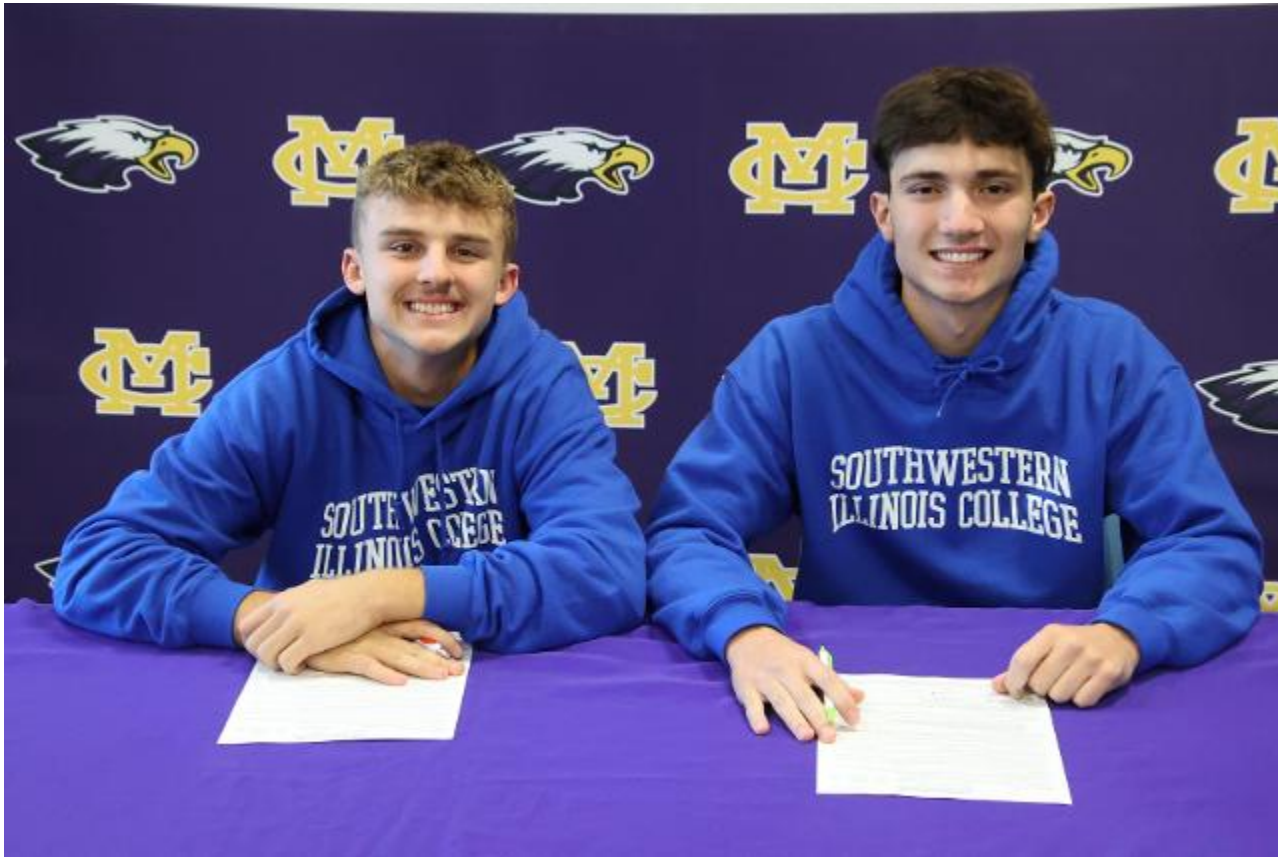
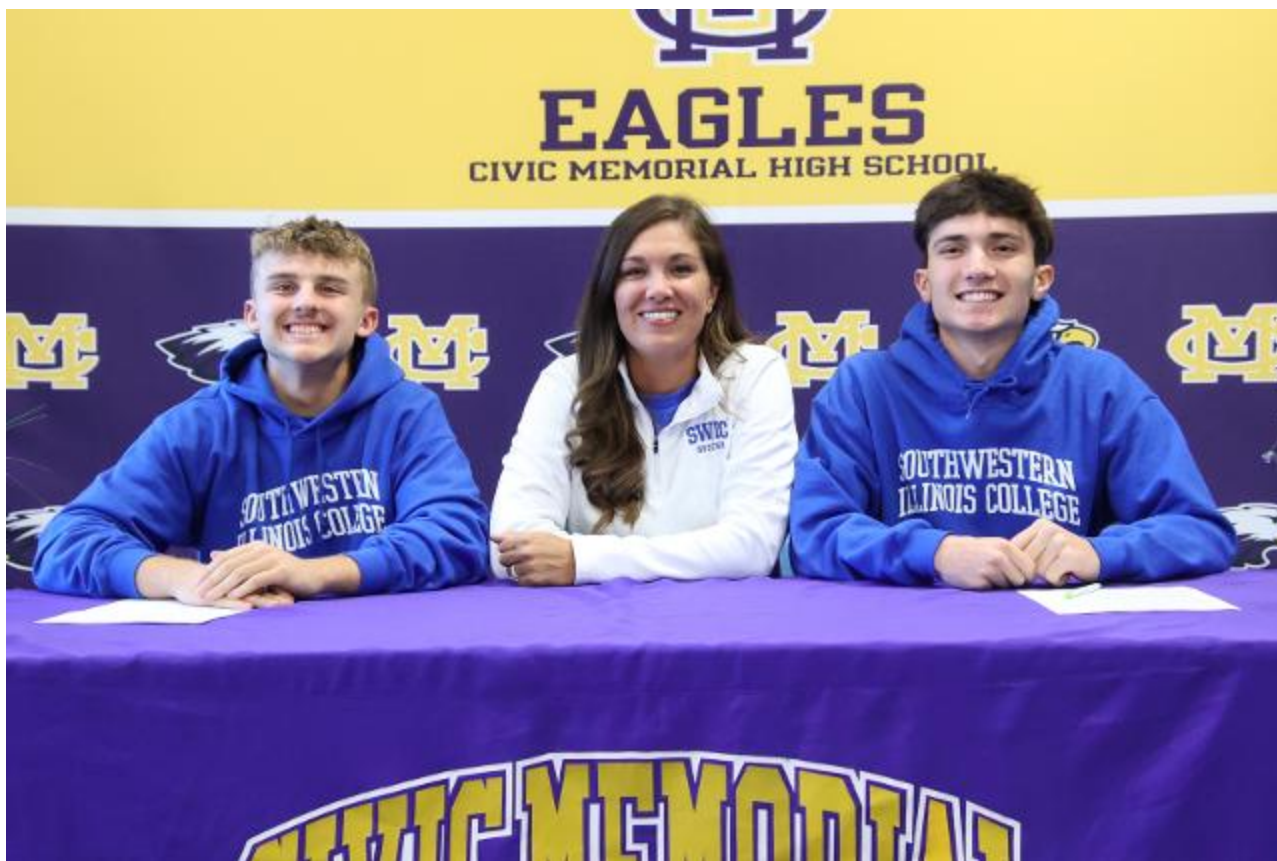


