



JIM OLEXA/SUN NEWS

Hathaway Brown's Vanessa Smith, right, is competing in Ukraine as part of the Women's Basketball Tour.

Former Blazer Smith competing in Ukraine

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BARBERTON — After the season is over and before she heads off to Princeton, Vanessa Smith of Hathaway Brown will spend some time in Kiev, Ukraine, as part of the sports ministry of Athletes in Action's Campus Crusade for Christ.

As a member of the 2013 Women's Basketball Tour, Smith will be part of a team of Americans that will play against the Ukrainian national team and the junior national team among other clubs.

The tour started on June 22

and run until July 3.

Smith, who just graduated, said the Blazers' athletic director Paul Maes played and coached in the program. He's the one that alerted Smith of the opportunity.

"I researched it and applied," Smith said.

Training starts in June in Xenia, Ohio.

"I always wanted to travel overseas," Smith said. "I've thought about playing after college overseas. I'm interested to see what the game is like in other countries. It's a perfect fit."

Smith will also go to Spain

during spring break as part of a school trip.

Smith, a Christian, said the players will also do community service and mission work, mainly talking about their faith.

She said she hasn't met any of her teammates yet, but she does know she'll be the youngest person on the team. Many of the players are already in college or even graduates.

"That makes me even more excited, playing against a whole other set of players in a different environment," Smith said. "I can't wait. Playing the junior national team is exciting. We're playing good com-

petition. It's the best thing I can ask for."

Smith said Princeton coach Courtney Banghart gave her a good endorsement for the opportunity.

"I talked to coach about it and she was excited," Smith said. "All around, it's going to be different."

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