

Former Mustang Allen to star for Purple Aces in Division I basketball

By JEFF PASQUALE
Sports Reporter

Bobby Allen is going to finally get a chance to showcase the basketball talent that had American college coaches drooling two years ago.

Allen has just signed a scholarship to the University of Evansville (Illinois), a minor Division I school after spending the last two years improving his game and his marks at Spoon River Junior College in Canton, Illinois, located about 160 miles southwest of Chicago.

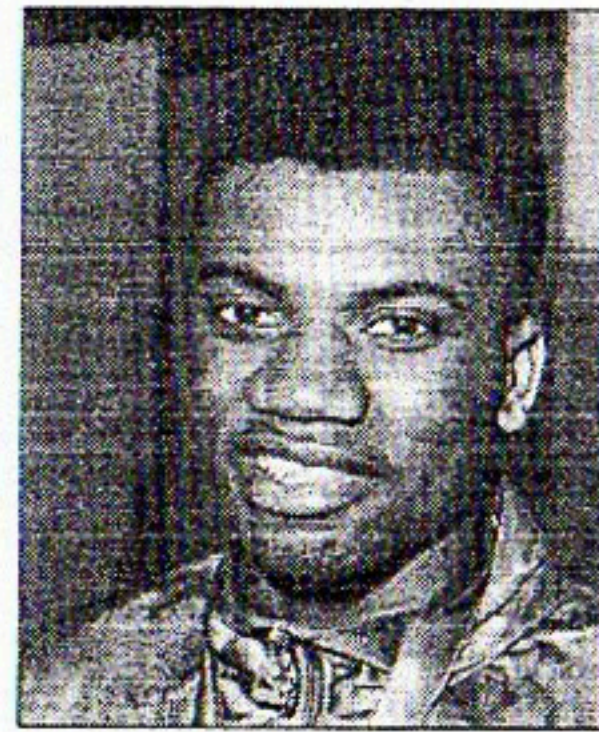
"Evansville seemed to be the best situation for me," said Allen from Spoon River, where he's finishing his school year. "The school isn't too big or too small and it's playing a tough schedule. I'd rather be starting at a smaller school than sitting on the bench at a larger school."

Allen, who attended Morning Star Secondary School, is going to major in sociology at Evansville with the intent of becoming a social worker.

He has two years of college eligibility remaining at Evansville.

Jim Crews, the coach of the University of Evansville Purple Aces, won the Bobby Allen sweepstakes. But Allen fit very nicely into the NCAA Division I program he's trying to run.

"There are three things we look for in a recruit," said Crews from Evansville. "First, we're looking for good people and I was very impressed with the kind of person



BOBBY ALLEN
Joins Division I school

Bobby is. He's a humble young man and he's a joy to be around.

"Second, he wants to, and is going to get his degree. We like our players to graduate. And finally he's got to be a good basketball player. Bobby certainly qualifies on that point. I think both parties are going to enjoy Bobby's time at Evansville."

Crews feels his two years at Spoon River really helped Allen mature as a player.

"B.J. (McCullum, Spoon River coach) did a great job with Bobby. I think he helped him gain a good understanding of the game. Bobby has good court savvy and sees the whole court. He's a very unselfish player — maybe too unselfish — but can also get inside the defence,

which is something we've been looking for."

Perhaps the man most upset at Allen's signing with the Purple Aces is probably McCullum. While with the junior college, Allen helped the team to a combined 47-16 record.

But McCullum is glad Allen is getting a chance.