# **Zyung, Aiello Sign To Play Soccer At SWIC – Both Are Tom Lane Male Athletes Of The Month For CM**

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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BETHALTO – Seniors Brayden Zyung and Joe Aiello have been playing soccer together since pretty much kindergarten according to Civic Memorial High School boys soccer coach Derek Jarman.

Jarman said the thing he'll miss the most about Brayden and Joe is their immense leadership. In his words, the two "drive the bus."

"When you have kids like that, you have freshmen that are looking up to them and they want to be like them. And now the freshman and the other kids that are seeing them sign on the dotted line to go to college, now they want to do that. And that's just contagious," Jarman said.

The two have been captains on CM's varsity soccer team since they were sophomores and have always been tremendous leaders according to Jarman. That's one of the things Southwest Illinois College head coach Lindsay Eversmeyer saw in them.

"They immediately stuck out to me," she said.

“With Joe, he plays with such heart all the time. You can tell that he’s super passionate about it. We needed a defender because we lost our whole backline last year. When I watched him, I was like man, this kid loves to play,” Eversmeyer said about CM’s long-time starting back.

“When he plays at the center of the park, he’s a selfless player,” she said about Brayden. “That’s why he leads the entire St. Louis area with assists. So, he can create those chances for our forwards and our midfielders and he’s so good on the ball and so talented.”

Brayden and Joe will join longtime friends and club teammates Myles Paniagua and Charlie Fahnestock from Marquette Catholic. The four have played club soccer together for the Alton Irish for a long time now. Eversmeyer kept these four together on purpose.

“I’m really excited about it,” she said. “I think it’s really important and good for the program when you get multiple players who have played together as long as they have that can come in and immediately bring some chemistry to the program.”

Joe and Brayden are excited that they get to stick together too.

“I love Joe, and also the two that just signed the other day Myles and Charlie, I’ve played with them all my life too in club soccer. I’m very blessed to be with them again,” Brayden said.

“It’s nice to be able to do that with a player like Brayden,” Joe said about playing at the next level with his best bud.

Eversmeyer mentioned that Brayden led the St. Louis region in assists. He finished with 33 assists and 15 goals. Joe notched seven goals and 12 assists his senior year.

The two led the Eagles to a regional championship before falling in the sectional finals this season. They also won a regional plaque in their junior and freshman years. Their sophomore season was cut short due to the pandemic.

“Two of the best that you’ll ever see; led us on and off the field,” Jarman said. “These guys have earned this opportunity, great for them. I’ll miss seeing them here every day at school but they’re going to make SWIC a lot better in terms of everything. They’re going to bring leadership, accountability, and just showing up and getting better every single day.”

Brayden mentioned that Eversmeyer came out to a game when CM was playing Granite City. They talked after the game and then later on Joe began emailing Eversmeyer.

“It’s definitely something I’ve aspired to do for a long time,” Joe said. “It’s pretty surreal to finally be able to pick a college and sign somewhere I’m really going to love to play.”

“It’s going to be a lot of fun. I hope we can do some great things there too,” Brayden added.

Brayden plans to study computer science while Joe hasn’t settled on a degree quite yet.

They both agreed that they will miss their teammates, their coaches, and their friends at CM.

“They’ve been with me through thick and thin. It’s been really awesome, and I love every single one of those guys,” Brayden said about his teammates.

“It’s been a ride,” Joe added.

Both Joe and Brayden were coached by their dads at CM and at Alton Irish and they’ll both look back on those times fondly.

“He’s coached me on basically every team I’ve ever been on,” Brayden said about his dad Eric, one of CM’s assistant coaches. “He’s probably one of the better coaches I’ve ever had, and I do love him.”