man that possesses the leadership skills he has. Time and time again he hit a big shot or got a big rebound."

Camardella served as co-captain with senior forward Luke Kasten, last year's team MVP.

In other team honors, senior Eric Starkey won the best defensive player award for the second straight season and senior guard Chris Silagi (**Oswego HS**) won the Titan Award.

Starkey, a 6-2 guard from **Milford (HS)**, guarded opponents' best perimeter players. "More often than not he did a pretty good job of shutting down that person," Trost said. "He is long and rangy and has a great work ethic. He was very tenacious on defense."

The Titan Award recognizes a person who shows courage, leadership and has pride in IWU. "There were some other guys capable of winning that award," said Trost. "I think Chris exhibited all those

characteristics, especially with what he had to go through at the end of the year (with the death of his father). To see how much support Chris got shows how much he is liked and respected."

Junior guard Jim Lehan (**DeKalb HS**) was voted captain for next season. Lehan, who averaged 3.1 points as the backup to starting point guard Adam Dauksas, will be one of two seniors next season with John O'Brien.

"Jim is one of those guys who demands a lot of respect from his teammates," Trost said. "I think Jim will be a great leader for what will be a very young basketball team (with one junior and 10 sophomores). I have the utmost confidence that Jim will continue the leadership from John and Luke. He has those same types of characteristics and traits. I am excited he was elected captain."

Kasten (**Coffeen, Hillsboro HS**) was a first team all-CCIW player for the third straight year and was chosen to the third team of the D3hoops.com All-America squad. He was IWU's team leader with a 17.0 scoring average, led the Titans in scoring 12 times and was the team's top rebounder in 10 games. He finished his career No. 4 all-time at IWU with 1,848 points, No. 8 with 702 rebounds, and No. 3 with 439 free throws.

Trost, whose seven-season career record as a head coach is 85-67 overall and 42-42 in the CCIW, awarded letters to 15 players, including six freshmen and two others who return next season. The lettermen are, with hometowns and high schools:

**SENIORS** - John Camardella (**Arlington Heights, Hersey HS**), Laban Cross (**Dahlgren, McLeansboro HS**), Marty Eich (**Palatine HS**), Seth Hubbard (**Normal, U High**), Luke Kasten (**Coffeen, Hillsboro HS**), Chris Silagi (**Oswego HS**), Eric Starkey (**Milford HS**).

**JUNIORS** - Jim Lehan (**DeKalb HS**), John O'Brien (**Bloomington, Central Catholic HS**).

**FRESHMEN** – Keelan Amelianovich (**Naperville, Neuqua Valley HS**), Adam Dauksas (**Flossmoor, Homewood-Flossmoor HS**), Jason Fisher (**Delavan HS**), Cory Jones (**Calumet City, Thornwood HS**), Mike McKean (**Cissna Park, CPCI**), Steve Schweer (**St. Charles, Hinsdale Central HS**).