

Raelynn Kuykendall

### Student Athlete

Growing up, I was a student first and then an athlete. I was always on the honor roll in school and played many sports. I started as a cheerleader in pre-school and worked my way up to include many other sports. I began playing T-ball as my first team sport as a child. Once school started, I always maintained good grades because I loved to learn. As time went on, I wanted to be seen as more than just a student in school. It was then that I began to take sports seriously. Middle school was a great time for me because I was a member of the track team, cheerleading squad, and band. It was also a time when I was bullied because I would always answer most of the teacher's questions in class. Sports helped me not to be a nerd. Being a student-athlete was one of the best things I could have done to break that cycle. As I entered high school, many more opportunities opened up to me. I was the softball captain and an MVP. Being on a sports team helped me be a leader and a role model to other students.

I had scholarship opportunities because I was in the top 10 percent of my class and had many sports activities to add. Over the years, people have remembered what type of leader I was and a team player. This enabled me to get job offers to coach after I graduated. As a result of participating in sports, I have become more prepared for the future. Getting involved in high school athletics taught me that other people depended on me. I developed the self-discipline, motivation, and leadership skills I will need to build a purposeful life. It helped me with life skills that I never thought I would need. For example, you are already familiar with teamwork, leadership, and communication, which are excellent job skills. Sports teach you organizational skills, time management skills, and how to make good decisions under pressure. All these soft

critical skills you can learn from playing sports. I may not have seen that when I was playing sports back then, but as I experience the world now, I can see and use these skills to make my mark on the world.