

McMullen excited for opportunity at Northwest Missouri State



Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen helped the Lady Cats to three state tournament appearances during her career at Louisburg High School, including a runner-up finish this year. She signed her letter of intent on Nov. 15 to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State next fall.

Volleyball has always been a part of Sophie McMullen's life and life has been really good to McMullen as of late.

First, McMullen helped the Louisburg volleyball team to a runner-up finish at the Class 4A-Division I state tournament last month. Although her high school career has come to an end, a new beginning for the Louisburg senior is right around the corner.

During a ceremony in front of family and friends on Nov. 15 at LHS, McMullen signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State and is looking forward to spending the next four years as a Bearcat.

"The process of recruiting was crazy and finding the right home was a big deal for us," McMullen said. "I think that I found the right home and I am super excited to be able to sign with them and go down there during the summer to see what it

is all about.”

The decision was a difficult one at times as she had offers from other programs, but McMullen appreciated the loyalty from the Northwest coaches.

McMullen had been recruited by the Bearcat staff for several years, including a time when she transitioned into different positions.

“What really stuck out was the coaches,” McMullen said. “I don’t really like having too aggressive of coaches. I like having a coach who will help me when I am in need of help, not when I am doing well. These coaches are just really supportive.

“They have watched me since I was a setter back in 2014. They have watched me a long time and have seen me develop into a hitter and a right side hitter. They saw something in me back when I was a setter and stuck with me and I appreciate that.”

McMullen played a big role on the Lady Cat volleyball team this season. She led Louisburg with 114 aces and 437 digs. As an outside hitter, McMullen was second on the Louisburg squad with 381 kills.

She was also recognized as one of the top players in the state in Class 4A. McMullen was a first team all-Frontier League selection and was also named to the Kansas Volleyball Association all-state first team. She was later chosen to participate in the MO-KAN senior all-star match.



LHS senior Sophie McMullen signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State on Nov. 15. Sitting next to Sophie are her parents Sarah and Scott McMullen and her sister Corinna. Standing (from left) is LHS assistant volleyball coaches Mary Quinn and Leanna Willer, head coach Jessica Compliment, LHS activities director Jeremy Holloway and Dyansty club director Bryon Larson.

It was a long road for McMullen, who started her Louisburg career as a setter her freshmen season. She was also the Lady Cat setter as a sophomore as she helped Louisburg to back-to-back state tournament appearances.

McMullen eventually transitioned into an outside hitter, where she helped Louisburg to a runner-up state finish as a senior, which was her third state tournament appearance.

“In Louisburg volleyball, I started off as just a little fish just trying to make it,” McMullen said. “I was a freshman and scared of all the seniors. I was just trying to go do my own

thing until Comp (head coach Jessica Compliment) asked me to be the JV setter. I was really excited about that, but then halfway through the season she asked me to suit up for varsity and I obviously hadn't experienced anything like that before.

"This year was an eye opener. Coming back from the loss to Paola at substate my junior year, it took us down a couple notches, but this year I think was one of the best in Louisburg volleyball history. Being a part of it was amazing, but now I realize high school volleyball is over and it pulls at the heart strings a little bit. I am ready for the next level though and excited to experience the college volleyball atmosphere."

The love of volleyball for McMullen started in fourth grade as she spent most of her days hitting the ball against her garage door. The constant banging annoyed her parents at times, but McMullen had a hard time putting the ball down.

Instead of punishing her parents' house, she intends on taking it out on her opponents during her time at Northwest. Playing at a high level is something she had always wanted to do.

"I knew I wanted to play in college the minute I touched a volleyball," McMullen said. "I always thought of myself as that 5-1 setter and nothing else. I never thought I would be recruited as a hitter, but now it is my favorite thing to do. Hopefully I will be able to do it well in college."

Northwest seemed like the best destination for McMullen, who not only looked for the right fit for her, but somewhere where she could be close to her family.

"Distance was a big deal for me," she said. "I was looking at a school in South Dakota and I just felt that I wanted to be close with my family, be with my sister (Corinna) and see her grow up. I think it was a big deal for her to see me play volleyball so it would be cool if I could be there every time she played. I didn't really want to leave my family. I am kind

of a homebody and I like being spending time with my family and I don't think I could have gone nine hours away."

McMullen will join a Bearcat program that earned a No. 5 seed in the MIAA Tournament earlier this month, but lost in the first round to Central Missouri State and finished the year with a 17-15 record.

"I am being recruited as an outside hitter on the right side as of right now," she said. "I think I could potentially play defense, but they are pretty heavy there right now. I think myself, along with the rest of the signing class from this year, can come in and help the team."