

A Ruler On The Court:

Emma Ammon Builds Belief

Natalia Roberts: Editor-in-Chief

High school athletes walk through the halls of Blair High School day and night, and senior Emma Ammon is one that stands out. Ammon has played volleyball, basketball, and track and field for Blair, but was it an easy start for her? Ammon is a skilled player on the volleyball team, but she did not have an early start like some other athletes.

"I started playing volleyball when I was 14, so I was a pretty late player. That was pretty hard to get over because all of the girls I played with had been playing for so long, so it was hard for me to catch up to them. It was hard for me to realize that I needed to give myself some grace because I was just starting and didn't know how to play the sport when I joined my first club team," Ammon said.

Over time, Ammon began to fit more into her role on the court. She had the height, she had the skill, and she had the strength. However, there was something key that Ammon was missing with her role as an athlete: the confidence.

"I struggled a lot with having no confidence. I had no confidence when I was playing because all of the girls around me were so good, and I didn't really know how to play in the beginning. I had to work really hard to build that confidence for me, and for my team," Ammon said.

Now that Ammon is a senior, the younger players are looking towards Ammon as someone they can look up to as a player and as a leader. Ammon knows what she needs to achieve for herself and for her team to be a strong fit for a leadership role.

"I've had to work really hard to step more into that leader position and try to be there more often for my team, trying to help more. And that's something I work on every day. I always have to think about what I can do to keep stepping up and showing up for my team," Ammon said.

As Ammon continues to work on her leadership skills for her team, she knows she needs to continue working on her confidence, along with everything else.

"I work on my confidence every day. It's something that you have to build up. I wish that it was something that somebody could just give to me, but I really just have to think about it all of the time,"

Ammon said.

While confidence for volleyball is something Ammon continues to work on, Ammon's confidence for track came naturally.

"I started track in seventh grade. I did high jump and hurdles. It was fun for me because I was so good at it in middle school. I just wanted to keep doing it because it was something I could naturally do," Ammon said.

Ammon's love for track kept her working on it more and more. Ammon loved seeing her personal growth and improvement in track, and it was easier to see that in track than in volleyball.

"It's so much easier to see your improvements and your success over volleyball because it's a numbers game, and you can see that, you can see your

numbers getting so much better and better that I just keep wanting to do it and get better at it," Ammon said.

Ammon has the strength to continue to improve herself as a player and teammate, but Ammon has other qualities that make her a strong teammate.

"I think I'm a pretty calm person. I try not to get too stressed. I try not to take it too seriously, but I know there is a line where I do need to keep playing at my best all of the time," Ammon said.

Ammon has been able to learn a lot of connections and respect as a player and teammate through her experience as an athlete, but she knows that she can't gain anything as an athlete without learning lessons from her athletics.

"I definitely have learned the value of patience. You want to say you'll do something and get a reward right away. But with sports, I've learned that you have to put so much time and effort into it to see even a little bit of progress. You have to be patient and wait for it to keep happening, and you have to keep going even if you don't know your next step. You have to keep calm to keep moving forward," Ammon said.

Ammon keeps learning and crafting new skills for herself because, as an athlete, sports mean a lot to her.

"I love to go out and see what I'm good at and then make it absolutely the best that I can. I love playing. I love playing a game. I'm very competitive. I love being with a team. I love having people right next to me that strive for the same things I do and everyone has the same goals, and we are all working towards the same thing together," Ammon said.

Ammon owes it all to the passion and support she has to keep herself going in her athletics.

"Passion is a really important part of being an athlete. You have to love what you do, or you'll hate every moment of it. You have to love the game, you have to love your teammates. My teammates are definitely a thing that has gotten me so far. They're always there to support me if I have a bad day. If I have a great day, they're always my number one supporters," Ammon said.

Even with the everlasting love Ammon has for her volleyball environment, committing to a college for the sport came as a surprise.

"I didn't know for the longest time if I was going to commit to a college for volleyball or track. I wanted to go for both, but then I decided it was going to be a lot, and I wanted a life outside of sports. I do think I made the right choice with picking volleyball," Ammon said.

Ammon committed to Missouri Western State University to play right side on the volleyball team. Ammon's goal is to continue getting better in her sport, and she's interested to see where it takes her.

"I'm undecided with my career. I want to get some type of degree in college, but I have no idea where college will take me. I'm going to keep focusing on volleyball, and maybe it'll take me somewhere. It'd be fun to play at a professional level. I would keep building on my leadership skills to coach. I think it's so different to play than it is to coach," Ammon said.

Emma Ammon's story is one that can teach current and incoming players that no matter when you start and where you come from, as long as you believe and have confidence in yourself, you can work hard to stand out.

