

Volleyball has been one of the most transformative and meaningful experiences in my life, shaping not only my abilities as an athlete but also my character and perspective as a person. Through both adversity and success, this sport has taught me leadership, the importance of support, and resilience.

During my first few years, volleyball became a source of excitement, joy, and lightheartedness. This slowly changed as I got older; volleyball became filled with anxiety, fear, and doubt as I was greeted to high school with a coach who did not believe in me, and made it clear she never would. The days of practices were filled with constant belittling, humiliation, and doubt. I began to forget what it felt like to play with excitement and joy with the people I love.

That year, I decided I needed a change. I moved clubs, and was greeted with coaches and teammates who had more confidence in me than I had in myself. I was greeted with teammates who began to make the game fun again. These were the teammates who pushed me to be a better person and the teammates I eventually qualified for open with. Later that same year, I was greeted with a new high school coaching staff that completely changed my perspective on the game. These were the coaches who cried tears of joy when their players succeeded, and the coaches who cared for us as people before athletes. These were the coaches and teammates that I would volunteer at Elementary School Fairs with, and do face paint for the little kids— no matter how bad our art skills were, these kids ended with the biggest smiles and laughs. That year changed my life; I learned the impact one person, or a group of people, can have on someone.

So yes, volleyball is an activity I pursue outside of school, but it's an activity that has helped shape me into the person I am proud of today. Through this sport I have learned that growth is not always going to be linear; I am going to have good days, bad days, and everything in between, but it's how you choose to learn and move on from your bad days that will determine success. I learned that not everyone is going to believe in you, and that's ok.

I've learned that you do not need a label to be a leader; no matter where you are on the court or the role you have on our team, there is always a way to step up and make an impact. This sport has taught me not to compare myself, and to embrace my own journey.

I want to take what I have learned through this sport and use it throughout my life, my education, and the career I hope to have. I have aspirations to be a pediatrician. I want to believe in kids just as some of my coaches did for me. I want to help children grow up to be the best versions of themselves in any way I can.

That is why I deserve this scholarship— not for what I have done on the court, but for what I have done, and will continue to do off the court with what volleyball has allowed me to learn.

