

What does Eastside Ice mean to me? That question is something that I can answer easily. It saved my life. Sophomore year sectional finals, I thought would be my last time ever playing volleyball, my school coach ruined the love of the game for me. I genuinely didn't want to play volleyball again, but after I had finished that game, one of the referees was a coach for this club I have never heard of, Eastside Ice Volleyball Club. He came up to me and told me I had so much potential in the game of volleyball, and wanted to help me achieve all that I could. I politely told him I wasn't sure I wanted to play anymore, but said I would look into it. That man is my current coach, Thomas Lomax. Because I was too late to try out, Coach Tom believed in me so much that he was able to arrange for me to be on the 16's team, even without a tryout.

Throughout the season, I started to get the love for the game back. I improved so much, not only as a player, but as a person. I finally found my passion, and to this day, volleyball is something that I cannot live without. Eastside Ice allowed me to make friends I never would have thought I would make and it allowed me to get in front of many different college coaches, to eventually achieve my dream of playing collegiate volleyball. My Junior year, I was on the 17's team, personally I believe that this team was the best team I have ever been on. Everyone was close, there was minimal drama, and I met my best friend. To this day, she is still my best friend. Eastside isn't about always winning; it allows each player to come together, create bonds, and play the game they love to play, and that is something that stood out to me when I first joined.

During an Albany tournament my sophomore year, there was a showcase that each player was given the opportunity to go to, and I decided to go. There was one specific college that noticed me, they saw potential in me, and started to recruit me. That college was SUNY Brockport. At first I didn't think too much of it, because it was a D3 school, my brother attends there, so I swore to myself I would never go there. But two years later, the director of Eastside Ice, Amy Wallace, tells parents on my team that there is a SUNY Brockport summer camp, a fairly inexpensive, 3 day camp. A few girls from my team wanted to go, so I decided to go as well. I still had no intentions of going there, I just wanted to go to the camp, play some volleyball, and be on my way. But I ended up loving it there. I felt like I was at home, and was succeeding in everything that I was able to do. The second day into camp, I started looking into the college, it has my major, my minor, and the sports I wanted to do. I ended up telling the coach I was interested in attending Brockport, and 3 months later, I officially committed to SUNY Brockport for volleyball and track.

I would never have been able to commit to Brockport and go to the school of my dreams, if it weren't for Eastside Ice. This club saved my life, it brought me back onto the path of volleyball and exceeded my expectations of passion for the game. This club may be small, may be unknown to many people, but to the people that are in the club and those who have been affected by it in any way, I know for a fact that they do not regret anything. The closeness and power this club has for each player is awe inspiring. This being my last year playing for Eastside, makes me upset. I won't be able to come every Monday and Wednesday, see some of the best coaches in the world, and play the game I love. But I feel so prepared to go on and do bigger and better things. This club truly put me on the path that was right for me, and I owe the club and all those amazing people who stood by me and helped me, that everything that they did for me, paid off. I am forever grateful for all they have done.