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Sports feature (writing assignment No. 6)

Morgan Kull's journey at Auburn University

Morgan Kull grew up in a family where volleyball is very important. Her mother coached volleyball for over 35 years giving Morgan a competitive edge by learning and playing the game at a young age. When Morgan entered middle and high school she became more involved by balancing school, club volleyball, club soccer, school volleyball, and school soccer. Morgan said, "Playing two sports full time taught me to be a better and more diverse athlete in my abilities in each sport." Morgan was torn between the two sports and which one she wanted to pursue in college, she chose volleyball. Her position on the court is setter, she's in charge of running the offense and making the decision on plays, who is getting the third ball, and how to beat the other teams defense. Morgan said, "As someone who loves to be a decision maker and leader on and off the court, volleyball played to my strengths."

Morgan is from Saint Charles, Illinois and deciding where to go to school was difficult. While volleyball was very important in her life, Kull had big aspirations following school and wanted academics to be centered in her college experiences so those dreams could become a reality. Therefore, she spent time talking to small schools with good academic programs and going on visits. However, there was no campus she really could see herself living on. Then, during a trip to a school in New Orleans, the Auburn volleyball coach Rick Nold contacted her and asked if Kull could take a visit. Morgan was incredibly hesitant because she had no desire

to go to school in Alabama. Her mom however stressed how great of a school it was and convinced her to visit. As soon as Morgan stepped on campus on a sunny day in March- she was hooked. The staff took her around campus on a golf cart and set up visits in the Haley Center, the academic buildings, and showed her Auburn's top-notch freshman dorms and athletic facilities. Morgan then met some girls on the team and felt incredibly welcomed and loved how the locker room constantly filled with snacks and couches for relaxing while waiting for classes.

Being an athlete for Morgan automatically means that your team becomes your family- whether you like it or not. She spent over 20 hours of each week spent with the same group of 15 or so girls. Morgan's freshman year, her skills needed work so she did everything in her power to be the best teammate on the bench. She spoke to the team in timeouts, told players how they could score points, and dug into her knowledge of the sport to help her team. As the years went on, her role shifted into being a captain during Morgan's sophomore year. Kull made sure she was always the first and last person in the gym and was a great teammate.

Everything payed off Morgan's third year at Auburn when she finally got the opportunity to play. After her time playing at Auburn Kull said, "I played all season and really enjoyed my time even though we lost a lot. It was a long season, but I enjoyed being with some of my best friends on campus throughout the experience. Our nights at wellness kitchen, studying in the library, or getting home from a charter flight at 1 am are some of my favorite experiences."

Morgan is now playing at University of Illinois Chicago and will be graduating in May 2021 with a master's in public policy.