

Volleyball Star Jake Roth Is Jeff Lauritzen - Country Financial Male Athlete of Month For Marquette Catholic

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - Marquette Catholic senior boys volleyball player Jake Roth has emerged as one of the most important players for the Explorers in their inaugural season, helping the team to a 8-5 record thus far in Marquette's first varsity season, which was pushed back a year after the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled the 2020 season.

Roth is a very important cog in the Explorers' attack, coming up with big kills and other plays in a match against Edwardsville May 12 at Lucco-Jackson Gym, where Marquette lost a hard-fought three set decision to the Tigers 25-16, 19-25, 25-15. The Explorers

bounced back the next night to win over Metro-East Lutheran in a Prairie State Conference match 25-10, 25-7, with Roth playing a big role in the match.

For his efforts so far this season, Roth has been named the school's Riverbender.com male Athlete of the Month for May, 2021.

Roth, who plays for head coach Mark Ellebracht, feels that his team has been very competitive in its initial season, getting a big win over Belleville East at Marquette Family Arena May 7 and playing very well against Edwardsville before the Tigers took control in the third set.

Roth thanked the Marquette Catholic administration for starting the boys volleyball program at the school and coach Mark Ellebracht, who had been with it from the beginning.

“I want to extend a huge shout out to our coach, Mark Ellebracht for working so well with the athletes, parents and athletic office to help better our program,” Roth said.

Roth has played club volleyball for High Performance in Fenton the past four years, the team qualified for nationals in USA for past four years. He was the captain of his club boys volleyball team and the Marquette Catholic boys volleyball team for three years.

Roth said what he loves about volleyball is the camaraderie when winning a point or match.

“Compared to sports like football, basketball or baseball, every single time the ball is put in the air, someone is getting a point, so it keeps it interesting,” he said.

Roth has been a Rotary Club Student of the Month, is a four-year high honor roll student. He has also been a swimmer for four years, soccer player two years, track one year, on the bowling team for one year. As a freshman, he approached the Marquette administration about starting the new sport- boys volleyball and he presented his case to the MCHS Board and it included a petition that three-quarters of the student body signed that they supported the team. In the end, the board and administration agreed to start the team.

Roth plans to attend St. Louis University and will work on a pre-dental school track with chemical biology course emphasis.

Roth feels that things have gone well for the Explorers thus far in their first varsity season.

"I think they're going really well," Roth said. "I'm the only club player that plays all year round. Everybody else has never really played club before. It's really outstanding, because all of Edwardsville's starting roster and their JV players, Belleville East, they play club all year around. A lot of them play on the same teams, and we have never played club, we've never seen club players, so I am really proud of our team for stepping up to the plate and being able to compete."

The goal for the Explorers, being a first-year expansion program, is to be as competitive as possible and possibly surprise some observers. Roth is feeling very pleased and optimistic about the team's future, and hopes many of his teammates begin playing club volleyball as well.

"I think things are going really well so far," Roth said. "Just like, I'm hoping that some players will come out for club, maybe we can get more experience, and I really think with our JV team, there's really good potential after I leave."

Roth has some lofty goals for himself and the Explorers for the rest of the season.

"Definitely this year, winning regionals," Roth said, "going to the state series. We can compete, and I know we can. We just have to put our minds to it, really."

But it's so far, so good in the Explorers' opening campaign, and Roth is very optimistic about the possibilities for his team.

"The sky's the limit, really," Roth said with a smile. "We have some really strong players that can compete."

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