

# **Senior Volleyball Star Ella Middleton Is Tom Lane-State Farm Female Athlete Of The Month For CM**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
November 19 2021 1:24 PM



BETHALTO - If there was a fall athlete who always had her team at heart, it was Civic Memorial senior girls volleyball player Ella Middleton.

The Eagles had an exceptionally strong season under head coach Kristie Ochs, and Middleton played a key part in it. Ella is also a high honor roll member at Civic Memorial and takes the academic part of her education as strongly as she does her time on the volleyball court and softball field.

Ella was quick to praise the others on her team: "My teammates have also played a big role in my success. The other seven seniors and I have been playing together since fourth grade, all through middle and high school, and they've all pushed me to be the athlete I am. One person in particular that I want to say thanks to is Maddie Brueckner, over our time of playing with each other she's become the teammate and friend that you want on your team. She is the person that I know I can turn to who will pick me up."

Ella also commended her family for her constant support.

"I would like to especially thank my mom and dad because they would drive me all over the area to either practice, training, or a tournament, even if it meant that we wouldn't get home until 10:30 at night. My mom is Missy Middleton, and she is a first-grade teacher and has been my coach since the fourth grade. She is definitely my role model because she is always willing to do things for others. I'm grateful to have her as my mom.

"My dad is Tad Middleton, and he works at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, and he is someone who is always doing something for others just like my mom. He is for sure the first person that I can count on to have my back because he always says to me 'I'll always have your back at 110%' and he has. He knows how to pick me up without even saying anything. I would make a mistake and I'd find him in the stands and he would brush his chest signaling to me that I need to shake it off and move on to the next play. I'm beyond grateful to have parents that would have supported and pushed me to be the person I've become."

Ella was also extremely thankful to her coach Kristie Ochs for her constant inspiration.

"Kristie is positive, enthusiastic, supportive, trusting, and just really everything that you want from a coach," she said. "She has really pushed me to be the athlete that I am."

The CM senior said getting All-Conference First Team her junior year was one of her biggest individual accomplishments "because we have a lot of good competition in our

conference and getting this award was just a real eye-opener for me because it made me see that all my hard work pays off - spending countless hours in the gym getting rep after rep.

"I've been playing volleyball since fourth grade, and what I love about it the most is honestly just throwing your body on the floor to get the ball up. Yes, it might hurt but guess what you got it! It's either between that or digging a ball that was hit by a really good hitter. There's just so much that I love about this sport for me to just give one answer."

Ella said if she isn't playing volleyball, she can be found painting.

"I have found a love for art, especially painting," she said. "All my life I've been involved with sports and having different coaches for both softball and volleyball has really helped me become the person I am."

The CM senior that being an athlete has taught her that everyone is human and going to make mistakes, but you have to learn how to shake it off.

"There are times in games where the refs or umpires might make a bad call, and you can't control that, all you can do is score on the next or make a play on the next pitch," she said. "When I was a freshman playing varsity, some of the upperclassmen weren't really happy about it because I was playing before them, but it's life and instead of being hurt about it, you should be happy and cheer the other on.

"Volleyball and softball have both taught me many life lessons that I think everyone should learn. I will be continuing my volleyball career at Illinois College. Ella plans to major in graphic design, along with marketing,"