

At the USA Volleyball All-Star Championships this past summer, I found myself in a position I had never been in before. I was competing against athletes who had played volleyball for their entire lives, while I had less than two years of experience. In warm-up hitting lines, I cowered as nearly everyone on the opposing team slammed the ball into the ground with a vengeance I'd never seen before. For a moment, doubt crept into my mind.

But I had learned something over my short time in volleyball that kicked in at exactly the right moment: I couldn't control how skilled they were, but I could control my effort, my attitude, and how I showed up for my teammates. That shift in thinking carried me through the match. Though admittedly, we were clobbered by most teams, I remained proud of my efforts.

Volleyball has consistently taught me lessons that I wouldn't have discovered elsewhere. I came to the sport late, long after most of my peers, and had to work much harder and more intentionally to compete. That process taught me more about discipline and perseverance than anything else in my life. It also gave me a community and a sport that I aim to keep with me through the men's club volleyball team in college, and beyond.

For my next four years, I'll be attending the University of Texas at Austin, where I'll study in the Civics Honors Program. I'm drawn to questions about how societies organize themselves, how policy shapes people's lives, and how global forces intersect in ways that affect both communities and individuals around the world. I plan to pursue a path in public policy or international relations, where the lessons that I've gained from volleyball, such as staying composed under pressure, and working alongside others toward a shared goal, are crucial.

I'm deserving of a scholarship, as I've demonstrated leadership and excellence across volleyball and many other activities. To me, success in volleyball means little without developing in other areas as well, and I've done exactly that. In addition to serving as the captain of my high school boys team, I'm a captain of debate and speech, where I've competed at the MSHSL State Tournament, as well as multiple national tournaments. I've continued to excel in academics throughout high school as well, consistently challenging myself with the highest-level coursework available, earning AP Scholar with Distinction recognition in the process.