



# **Despite disease Edwardsville soccer star Ethan Miracle's attitude shines on and off the field**

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Ethan Miracle is in the form of his life on the soccer pitch.

You would be hard-pressed to find a better attacking-midfielder than him in the St. Louis Metro area. So far in the 2018 season, through 11 matches, Miracle is the leading goal scorer in the Southwestern Conference with 11 goals, two assists, and 24 points for the Edwardsville Tigers.

“It’s a step up from last year,” Miracle said. “I had some low points where I wasn’t scoring in multiple games, but this year I haven’t had one of those lulls. The only games I haven’t been able to score were in low-scoring games or no goals at all. Being able to find the net that often is a great feeling and reassuring to get the next one.”

It’s a bit hard to believe how far Miracle has come to be able to succeed on the field after what he’s mentally and physically gone through.

Miracle’s life was dealt with a blowback 18 months ago.

“My mom had been noticing how I’d been looking kind of sluggish and a little tired. She just knew something was off,” Miracle said.

Soon after during an annual medical checkup, Ethan’s blood sugar was tested. A healthy amount is supposed to be between 80 and 150. His blood sugar level was at 500.

The boy who is terrorizing defenses on a nightly basis has Type 1 diabetes.

“It was all kind of just a shock. You don’t expect it being a high-level athlete running all the time. Sometimes you get screwed over by the genetics,” Miracle said. “It’s something you have to learn to live with. At the beginning, it’s like how?”

His mother had a bad feeling that her son had diabetes because her father also has diabetes.

“She didn’t tell me what she was thinking because her dad is a Type 1 diabetic. So she kind of knew the signs, but she didn’t want to scare me.”

After finding out about his blood sugar level, Ethan immediately was taken to the hospital where he would spend the next three days, which happened during spring break to add insult to injury. During that time he had to learn how to take insulin, which is a hormone that helps control blood levels.

“You have to be taught to use your insulin and how to use everything and take care of yourself. Being in there for three days being able to bring the blood sugar down from 500 to keep it there and monitor me,” Miracle said. “That’s how that week went.”

Being an in-shape, next level soccer player made Ethan question how could he have such high blood sugar.

“It changed everything in my life. At the beginning , want to be doing this. I couldn’t ignore it,” Miracle said.

However, as time went on Ethan started to get used to the routine.

“After a while, you realize it’s not that bad,” Miracle said. “You just have an extra step in eating where you have to inject yourself with insulin here and there. You don’t really notice it after a while, and you learn to live with it.”

He’s also not afraid to apply some self-deprecating humor about his condition.

“Me and my friends actually like to make diabetes jokes all the time,” Miracle said. “If you can’t learn to laugh at yourself there’s really no point. I just bought a shirt that says “I am the proud owner of useless pancreas.”

As for his ability to play soccer, Ethan rightfully had his initial fears.

“At the beginning, I thought I’m never going to be on the field. I’m going to be always checking my blood sugar. I’m never going to be that level of a soccer player ever again,” Miracle said. “I was scared that I wasn’t going to play soccer again.”

It turns out Ethan’s fears were a tad overdramatic.

“After a while in the hospital, I was like, well maybe it’s not quite as drastic,” Miracle said. “ got it under control it wasn’t that big of a problem.”

This is Miracle’s second season playing in the Edwardsville soccer program. In his first two years in high school, Miracle played club soccer for Scott Gallagher Soccer Club based in St. Louis. He was a first choice starter during those two seasons.

“For me, I really enjoy the high school atmosphere,” Miracle said. “Being able to play in front of fans that aren’t just your parents your friends and people that are genuinely interested in the sport and don’t have to be there, but want to be there is incredible. Under the lights in front of fans being able to score in big game situations where they actually mean something is a great experience that everyone should experience whether it be at the college or high school level.”

Before every game, Ethan has to check his blood sugar. If it’s low, then he’ll drink a bottle of Gatorade. Ethan has one of his teammates check his iPhone now and then because Miracle wears an Aqua Meter on his arm that sends updates about his blood sugar to his phone. If his blood sugar is going low, then Miracle will be notified and then drink half a Gatorade when a pause in the action occurs.

“That’s rarely happened. It’s usually before or after games because adrenaline is pumping so much it doesn’t really make it go low,” Miracle said. “It’s nice to have somebody over there checking it for me, so I don’t have to run on and off the field.”

Nearly two weeks ago on September, 22, Edwardsville hosted the Normal Community Ironmen on a Saturday afternoon to raise money and awareness for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. The JDF benefit game at EHS raised more than \$5,000.

“Me and my mom talked about giving back to J.D.R.F. because I felt like that was something I needed and wanted to do,” Miracle said. “My mom came up with the idea for the fundraiser and it all just kind of circulated together when we talked to Heiderscheid about maybe doing it as part of the game. He thought it was a great idea and was amazingly supportive of it as he always is. He loves his players and wants everything for them. He was a great part of this as well.

"It was really great to give back," Miracle said. "Being a Type I diabetic myself, I want to help give back and show kids recently diagnosed it's not that bad. It's just an extra step in eating. It was really great the community showed the support and it meant a lot to me."

Miracle uses an insulin pump and constant glucose monitoring system, two modern advances, to control his sugar. He said both devices work well for him.

As for the game, Edwardsville dominated possession like they almost always do, but the final score was 0-0 moving the Tigers record to 6-2-3 for the season.

Miracle plays primarily as a central attacking midfielder but prefers to line up as a striker.

“Personally I like to play striker, but lately I’ve been playing underneath Glisson. That’s mainly because of injuries that we’ve had and different stuff,” Miracle said. “We play back and forth on the attack. Normally I’ll defend as the ten, and he’ll defend as the nine.”

The Tigers have two games remaining on their schedule against Alton and Belleville West and need to win one to clinch their third straight conference championship. Edwardsville plays a tiki-taka offensive style of play where they primarily keep the ball on the ground and retain the majority of possession.

Miracle enjoys and thrives in it.

“It always is . Being able to play with great players like A.J. , Bryce Glisson and Bryce Broshow are amazing technical players,” Miracle said. “Being able to combine with them and shred teams with our with our passing and combination throughout the field is incredible. It makes the goal that much better the whole team was involved.”

Going forward, Ethan will look to lead to Edwardsville to a state championship, which would be the icing on the cake to a brilliant high school career. Off the field, he’ll continue to be an advocate by encouraging other diabetic children to keep chasing their athletic dreams.

“I want kids to be able to have the same positive outlook on this that I do and have better advances in the medicine that goes towards diabetes,” Miracle said. “I just want to show them that it’s not that bad. You can still play your sports. You can still function normally, and it’s something that shouldn’t bother you a whole lot.





