# Two-Sport Athlete Claire Christeson Is A Tom Lane State Farm Insurance Female Athlete Of The Month For CM

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BETHALTO - Recent Civic Memorial High School graduate Claire Christeson was a two-sport standout athlete for the Eagles. She was a star on the girls' basketball team and also loved playing soccer come springtime.

Because of injuries and the COVID-19 Pandemic, she had an absolute roller coaster of a high school campaign. With her career finish in both basketball and soccer and how she faced all the challenges and remained vital to her teams, she is a Tom Lane State Farm Insurance Female Athlete of Month for the Eagles.

"Personally, I didn't expect it to go this way," Claire said. "Looking back at it I wouldn't change anything."

She started off by making the varsity basketball team her freshman year and came off the bench, participating in 20 games. The following year she played in all 35 games. Her junior year was cut short due to the pandemic. The Eagles still managed to get in 17 games, only losing one of those. Claire played in all 17 and averaged 10.2 points per game.

She gave great thanks to her head basketball coach at CM Mike Arbuthnot.

"Coach Arb made me see the game from a completely different point of view. There was never a moment he wasn't there for me."

She mentioned being able to talk to him during her injury and just tell him how she felt. The two were more friends than coach and player.

As for the soccer field, she also made the varsity team her freshman year. COVID-19 completely wiped out the spring sports schedule her sophomore year, but as a junior, she had a solid campaign scoring a couple of goals and assisting on seven more. In her senior year, she was still on the bench due to the injury.

According to Claire, soccer was actually the first sport she ever loved. She's played for CM head coach Eric Zyung ever since she was in the third grade.

Because of playing sports at such a young age, she made plenty of friendships along the way. She mentioned Mady Zhung, Kelbie Zupan, Emily Williams, Kailyn Aiello, and Madelyn Brueckner to name a few, but the list surely goes on and on.

"We all grew up super close together," Claire said. "The reason we're all so close is because of the sports."

If the pandemic wasn't already enough, after she tore her ACL she was sidelined for her entire senior season. She made a couple of appearances with one being Senior Night and the other being the final game of her high school career in the Class 3A third-place game at state.

Despite all of that, she has been healing and will continue her basketball career in college. She's going to attend the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and plans on studying elementary education.

She says teaching is something that she's wanted to do for a long time because of her mom.

"My mom was always a teacher and she told me how happy it made her," Claire said.

Claire mentioned that she's always loved kids anyway so It seemed like a good fit for her.

Even throughout all the hardships, Claire knew early on that she wanted to continue her basketball career post-high school.

"Ever since freshman year, I had the mindset that I wanted to play college basketball. I planned on committing the day I got hurt actually."

She feared that after the injury UMSL wasn't going to want her anymore, but head coach Katie Vaughn still believed in her.

"She still wanted me before knowing what my injury was," Claire said.

Regarding the knee, Claire says she is doing just fine and hasn't had any pain.

"I'm good, I'm officially cleared," she said.

She was medically cleared in the spring and began to get back out on the court.

She's been playing in some scrimmage games for UMSL where she's been getting a lot of minutes against other colleges. She mentioned an upcoming summer camp that she'll be attending.

Although she is super grateful to play in college, she'll also never forget the memories she's made during high school.

"It makes us realize how much we took it for granted," she said.