

Prettyman signs to swim for Missouri State



Louisburg High School senior Maddie Prettyman's love for swimming led her to a spot on a college roster as she signed to swim for Missouri State on Nov. 10.

Maddie Prettyman loves the water.

In fact, there are times where the Louisburg High School senior considers it her second home. Prettyman has lived in the water for most of her young life and it has led to some big accomplishments.

However, there were none bigger than what happened on Nov. 10.

In front of family and friends at LHS, Prettyman signed her letter of intent to swim at Missouri State University – fulfilling a dream that has been several years in the making.

“I am super excited to be going to Missouri State,” Prettyman said. “To finally be signing with the college that I have always wanted to go to is truly amazing. I have always wanted to swim in college and for the last four years I have wanted to go to college there.”

It has been a different route for Prettyman to achieve her college dreams. Although most swimmers who go to college have an opportunity to swim for their high school, she didn't haven't that option with Louisburg not offering a program.

Prettyman currently swims for Empire KC, a club based in Lee's Summit, Mo., and has competed with different teams throughout her young life.

"It has been really interesting for me to only be swimming with my club team year-round," she said. "The first question I get asked by a college coach is about my high school team. I then have to tell them that Louisburg doesn't have a swim team so I was never able to compete at a state meet. Almost everyone on my team has a high school season so I was one of the few people that stayed swimming club for the entire year."



Louisburg senior Maddie Prettyman signs her letter of intent to swim with Missouri State. Seated next to Maddie are her parents Corrine and Greg Prettyman. Standing (from left) is her coaches Carmen Menges and Marjorie Sherard. – Photo by Breeana Christy, LHS Yearbook.

Prettyman may have not had an opportunity to swim for LHS, but

she did begin her journey with the Louisburg Barracudas – a summer league team – when she began swimming at 7-years-old. She still swims at times with the Barracudas over the summer, but it was there where she took to the sport.

“I began my love of swimming when I started on the Louisburg Barracudas when I was 7,” Prettyman said “That summer, and the next, really made me realize that swimming was the best sport for me. It is both a team sport and an individual sport in the sense of the entire team winning meets, while it is on you to swim your best and get your best times. I love pushing myself to improve both in meets and during practice, and that is really what attracted the thought of swimming year round to me.

“My summer league coach, Kyle Farrington, was the person who actually suggested that I go and start to swim club during the winters and I will be forever grateful for that suggestion he made because since I was 8, it became my entire life. The social aspect and the intensity really just made me want to be able to swim all year.”

That move to the club level eventually led to a scholarship with a Division I program in Missouri State, and a Bears team that has had success in the Missouri Valley Conference.

The Bears have won 13 women’s conference championships, including last year where Missouri State won in an 832-point landslide victory under head coach Dave Collins. Under Collins, the Bears took home seven individual conference titles and had the MVC Swimmer of the Year on their roster

Success, and the Bears coaching staff, is what made it an easy choice for Prettyman.

“I immediately loved the program as soon as I got there,” Prettyman said. “David Collins and Chelsea Dirks-Ham (Missouri State assistant) are the coaches and they run a wonderful team. As soon as I got there, the entire team welcomed me and

they all seemed to be really close friends.”

When Prettyman reports to Missouri State next season, she is planning on swimming the butterfly and backstroke – two of her most successful events.

However, she also knows it will take a lot of hard work and practice time to get where she wants to go.

“My goals for my college career include making top 16 at conference in the 100 butterfly and the 100 backstroke,” Prettyman said. “This is a lofty goal, but I believe that with the hard work and the support of my coaches, it is attainable.”