

MORE THAN JUST A SPORT

A FEATURE ARTICLE ABOUT BROOKE HERZIC

Volleyball is really just a game of ‘bump, set, spike,’ right? Well to Brooke, it’s so much more. Brooke Herzic is a 13 year old girl who loves her family, friends, and her dog more than anything. She tries to be as happy as she can be and finds fun in everything she does, Brooke mom says, “Brooke always tried to find the best in everything, even if it was nearly impossible.” She was always a happy kid, but her smile grew even larger after she found her biggest passion, volleyball.

Brooke started playing volleyball when she was in fifth grade, and right as she stepped foot in the gym she knew she would love it.

She started out in the Little Hawks Volleyball Club and she was so passionate about it because she got to work with a bunch of other girls her age and have fun, but while working hard and constantly getting better. She decided that she didn’t enjoy playing for the little hawks as much as she thought she would, but she loved the sport too much to stop playing.

Her mom had the idea to try out for Iowa Rockets, so in 7th grade she decided to try out, and she made it. At their first tournament, Brooke broke her ankle but she wanted to keep playing and forget about the pain of her ankle, even though her parents along with her coaches were completely against that idea, she was in a boot for 6 weeks and missed a lot of the tournaments, but she still came to support her team.

She played as a setter and she gained a lot of volleyball knowledge throughout the season. They got first place at their first, and last tournaments, and all the girls were determined to do it again next year, so they all tried out in 8th grade and most of them made it again, including Brooke.

They had some of the same players on their team, but some different. Brooke was originally a setter, but her coach decided that she would be a better back row player, a position she’d never played before. She practiced and practiced to get better and soon she was a libero.



A photo of Brooke's team in Sterling, Illinois on March 26.

MORE THAN JUST A SPORT (CONTINUED)

“Complaining about trying something new is only hurting yourself,” Brooke says. Both of her coaches agreed that back row was a much better option, even though her coaches didn't always agree. They both had different teaching styles, and one of them in particular didn't get along with the parents so it really affected their 8th grade season.

Coaching the players and telling them what to do are two different things, and it takes a lot to be able to coach teenage girls and some people just aren't right for that job.” Says Brooke's mom. The girls didn't let it get to them but sometimes she got in Brooke's heads and affected her playing.

“Once you step on the court, nothing that has happened in the past matters anymore,” is something Brooke's other coach, Kenzie would always say to the players, and that affected their attitudes way more than anticipated, in a good way.

Their first tournament they got second place, and weren't fully satisfied until they would get the gold. Soon, they did get first place and they ended up getting first place three times in a row. Brooke and her whole team celebrated their victories together in a hotel room while waiting to play at regionals. Volleyball has impacted Brooke's life a lot, mentally and physically. Brooke says, “Volleyball isn't just about passing the ball up and spiking it down on the other team, it's about coming together as a team, forming new bonds, and knowing that if you make a mistake, your team will always be by your side to bring you back up.”