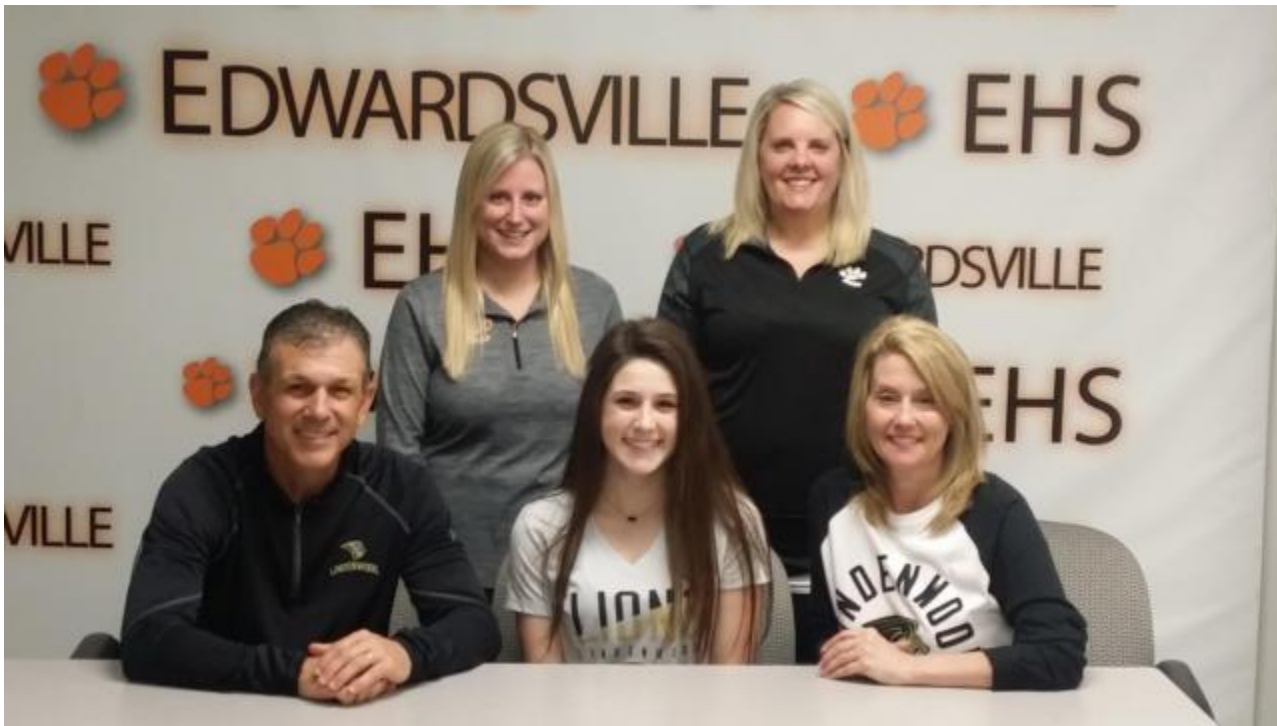


Tiger cheerleader Mullican signs letter with Lindenwood-St. Charles

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
May 12 2018 7:00 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – Competitive cheerleading has grown in popularity over the past several years, to the point where area high schools have teams not only for cheerleading at football, basketball and soccer games, but in competitive activities where stunts cheers are judged in competition with other schools.

At the collegiate level today, competitive cheerleading has also grown in popularity to the point where scholarships are offered to join cheerleading teams.

For Edwardsville cheerleader Rachel Mullican, she signed a letter of intent to attend Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Mo., beginning next fall to cheer for and be a member of the Lions' cheer squad.

“I danced when I was about two (years of age) and I saw these cheerleaders – all cheerleaders mainly dance – and it made me interested when I was seven years old,” Mullican said. “I went and cheered at Pride of Illinois in Collinsville, then I cheered in middle school (at Liberty Middle School) and all through high school, then I went back to Pride; I tumble there now” at the Brownsville-based gym.

“I've made a lot of memories, even in middle school; we won the floor cheer in middle school and all four years, we've made it to the IHSA (Cheerleading Championship) Day 2 (of the state competition) multiple times; we made Top 10 all four years and I've made the All-State team this year. My sophomore year, we won the all-girls stunt group, so I've made a lot of memories as a team.”

“Rachel was a great asset to our team,” said Tiger cheerleading coach Cayla Bowen. “Not only did she bring great leadership skills, but her athletic ability allowed her to be an amazing asset for the past four years for our team. It was a long and demanding season; we pretty much start in June and don't finish up until March – it's multiple games, competitions, practices, but she's been dedicated for all four years.”

“With the long, grueling hours we put in, we really become a family,” added EHS assistant coach Ashley Walsh. “Rachel is one I will truly miss; she's become almost a second daughter – I couldn't be more proud and happy for her to have this opportunity to go on and continue to do something she's obviously passionate about and really loves, but we're sure going to miss her.”

“I hope I can learn to grow as a team,” Mullican said of what she hopes to accomplish at Lindenwood. “I felt I worked too hard these past four years to give it up, so I wanted to continue doing that and learn from all of my teammates and coaches about how college goes.”