

MEL's Schwarz signs to play volleyball at Concordia Chicago

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Metro East Lutheran girls volleyball player Emily Schwarz accomplished quite a bit for the Knight program in just two years playing for MEL.

Schwarz set a single-season digs record for the Knights in the 2017 season (recording 697 digs) as well as holding the seventh-ranked position in career digs for MEL.

Schwarz's accomplishments helped lead her to signing with Concordia University Chicago, located in the suburb of River Forest, Ill., near the city of Chicago, in a recent

ceremony at the school, where she will be playing volleyball for the Cougars of the Northern Collegiate Athletic Association, a NCAA Division III program, and coach Troy Campbell at the school.

“There were a lot of things that attracted me there,” Schwarz said, “but I really love my Lutheran education that I get here at Metro and I wanted to continue that on into college. I can spend more time with my brother (Justin, who also attends Concordia and plays for the men's basketball team there), of course, and I love Chicago.”

Despite just being in the program for two years, Schwarz made a huge impact in many ways both on and off the court. “It's a thrill for me,” said Knight coach Jon Giordano of Schwarz's decision to sign with Concordia. “Concordia Chicago is my alma mater, so it's great to have a Lutheran volleyball player competing and studying at one of our Lutheran universities.

“Emily has a wonderful combination of work ethic, positive attitude and obviously tremendous skill, so to have those factors playing together at the same time is a great addition to a program and to a school.”

“She has not only a great attitude, she's a great athlete on the court,” said Schwarz's club volleyball coach, Emily Thebaeu of the H2 club in St. Louis. “This is her second year playing for me; she has improved tremendously in the two years I've gotten her; I think, moving on to the college level, she will grow and develop more.

“I think she'll excel, take over and have a lot of fun.”

Schwarz began playing volleyball in second grade. “It's been a really long time since I've been playing, but I just remember going to high school volleyball games with my dad and I just loved it and became attached to it and wanted to be a part of it,” Schwarz said. “It's definitely a good education here (at MEL), both academic and athletic. I'm so thankful for it.”

Schwarz will take many memories of MEL and the program with her to Chicagoland. “Without a doubt, the people and the teachers,” Schwarz said when asked about what she will remember the most. “Everyone was trying to get to know me and welcoming me – I will definitely miss that.”

Schwarz plans on majoring in either early childhood education or special education at Concordia. “I love working with children and I just can't imagine not doing that for my future career,” Schwarz said.