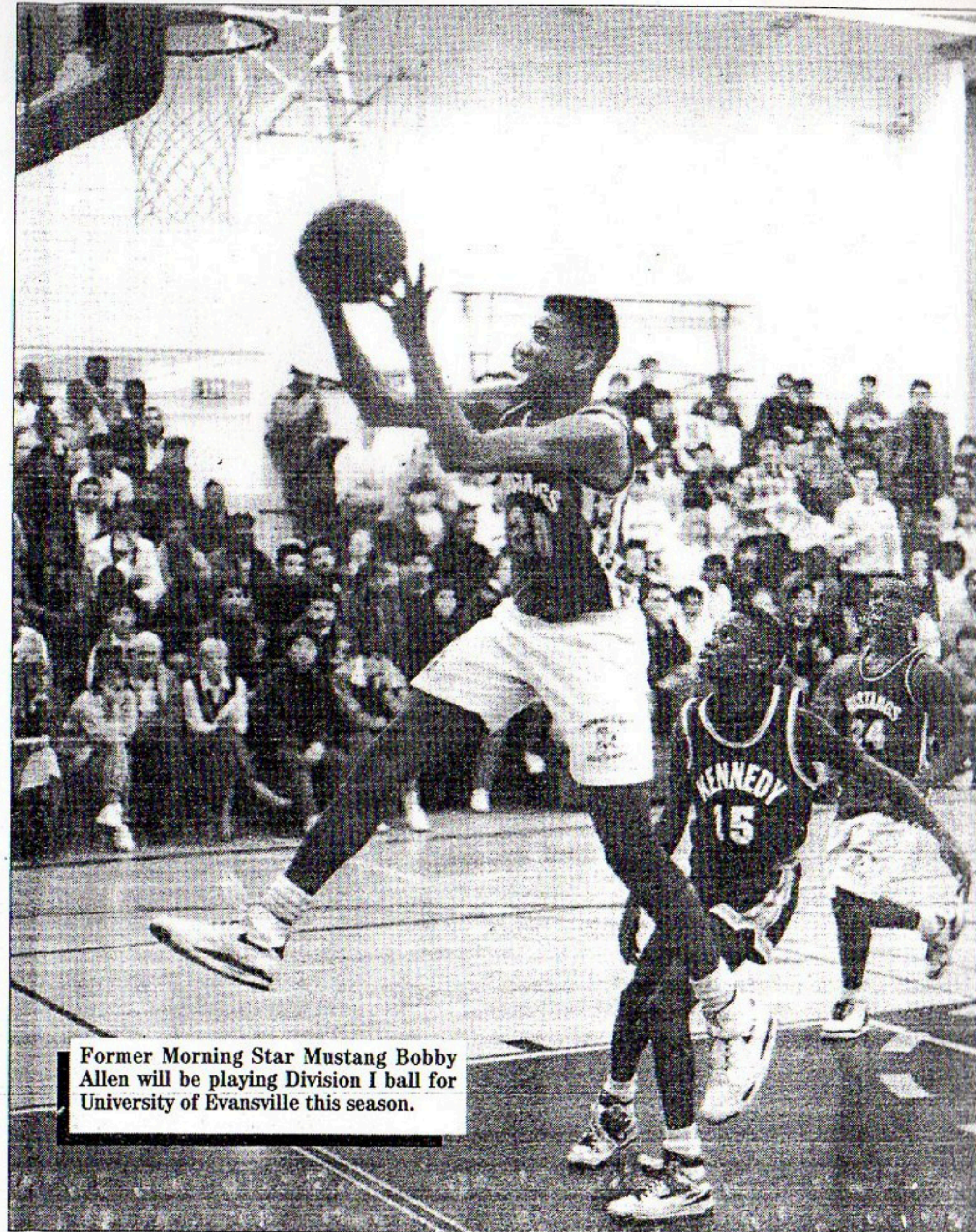
"There were about 40 division I schools after Bobby, including Bradley, Hawaii, Murray State and Eastern Michigan," said McCullum. "I guess Evansville just out-recruited the others for him."

It was McCullum who gave Allen a shot to play in the States after he found out he couldn't play at a major college because of his marks, a rule known as Proposition 48. McCullum blames his coaches and teachers at Morning Star for this.

"Bobby just missed qualifying for division I, but he didn't know the requirements," said McCullum. "If the coaches up there had an NCAA guide, they'd be able to start telling these kids in Grade 11 or Grade 12 exactly what it's going to take academically to get into the States."

McCullum speaks highly of Allen on a personal level as well as an athlete.

"If all my players were like Bobby Allen, on the court and off it, coaching would be a pleasure all the time. Bobby's a good kid. He's worked very hard here. He's improved his study habits and hasn't missed a class. He's earned everything he's gotten."



Former Morning Star Mustang Bobby Allen will be playing Division I ball for University of Evansville this season.