



**Sport: Flag Football**  
**Hometown: Naperville, IL**  
**Age: 32**

## **1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?**

I started playing when I was a junior in high school, so around 2006. I did all of the sports they offered in high school like basketball, swimming, track, and bowling. Now I just play basketball, softball, and flag football.

## **2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?**

It changed my life when I realized that I was eligible to be able to compete in Special Olympics. I was always in sports a lot and played a lot of regular sports when I was younger. I tried out for regular basketball in middle school and high school once but I was not good enough to make the team. So when I learned that I could be in Special Olympics, I have been in it ever since. I love being able to compete and playing sports with doing something that I am really into. I am thankful for the opportunity of being able to play sports in Special Olympics.

## **3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?**

The biggest obstacle for me would have been finishing college with both my associates degree just in general studies and my bachelor's degree in history. It took a while after high school because I didn't know what I wanted to do. So I went to community college first to see what might interest me and was there for a handful of years still unsure what I wanted to do. Then I went to Northern Illinois University to try PE but was not really into that so I ended up with my bachelors for history. I feel like was one of my biggest challenges was figuring out what I wanted to do and finally being able to finish school after being in college for around 10 years after high school

## **4. What makes you most proud?**

The things that would make me the most proud would be being able to compete in sports with something I love doing and finishing college.



### **5. What are some other accomplishments you are proud of?**

One accomplishment would be when I joined my current flag football team that I am on. I had been playing softball with a few guys that were on the football team and one of the parents who is the coach for football was asking me if I would be interested in joining their team. So that is when I started playing flag football. My first year with the team in 2018 we went down to state and won the gold. We also won the gold again in 2021.

### **6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?**

Depending on the time of year and season I am watching a lot of sports when I am not busy playing them. For football I am a big Green Bay Packers fan. For basketball I like the San Antonio Spurs and Milwaukee Bucks the most. Then with baseball I am a big White Sox fan. Whichever sport might be going on at the time - I rarely ever miss watching a game when ever any of those teams that I like are playing.

### **7. Who do you admire most and why?**

The person that I would admire the most would be my dad. I chose him because of everything that I have learned from him and what he has taught me over the years. Most of what I know about sports I owe to him. He was always really into them and a lot of that got passed on to me. Most of my love for watching sports came through him. I would always watch a lot of games with him on tv for basketball, baseball and football. Also, with actually going to a lot of games together in person for any of those sports is something we did quite often as well. Also, he played sports quite a bit. I feel like I got most of my love for playing sports I got from him too. He always supported me with the sports that I play and if he could make it, he would always be at any of my games that I was playing for which ever sport that I had going on at the time we would always be there watching.

### **8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?**

This would be my first time going to USA Games. It will be a new experience for me which I am excited about. I am looking forward to being at Disney World because I love going there and have been there many times with my family on vacation. It means a lot for me to be chosen to go down there and represent Illinois. Personally, for me it will not feel the same because unfortunately my dad will not be able to go down there with me. I will be there to represent him and honor him by playing. I know he will be there with me in spirit and will be watching over me as I am playing.

### **9. How are you preparing/training for USA Games?**

Practicing with my Illinois team and working out trying to stay active as much as possible. I also do a lot of walking when I am at work so that helps too.

### **10. Have you been to a World Games or USA Games before?**

I have not participated in the USA Games before -- this would be my first time doing this.

### **11. Are you employed? If so, where at and what's your role?**

Yes, I work at Meijer full time pushing carts outside.

### **12. Are you currently a student? If so, where and is it a Unified Champion School?**

No, I am not currently in school

