

Highland native/SIUE athlete Torre signs pact to play professional volleyball in Germany

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EDWARDSVILLE – Just one season

ago, **Kristen Torre** was a senior on the SIUE volleyball team ready to make a mark in her final season in the [Ohio Valley Conference](#).

Now Torre, a native of Highland, Illinois, stands as an American playing professional volleyball in Germany. The 6-foot, 2-inch middle blocker, who was a two-time All-OVC honoree, signed a contract to play with ProWin Volleys in Saarbrücken, Saarland, Germany, a university town near the border in France and Luxemborg.

"It's scary for me to completely pack up my whole life and do it in a whole different country thousands of miles away," said Torre. "It's something that if you don't do it now, you'll regret it."

Torre will be one of two Americans on the team. Her contract includes a place to live, transportation and meals.

She earned this spot after competing at an international tournament in Croatia which followed a record-setting senior season at SIUE. She finished the 2015 season with a school-record .375 hitting percentage. While playing for Team BIP (Bring It Promotions), a scout talked to her about an opportunity to play in Germany. After a couple of conversations with ProWin Volleys, Torre decided to take the next step.

"They talked about the team and what they expected of me. I felt like it was a place I needed to be," Torre said. "From there I was able to understand more about the professional world. I jumped at the opportunity."

SIUE Head Coach [Leah Johnson](#) said Torre's participation with Team BIP was a big part of her transformation from college to the pro level.

"When she was picked up to play on that team, part of the reason was because we felt it would expose her to a professional opportunity," said Johnson.

Johnson provided SIUE game footage as a method of scouting for ProWin Volleys, but it was Torre's work ethic that put her over the top. From her prep coach to her coach with Team BIP, Torre continues to impress with how hard she works in practice.

"She'll take anything you give her," said Johnson. "She will try it and do it full speed without question."

Practice already is underway for Torre, and games are usually played on the weekend with three practices a week in addition to strength and conditioning workouts. The practices are done in both German and English with teammates who know both languages to help with interpretations. There also is an opportunity to learn basic German available after practice.

Torre said she wants to learn an appreciation for different cultures as well as share her own training techniques and ideas.

"We ran a really fast offense at SIUE," said Torre. "Over there is a lot of high balls and hitting different spots. Even the ball is a different size and weight so it was learning how to adapt to the international rules and regulations."

Torre will meet up with fellow American Kelsey Chambers, of Northern State University, an outside hitter. Both were education majors. Most of her German teammates have been a product of the club system and have been playing professionally since the age of 14.

Torre said most of the travel to and from games will be by bus, which is similar to the travel schedule in the OVC.

"It's comfortable for me," she said. "It's what I know so it's going to help the transition go smoother."

"I think Kristen will be an immediate difference-maker with her speed, power and size," added Johnson.

Torre said she will need to employ a fighter mentality and attitude to keep her professional career going as her contract runs through April.

"One big thing she (Coach Johnson) always told me was to never settle and always expect greatness in yourself and those around you," said Torre. "The advice I would give my former SIUE teammates is to keep chasing that dream. Don't stop just because college ends."