



# **Athlete Spotlight: Smith is a rare, four-sport star, outstanding student for Liberty**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**EDWARDSVILLE - Maria Smith**, an outstanding **Liberty Middle School** eighth-grade athlete, has her sights set high for the future.

Maria, the daughter of Anthony and Yvonne Smith, said her goals are always to succeed first as a team or second, individually, in whatever sport she is a participant.

“I have been able to go to state in multiple sports, but last year I was a state champion in track,” she said. “All the programs are run differently and take different talents and have different people in them. I have taken something from each of my coaches and with every mistake find it can only make me better. I would like to thank all of them.”

**Liberty Middle School Athletic Director Allen Duncan** said Smith is one of those athletes who is excellent in each and every sport.

“She is solid across the board,” Duncan said. “She is one of those athletes who can do about anything. She is state champion in track and field, is a good basketball and volleyball player and a dynamic softball player.”

Smith was a state champion in the shot put in the Illinois Elementary School Association competition last year, placing first in the shot put. She was third in the long jump, fifth in the 100 meters and a member of the fifth place 4 x 100 relay at state.

Maria’s goals for the future are lofty and she wants to participate in multiple sports in high school.

“I really want to go to college on an athletic scholarship,” she said. “I want to go to a Division I school and the colleges I am interested in vary for each sport.”

One's attitude is extremely important to be a good athlete, she said.

“I try to be a leader and cheer my team on whenever and however I can,” she said. “Whether it is letting them know what I have observed or it’s pumping them up before games, I try to help them.”

Maria said she plays four sports and she has to work to keep healthy and make sure her schoolwork is done properly.

“The people you are playing with aren’t just your teammates, but they become like your family,” she said. “All of my families always have my back.”