



## Penn Station Athlete of the Month –

**Student:** Gretchen Madonia

**GPA:** 4.33/4.0

**School:** Sacred Heart-Griffin High School

**Athletic Director:** Ken Leonard

**Parents:** Sherri Madonia & John Madonia

**Sibling/s:** Adam Madonia & Ryan Madonia

**Favorite Penn Station Restaurant:** Lindbergh Avenue

**Favorite Penn Station Sandwich:** Pizza Sub with Sweet Italian Sausage and No Mushrooms

**Extracurricular Activities:** Read Out Loud Poetry, Spanish Club, Our Lady of Nazareth, Freshman Orientation Leader, Teacher's Aide at Owen Marsh Elementary School, Freshman Focus Leader, CYO Basketball, National Honors Society Club, Tutoring

**Favorite Book:**

**Role Model:**

**Sports Role Model:**

**Greatest Achievement So Far:**

Being on a team that has won city and conference 3 years in a row.

**Plans After High School:**

I hope to improve thousands of children's smiles by attending dental school.

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

Being involved in high school athletics has prepared me immensely. It has taught me how to love something with all my heart, how to be determined to succeed and how to live a healthy life, but most importantly, I have learned how to manage my time, be a leader, and be accepting when something doesn't go your way.

Being a student-athlete has taught me outstanding time management and a great work ethic that will prepare me for my life beyond high school. When I'm in season, there is no time for procrastination because volleyball takes up so much of my time. Some days my volleyball life would begin as the sun was coming up and would not end until the sun was going down. I would have to battle lots of homework and studying for tests when I got home. Those days challenged me to succeed in school and grow as a person. I have learned to balance a schedule of



academics, athletics, school clubs, work, sleep, and a social life. This trait of time management that I have acquired can apply to many tasks that I will come across in the future.

An extremely important characteristic that I have developed from volleyball is how to be an influential leader. I have learned to lead my team by example. During practice, I know that I must give everything I have in order to get my teammates to do the same. When I am on the court, I have learned how to use my loud voice to give positive feedback to help my team achieve our goals. By giving them positive reinforcement, they will do the same to me to help us grow as a team. Leadership skills are beneficial in many various aspects, including the work force. My leadership skills that I have learned from volleyball will help me manage my employees and patients that I will oversee at my orthodontist practice I hope to someday have.

Volleyball has instilled in me the ability to be gracious in defeat. Despite experiencing a great amount of success on the court this season, my team was not able to achieve every goal we had set our minds to. At first it was difficult to not obtain success, but I learned how to respect the skills and abilities of my opponents and learn from any mistakes that I made along that way. Playing high school sports has taught me to be humble in victory, gracious in defeat, and how to be a more well-rounded individual, and this will help me to conquer anything I set out to do in the future.

**What made you decide to play the sport for which you were named the Penn Station Athlete of the Month?**

Volleyball has always been the first thing I look forward to when I wake up each morning. Every day I would wake up excited to go to practice and be on the court with my best friends. Even in the summer when I am required to wake up at 6 am to go to workouts or run a mile, I would not trade it for the world because I know all the hard work I put in will pay off. When I finally step onto the court after a long day, my mind is finally free because in that moment, nothing else matters. My worries are gone for the time I am in the gym, and my attention is focused on going after every ball, playing to my fullest potential playing every game as if it could be my last, and helping my team succeed.

Volleyball has taught me a lot about who I am. Since I started playing in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, I have always been a setter for my team. A setter is the quarterback of the volleyball team; you have to do everything in your power to set your team up for a kill. The importance of setting is often unnoticed by those who are watching because we are not the ones constantly diving across the court to keep the ball alive or the person on the court that helps everything run smoothly. We are in command of the rotation and have to constantly communicate with five other people in order to get the point. Therefore, volleyball has taught me that I am a leader. When playing in a loud gym, it is important to make sure that everyone knows what to do and to make everything run smoothly. To be a setter, I knew I would have to constantly call plays on the court and make sure that everything was perfect for my teammates to succeed. With the help of volleyball, I have become a person who is very personable and easy to talk to. Without talking to my teammates and knowing them on a personal level, it would be extremely difficult to know what kind of set they like so I could set them up for a kill. After every point, I ask my hitters, "Was that set good?" and they tell me how to improve. They keep me humble. Because volleyball is a team sport, there is never one person who stands out among others because we are all in this together. In addition, I have learned to communicate through chaos and pressure in order to



succeed. Learning how to communicate and respond to different personalities has helped me form strong relationships with everyone. This has helped me become a better daughter, sister, friend, student, and teammate. Volleyball has taught me not just lessons that help me succeed on the court, but also lessons that will help me succeed in life and grow as a person.

Thank you so much for nominating me for this award. This truly is a great honor to me and I will forever be thankful and appreciative.

**Quote from Athletic Director:**

Gretchen is a four-year letter winner and co-captain of this year's successful volleyball team. She also played four years for the Springfield Elite Volleyball Club dedicating her entire high school career to becoming the best volleyball player that she can. She plays hard every time she's on the court. She is a player who can make your team better, possesses a nice serve and is smart when she sets. She is quick to the ball and she's not afraid to get in there and compete. The setter position is one of the most important positions in volleyball, and a great setter can elevate a team from merely being good to greatness- this is Gretchen. She understands her teammates, manages the tempo of the game, and selects the right hitter to set. Her determination is priceless (not to mention her personality). Gretchen is one of a kind. She plans to attend either Butler University or the University of Iowa this coming fall. She is a High Honor Roll student-athlete (with a 4.0 or higher – on a 4.0 scale). She leads the team with 35 aces and 406 assists.

-Sandy Hamilton, Head Volleyball Coach

**Quote from Principal:**

Gretchen is an outstanding leader on and off the field. She works incredibly hard in the classroom and is an excellent role model to all students at SHG. It has been an honor to have had her represent our school over the last four years. I look forward to seeing what she will accomplish in the future.

-Kara Rapa