



Highland Hurler Emily Allsman Dedicates Win for the Love of the Game and Grandfather

April 24 2019 4:30 PM



HIGHLAND – It's been a roller coaster week for one Highland High School softball pitcher who doesn't like being in the spotlight, but loves being in the circle.

On Monday, in a game already decided by the score, senior hurler Emily Allsman came on in relief in the seventh inning with the bases loaded and faced one of the tougher hitters in the Mississippi Valley Conference. She gave up a meaningless grand slam. Emily didn't get the loss, but her team did to Triad 11-2. The loss left both teams tied for the top spot in the MVC. But after the game, Emily suffered a bigger loss, discovering that her grandpa passed away earlier in the day.

After a few controlled tears among family and friends beyond the outfield fence (and probably a few more privately), Emily decided that she would overcome this setback in the manner most comfortable to her. She would compete.

It was her decision to play the next day when Highland battled Jerseyville and Emily rebounded to toss a complete-game, five-hit victory. She allowed just one earned run in seven innings, struck out two and walked none.

"We allowed her to make the decision and she decided to play," her father Scott Allsman said. "She doesn't seem to let things bother her. It's that way when she's on the mound, too. If she gets into a jam, it just doesn't seem to bother her."

Under the circumstances, Emily's stats against Jerseyville were impressive enough. But her season stats are even more so. She's 5-0 (second in St. Louis-Metro area); her earned run average is 1.91. She leads the area in strikeouts to walk ratio with a 33/1 (she's only walked one batter in 33 innings) and she's 3-0 in conference play. She's slated to pitch for Southwest Illinois College next year.

But stats don't always tell the story. On the mound, Emily hasn't lost all season; off the field, she suffered a big loss Monday.

"While they were in better health, grandma and grandpa would come to almost all of Emily's games," Scott Allsman said. "They haven't been able to do that lately."

Highland coach Glen Nichols said Emily informed him late last week that she would need to miss a team bonding event because her grandpa wasn't doing well.

"We had a discussion about it," he said. "I told her team bonding was the last thing she needed to be worried about and that we'd keep our fingers crossed that her grandpa would pull through."

“Without knowing what had transpired earlier in the day, at the end of the game Monday, I told her Tuesday’s game was hers,” Nichols said. “She said fine. It was shortly after that when she was told about her grandpa’s passing and texted me about the news.”

Nichols said he spoke to Emily again prior to game time Tuesday. “She said, ‘I’m good’. She didn’t hesitate. She was all-in. She took the ball and pitched one heck of a game!”

“I wasn’t really surprised at all that she decided to play,” her mom Beth Allsman said. “She loves the game so much. And we knew that’s what grandpa would want her to do.”

During the team talk after Tuesday’s win, Nichols said some of the girls still were not aware of the off-field events. “I told them about Emily and her grandpa and it was quite a team moment,” he said.

The visitation for John W. “Bill” Ambuel will be Thursday evening. Emily will miss Highland’s road game against Teutopolis to attend the visitation. She will miss school to attend the funeral Friday morning, then suit up later in the day to play against Wesclin. Normally, if a student is absent from school, they are not eligible to compete in extra-curricular activities that day.

“But there are exceptions,” Nichols said. “Emily was concerned that she wouldn’t be allowed to play Friday. You can receive administrative approval to void the rule. Athletic Director Amy Boscolo talked to Emily and she wanted to play. So she has received permission to play Friday if she chooses to.

“Emily is the absolute role model for student-athletes,” Nichols said. “That’s no joke. I’d love to have 25 Emily Allsmans. Going into her senior year, I asked her to help me with the seventh-grade summer program and I don’t think she missed one game or practice.

“As a coach, you can’t have favorites; just like you can’t have favorite children,” Nichols said. “But I’ll say this, it would be a pleasure to have more Emilys.”

When asked how Nichols might use Emily on Friday he said, “The girls have started calling her Emily Ballsman. When it’s game time, she wants the ball and it’s let’s go! It’s likely she’ll be in the circle.”