



# Hard work pays off for Edwardsville's Werths, Tiger senior signs with Lindenwood

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE – Cal Werths didn't even step onto a volleyball court until his freshman year at Edwardsville High School.

Werths, however, has come a long way in playing the game, taking advantage of the opportunities to learn the game by going to off-season training sessions and by playing club volleyball to help develop his skills.

The hard work and effort paid off Tuesday when Werths signed a letter of intent to attend Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Mo., beginning next fall and play for the Lions, who compete at the NCAA Division I level in the sport as a member of the Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association.

Werths took up the sport for the first time when he arrived at EHS for the first time in the fall of 2014. “Starting out in the sport, it was something that was really hard to get adjusted to,” Werths said about taking up volleyball for the first time, “but it kind of clicked with me and I stayed with it.

“Tony (Miner, Werths' club volleyball coach with High Performance-Illinois) and coach (Andy) Bersett (Edwardsville's boys volleyball coach) have been two of my greatest mentors – they all helped me figure out the game and what I needed to do to play at the highest level; without them, I probably wouldn't be where I'm at today.”

Choosing to go to Lindenwood in St. Charles, Werths felt, was the right decision; it's close to Edwardsville and still in the Metro St. Louis area. “It's nice because I get to go

over and do my own thing, but I can go home and see my parents and family,” Werths said. “I went out there on a visit expecting great things; I’d heard a lot about the school and how great it was.

“I met the coaches and the guys on the team; they have a great group of guys, a bunch of guys who like to work hard. I just clicked with the guys over there, with the coaches and they have a great school as well. It’s a beautiful campus – it just seems like everything’s right there; I really clicked with it.”

“I think it’s a big accomplishment for Cal,” Bersett said of Werths. “He’s come a long way in his four years here; it’s a perfect example of what hard work will do. Cal came in here having very little experience and he worked his way up and earned a varsity starting spot last year; he’s taken it to the next level. He’s had a really good career here.

“We had a freshman team here when he started, with a couple other guys who are seniors now; he participated in off-season workouts for four years, he got involved with club volleyball and had a real passion for it; he had the perfect attitude to get better.”

That Werths began playing his freshman year had been a common occurrence in the EHS boys program. “That used to be common,” Bersett said. “But now, it’s more and more rare – we’re getting kids playing in the middle schools now and Cal’s one of the few guys we get now that’s he’s only been playing for four years, so his accomplishments and his ability to play at what essentially is the top level in college volleyball for boys is pretty incredible.”

Werths plans on majoring in business at Lindenwood, but has not decided on a specific area of business; he holds an interest in marketing. “They have a really good business program over there,” Werths said. “I’ve heard nothing but good things about it.”