



## Penn Station Athlete of the Month

**Presentation Date:**

**Student:** Ella Rutherford

**GPA:** 4.1101

**School:** Sangamon Valley High School

**Athletic Director:** Josh Myers

**Parents:** Marjorie & Scott Rutherford

**Sibling/s:** Caleb Rutherford

**Favorite Penn Station Restaurant:** Forsyth

**Favorite Penn Station Sandwich:** Dagwood

**Extracurricular Activities:** Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Business Leaders of America, German American Partnership Program, National Honor Society, Marching/Concert/Jazz Band, Competitive Travel Softball, Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering, Middle School Softball Volunteer Assistant Coach

**Favorite Book:** Outlander by Diana Gabaldon

**Role Model:** Anybody and everybody who pushes me to do and be my very best

**Sports Role Model:** Yadier Molina and Matt Carpenter

**Greatest Achievement So Far:** 4.1101 GPA, 2.02 ERA Freshman year, 1.56 ERA Senior year, 1<sup>st</sup> place music and overall 1A Division Marching Band (Drum Major) 2017 Senior Year

**Plans After High School:** Majoring in computer graphics and design, pursue softball at a collegiate level and to continue coaching



## How has participating in high school athletics benefited you?

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My involvement in high school athletics benefits me by the lessons I learn and the relationship I build every day. Whether it is playing softball, volleyball, marching band or any other extra-curricular activity, I've always come away having a new lesson in my pocket. We have a saying in my family that if you commit to doing something, commit to doing it well and giving it your best. This lesson has driven me on the softball field, volleyball court, Band room and in the classroom.

Volleyball was not my strongest sport and I fought hard for three years to gain a starting position on the Varsity team. I learned that I had to work hard both on the court as well as from the bench. That being there for the team regardless of my role was just as important as scoring the last point. My senior year I finally got the opportunity to be a Varsity starter as a middle hitter. I learned that hard work does pay off and I try to share that with the younger players as often as I can.

Being selected as Drum Major my junior and senior year took me out of my comfort zone, but I've gained so much in return. I learned what it took to be a strong leader and to try to live up to the type of person that people would want to follow.

Softball has always been my favorite sport and I've spent eleven years playing the game. The benefit I've gained from playing softball both in school as well as travel ball, is endless. I have made so many friends and have been blessed with fantastic coaches. My freshman year I had to step up to fill the shoes of our injured varsity pitcher. This taught me that anything can happen at any time so always be ready. Thanks to a great team backing me up I was very

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successful as a freshman finishing the season with a 2.02 ERA and 12-2 record. Softball has also taught me not to take anything for granted. After a season ending injury I learned the importance of being there for my team even if it was from the bench. Returning my junior year we finished the year with a 32-2 record and are off to a great start my senior year undefeated. The lessons in commitment, team work, being competitive and sacrifice are all going follow me into college and eventually into my career. I hope to share what I've learned with younger players serving for a third year as an assistant middle school softball coach. Sharing my knowledge of the game as well as my experience in sportsmanship and being a positive role model. What I've learned from this sport about team work, being competitive, hard work and sacrifice will carry with me throughout the rest of my life. I look forward to playing softball in college and can't wait to discover what other lessons are to be learned. As important as hard work is in my athletics and activities, my dedication in the classroom is even more important. It's the foundation that pushes me to do the best in everything I pursue.



**What made you decide to play the sport for which you were named the Penn Station Athlete of the Month?** My decision to play softball was made several years ago when I had a coach that really believed in me. I've had really high moments in high school and really challenging times in high school ball. After a tough season last year and a challenging summer season, I quickly became frustrated and felt and felt like playing past high school was not what I was meant to do. It took an impromptu college visit and a last minute meeting with the softball coach that gained me the confidence I needed to realize that playing in college is exactly what I want to do. Her support and interest in putting me on her roster really brought back the passion for the game that I thought I had lost. We are off to a great season my senior year and I am thankful every day that I made the decision to pick up that bat and glove for the first time so many years ago.

**Quote from Athletic Director:** "She is a great kid and very dedicated to anything she needs to accomplish. Along with her athletic achievements, she maintains better than a 4.0 GPA." – Josh Myers

**Quote from Principal:** "Ella is one of the most driven and dedicated students I have ever had the privilege of working with. Her work ethic and motivation are unparalleled." - Principal Jonathan Field

