

# Grimm to take volleyball talents to next level at Missouri Baptist University

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – Jack Grimm has played a key role for **Edwardsville's boys volleyball team** the past few years.

Grimm will now get the chance to go on and play at the collegiate level after signing a letter of intent to attend Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis County beginning in the fall of 2017. The Spartans are an NAIA school that play in the Mid-America Men's Volleyball Intercollegiate Conference.

“I haven't been this excited in my life for anything besides this,” Grimm said following the signing ceremony.

Grimm began playing volleyball after a suggestion by a middle-school teacher. “It was brought up by one of my middle-school coaches,” Grimm said. “When I was in eighth grade, he told me to come out to one of the high school volleyball games; I played volleyball in PE, but it wasn't until I went to my first high-school match that I saw what it was about. It's a lot different (from recreational volleyball).”

The reason Grimm chose the Spartans was a simple one. “The Christian environment at the school was really important to me,” Grimm said. “With my background, being raised Lutheran and then switched to Baptist six years ago, it was important to me. I liked the size of the school and the location, being in St. Louis.”

“Jack has done a lot,” said **Tiger coach Andy Bersett**. “It's amazing how you see a kid grow over four years; Jack always had the physical attributes being tall and lanky. Those are the things you look for in a volleyball player, but the work ethic he's put in the last four years – he's come in and played on the JV team his freshman year and then made the varsity team as a sophomore – and on a really good varsity team, a team that had the most wins in school history and was a starter for half the year.

“He was a starter for us in some key playoff games; last year, he played (middle hitter) – he was one of our better players. This year, he dedicated himself all summer, going to club clinics and camps and made a top club team, not only the top club team in St. Louis but one of the top club teams in the nation. He'll be playing a different position for us this coming year as an outside (hitter) on the right side he's just worked really hard. That's the exciting thing, just to see a player grow over those four years.”

“With Jack's size, he's going to be an offensive force for us,” said **Spartan coach John Yehling**. “We expect him to play a big role in the front row attacking and blocking. He's getting some experience with his club team right now playing outside and right-side hitter.

“It'll bring some flexibility and we'll see how he develops when he gets to campus and we'll go from there.”

The growth of boys volleyball in the St. Louis area, and in Edwardsville in particular, is something Yehling hopes will continue. “We would love to get a good pipeline of Edwardsville kids coming over our way,” Yehling said. “We'd love to get some of these Edwardsville volleyball players; we've got a good program over at Missouri Baptist and we're excited to have Jack.”

Last season Grimm had an 80 percent service average with one ace for the Tigers to go with a 1.47 kill per game average, an 0.64 block average per game and an 85.71 serve-receive percentage for the Tigers.

“He's contributed on the court in terms of numbers; last year, he was the type of kid we looked to for key points,” Bersett said. “If we needed a side-out, we needed to get Jack going. I always said, 'Jack, how you're going is how the team's going.' If he was on and we were passing the ball well enough to get him the ball, we played well.

“He's one of those kids always asking for open gyms and 'what can I do to get better?' and stuff like that. He's contributed on and off the court. He's just been a really good player for us.”

The prospect of continuing to play volleyball beyond the high school level is giving Grimm opportunities he may not have dreamed of. “I honestly never would have imagined I'd be playing a college sport,” Grimm said, “but now that I know it's happening, I can't be more excited.”