

Ella Stepanek Is Model Student-Athlete At GCHS, She Is Stillwater Senior Living Female Athlete Of Month For Warriors

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GRANITE CITY - Senior Ella Stepanek is a well-recognized name in Granite City. In every sports season, she puts on a new uniform from basketball, volleyball, and softball. She is also active in school activities at Granite City High School and is an exceptional student.

Ella Stepanek is the Stillwater Senior Living Female Athlete of the Month for Granite City High School.

Stepanek has now turned her athletic attention to basketball and is a key this season for the Granite City girls squad contributing points, rebounds, and her defensive play.

"Even though it is challenging to maintain the demands of both sports and school, I think that in doing so it has given me an immense amount of pride in my achievements for both athletics and academics," Ella said. "I have learned that if I am willing to put the work in, success will eventually follow, and the responsibility that comes with both will be worth it."

Ella recognized her family members and teammates for their support behind her as a scholar-athlete.

"My family members have been watching and cheering me on every step of the way," she said. "This includes not only my parents and brother but the extended family too."

“There is something really special about looking up into the stands and seeing all of them rooting for me. It drives me to work harder even after I feel as though my mistakes outnumber my successes.”

Ella also saluted her coach Greg Vaughn for his guidance.

“Greg Vaughn, he’s been my coach since I was in seventh grade,” Ella added. “I’m extremely grateful for all the ways in which he has helped me work to become the player I am today.”

The Granite City senior says her work ethic has been the key to her success.

“I would say that I’m a hardworking person, and with the refinement that my coaches have been able to equip me with, I’ve been able to succeed in sports,” she said. “I try my hardest to step out on the court and give my coaches the best that I can offer, whether it be during practices or games.”

Ella started her basketball career in fourth grade, playing for the Granite City Park District, where she met many of her teammates now.

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Ella said she would definitely consider a continuation of her athletic career in college, but she has not yet decided on a post-high school selection.

She says science has been of great interest during her academic career at GCHS.

“Chemistry is a field that I tremendously enjoy studying, with the science program at my high school I look forward to fully exploring the possibilities available in that area of study,” she said. “I have yet to narrow myself down to a specific career.”

Ella was a middle-blocker/setter and a standout volleyball player for the Warriors.

“I am involved with the Secondary Honors Program, Saturday Scholars, Renaissance, Varsity Club, Hockey Club, Science Club, Student Council, and National Honor Society,” she said. “I was selected as Rotary Student of the Month for February 2021, Elks Student of the Month for October 2021, and a participant in Illini Girls State. My

GPA is currently a 5.6 which puts me near the top of my class. I take great pride in my academic career and the education I've received at GCHS."

Ella closed with a thank you to her teammates in the various sports: "I want to thank my teammates because I couldn't have asked for a better group of girls to play with."