

Pritchard looking forward to opportunity with Emporia State program



Carleigh Pritchard always had a good idea of where she wanted to play volleyball and it was going to take a lot to pull her away from the school where everything seemed to fall into place.

That place is Emporia State University.

Pritchard made it official in November in front of family and friends at Louisburg High School when she signed her letter of intent to play for the Hornets. It was a moment she won't soon forget.

"I'm so excited to have the opportunity to play collegiate volleyball," Pritchard said. "I always knew I wanted to coach volleyball. It has been a dream of mine since I started playing volleyball, and I knew that to be a successful coach I needed to get as much experience as possible. I started the recruiting process my sophomore year, and it took off from there. It has been a dream of mine to play collegiate volleyball, I love the game and I'm so excited to see what next year brings."

The Louisburg senior has had her eye on Emporia for a long time. Her father, Cris, played football for the Hornets and she has made several trips to the campus.

Also, the fact Emporia had her major was just icing on the cake for Pritchard as she looks to continue her volleyball career for another four years.

“I think I always knew I wanted to go to Emporia,” Pritchard said. “There are a lot of things I loved about the school. My dad played college football there and we would take a lot of trips down to campus, so I was already familiar with it. I love their campus and the town, it has a small town feel like Louisburg does.

“I also wanted to go to that school because they have a very good education program. I want to be a teacher and they are one of the best colleges for education. I also love the team and my coaches I am going to play for.”



Louisburg senior Carleigh Pritchard signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Emporia State. Sitting next to Carleigh (from left) is her brother Chase, her father Cris and mother Samantha. Standing is Louisburg assistant Leanna Willer

and head coach Jessica Compliment.

That team, which had to take the fall off due to COVID-19, is a regular fixture in the MIAA Tournament under coach Bing Xu, who is in his 16th season with the Hornets.

“I am so excited to play for coach Bing,” Pritchard said. “I love how he makes the team feel like one big family. He is an amazing coach and has so much knowledge about the game and I am excited to see how far he will take me and how much I’m going to improve as an athlete.”

Volleyball has been a big part of Pritchard’s life as she started playing club volleyball her freshman year along with four years of high school. Her growth has been apparent as she has earned all-league and all-state honors along the way.

Pritchard, who was the team’s starting middle hitter for most of the season, missed a few weeks due to injury, but still made a big impact for the Lady Cats. Pritchard finished the year with 169 kills and 36 blocks to go along with 17 aces.

That success led her to earn second team All-Frontier League honors and was a Class 4A honorable mention selection.

Pritchard has enjoyed her time with the Louisburg, and along with her training in the offseason, she has the opportunity to continue to play the sport she loves.

“Playing club volleyball has definitely prepared me for the next level,” Pritchard said. “I started club volleyball after my freshman high school season, and just that year alone I improved so much. Because of club volleyball and my amazing trainers, I was able to go from freshman volleyball straight to varsity my sophomore year. I am so happy I got the opportunity to play varsity three years.

“I believe that at Louisburg, we have two of the best setters in the nation and getting the opportunity to play with them made me so much better. They made me a better hitter. Now with

club volleyball, I am on a team that is for sure playing at the college level and speed. I have three of the top club coaches in the nation who know so much about the game. I know they are going to get me ready for next year."