

Shaping Talent  
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## LIFE LESSONS THROUGH SPORTS



WORTHINGTON, OHIO – Ellie Bowers is Worthington Christian High School’s goalkeeper on the soccer field and shooting guard on the basketball court. She’s a standout in both sports – a hard worker and a keen competitor.

“I always want to prove myself and give my all to be the best I possibly can be,” she explained. “That’s something that just comes natural to me.”

But that drive is only part of the story. With considerable understatement, she verbalized what opponents, teammates, coaches and spectators alike can so easily see.

“God has blessed me with a natural athletic

ability,” she said. “I definitely have a lot of love for my sports.”

Ellie Bowers, now a 17-year-old senior at Worthington Christian, has memories of ballet and gymnastics as a young child. But they went by the wayside, she laughed, “because they were not my thing.” Soccer and basketball were. She became the starting goalkeeper for the Worthington Christian girls’ soccer team her sophomore and junior years. And she’s been chosen as a team co-captain her senior year.

“Ellie is definitely an athlete,” said the school’s soccer coach, Newt Jones. “She’s self-motivated, which makes training her that much easier. She leads by example, working hard in practice and doing the extra training to better her skills. She’s also encouraging to her teammates, pushing them to be better. It’s been a pleasure coaching Ellie these past few years.”

On the basketball side, Ellie started playing in the 5th grade. She’s since lettered 3 years at Worthington Christian.

“She’s a very good all-around player,” said Brent Wilcox, assistant basketball coach at the school. “I do think she’s a natural athlete. She’s a very good ball handler and she’s an excellent three-point shooter with exceptional shooting form.”

None of that comes as a real surprise to her parents, Matt and Julie Bowers.

“Since Ellie was a young child she demonstrated unusual strength,” said her mother. “By 4, she had enough height and muscle development that many thought she was a 1st grader. This enabled her to play harder and with older children.”

“Once she started school,” her mother added, “she preferred to kick soccer balls and run on the playground, usually with the boys who were tougher at play. And by the time she was in middle school, she was showing solid athletic skills and meeting the challenges of her coaches.”

But combining two sports has had its own set of challenges.

“At the end of my sophomore soccer season,” Ellie recalled, “I tore my ACL during our first tournament game. That put me out for basketball and put me in a ton of physical therapy. I had a great surgeon and a great physical therapist that helped me get back in 6 months.”



Interestingly, that experience, she said, helped to teach her some valuable lessons.

“Without being able to play, I didn’t know what to do with my time,” she recalled, “and I came to realize I was idolizing sports over God.”

“Through those months of rehab, I became closer to God as I learned how to be a leader in a different way, off the court, and still be an encourager despite my inability to play. It even made me a better player, being able to see the court from a different perspective and hearing the coaches talk about the game.”

“It also taught me patience,” Ellie continued, “and how to keep my composure in tough situations.”

“Consequently, praying about situations I don’t know how to handle has become more of a habit throughout my athletic career and has overflowed into my life.”

“So I’m thankful for sports and the opportunity for growth it’s given me,” she concluded. “I’ve learned many life lessons through sports, and I’m becoming a better person through the experiences God has put in front of me.”

Shaping Talent focuses on the influences that lead athletes to succeed. The people who helped them. Their work ethic. How and why they turned something they like into something they do. In other words, how God shaped their growth. If you have a suggestion for a future profile, contact Rye D’Orazio at Central Ohio Fellowship of Christian Athletes at 614-682-6551 or email [rdorazio@fca.org](mailto:rdorazio@fca.org).