

Illinois Building a Strong Foundation

By Noah Klotz

The University of Illinois Fighting Illini Women's Basketball team is built like many others in the Big Ten Conference, with about half of the team being upperclassmen and the other half underclassmen. Of the six underclassmen, this article is focused on Adalia McKenzie. The 5'10" freshman is a key part of this Illinois Women's basketball team both on and off the court.

Coach Nancy Fahey told me that Adalia brings positive energy to the team along with being their best rebounder, and having explosive energy to get to the basket. Coach Fahey said she believes that Adalia is a good and hard working person on and off the court.

Adalia is from Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, where she graduated from Park Central High School. According to the University of Illinois website, Adalia averaged 28 points per game during her high school career and was named Minnesota's Miss Basketball.

When I asked Adalia why she wanted to join the University of Illinois Women's basketball team, she said, "I want to make an impact and help the program turn around." She said her talents on the court are, "driving to the basket and getting rebounds." She also said that mentally she gives energy to the team by being very positive. She told me that she doesn't give up no matter what happens and she fights for her teammates on and off the court.

Adalia has started 11 of 23 games so far this season, averaging 22.7 minutes per game, which is fourth on the team. With 204 points to date she is the second leading scorer on the team behind Aaliyah Nye with 277 points. This is very uncommon considering Adalia has only made one three-point shot this whole season. Which proves that Adalia has the ability to drive to the basket and score. Second on the team in rebounds this season with 98, to Kendall Bostic's 269 - Kendall has started every game and has averaged nearly 30 minutes per game.

Illinois has had a tough season with only 6 wins, but half their players are inexperienced with how hard it can be going up against the top women basketball players in the NCAA. In another year or two they will have some more experienced players and be able to maybe be a top contender for the NCAAW title.