The Sojourn athlete of the week is Caedmon Bontrager from the men's basketball program. Bontrager is a redshirt freshman from Leo High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Bontrager started his basketball career in middle school.

“I was tall, I wasn’t really good at it, I didn’t like it that much either. But I just stuck with it and kept playing, I started getting better, pretty good, so I kept grinding,” Bontrager said.

Bontrager knew he wanted to continue playing basketball in college, which led him to get connected to Indiana Wesleyan through the coaches.

“They are probably some of the most genuine coaches or people,” Bontrager said, which contributed to wanting to join the Team.

Assistant Coach Caleb Muthiah praised Bontrager for his high motor and entertaining dunks.

“He’s leading the country in field goal percentage right now, which is kind of nuts. So obviously his finishing ability, but when he is high motor and just absolutely locked in, I think he’s unstoppable,” Muthiah said.

The 6 foot 7 forward averages 13.5 points per game and six rebounds and leads the NAIA, shooting 83.7% from the field.

The basketball team goes by the phrase, I am Third, God first, others second and yourself third.

Muthiah said everyone on the team contributes to the I am third lifestyle differently. Bontrager contributes to his role of being a paint monster and getting physical.

The basketball program incorporates the Word of God in any way they can with small groups or devotionals.

Bontrager said the team has what they call I am third circle groups. You meet with people in your group and talk about your faith, which helped him a lot this season.

Even when planning for their next games or at practice, they focus on Christ.

Senior guard Noah Smith said, “Most of the time we have like a verse or some type of passage attached to the scout or the key of the game.”

Caedmon finds relaxation in the word of God when it comes to finding a balance between basketball and life.

“I've learned to just get in the word more, read my bible more. I think that really helps, it just takes a lot of stress and then pressure off,” Bontrager said.

Bontrager said his favorite memories with the team include the Puerto Rico trip in December and their win against Marian University on the 2023 senior night.

The Wildcats have ranked in the top 15 for NAIA all season.

“We don't really think we are defined by our ranking,” Bontrager said, “We are focused on trying to get better.”

Wildcat basketball nears the end of the regular season with the Crossroads league tournament beginning Feb. 28. The NAIA tournament starts March 15.