



Explorers' Kiley Beth Kirchner Is Named All-State Softball, Is Jeff Lauritzen-Country Financial Female Athlete Of The Month

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - Recent Marquette Catholic graduate Kiley Beth Kirchner had a great senior season for the Explorers' softball team, hitting .452 with four home runs, 32 runs batted in and 23 stolen bases without getting caught stealing. She was named to the Illinois Coaches Association Class 2A All-State team for the second consecutive year, and was one of the team's most important players and leaders in helping the Explorers to a 20-6 record in the 2021 season.

For her efforts on the field, Kirchner has been named to school's female Athlete of the Month for June, 2021.

Kirchner, who played for head coach Dan Wiedman, felt that Marquette had a very successful season, and felt that the family atmosphere the team fostered was a big factor in their success.

"I think with our younger players, as a team, and the fact that we meshed together and played like a family was the high point of this year," Kirchner said during a recent interview. Kirchner was also to improve her hitting skills as the season went on.

"My hitting improved a lot," Kirchner said, "so I was able to bring more to the plate."



Kirchner and her teammates were very pleased and grateful to be able to play the season after seeing the 2020 season called off due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"Yes, very much," Kirchner said. "I think it was exciting to get out and play, and with an exciting team like we had."

When the Illinois High School Association announced that it would hold its state tournament series this year after having canceled it last season, it gave Kirchner, her teammates and all the players and athletes in the state a major boost.

"It was like playing for a higher goal than just finishing the season up," Kirchner said.

Some of her favorite memories with the Explorers involve postseason softball, as well as teammates who added to the Marquette program.

"My freshman year, we won regionals," Kirchner said, "and it was exciting to play in a sectional game. Also being able to play with some really good players as Meaghan Schorman and Grace Frost."

Kirchner will be attending Missouri State University in Springfield, majoring in either business or pre-law, and is looking to pursue a law degree and become an attorney, either in corporate or patent law, but won't be involved in sports while at Missouri State.

"I decided not to play sports so I could focus on my academics," Kirchner said.

Kirchner thanked her family, her teammates, and her coaches for their help and encouragement along the way with the Explorers.

"My coaches and my teammates definitely had a positive impact on my life," Kirchner said. "I'd like to say a thank you to my coaches, especially Dan Wiedman, my hitting coach, Jim Powell, and my family."

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