

Madeliene Maggs

## Jake Dixon Commits to Lewis University for Volleyball

As a four-year letterwinner in basketball and volleyball, as well as, three years in football, 18-year-old Jake Dixon of Bethel Park, Pa., is a local super star in the Pittsburgh area. With his high school career coming to an end, Dixon has received offers from Division I schools to play both volleyball and football.

"I would like to think of myself as just a regular high school student, but I am definitely more than that," Dixon said. "I am a role model in the community and a lot of younger athletes look up to me."

The 6-foot-6 athlete was a four-year starter in volleyball and a three-year starter in football and basketball. He was selected two time all conference in football, three time in basketball and four time in volleyball.

He was a tight end, linebacker and long snapper for the Bethel Park football team and a forward for the basketball team. Dixon continues to excel as an outside hitter for the volleyball team.

Former All-State Bethel Park Volleyball Captain Jason Stewart said, "In my time there we were very fortunate to win the section championship three out of my four years and leaving it's always great to see up and coming players that will continue that legacy. Jake is exactly that."

Dixon said he does not have a favorite sport but will be continuing to play volleyball. He committed to play volleyball at 2015 NCAA runner-up Lewis University on a scholarship. Dixon said earning a scholarship has been his biggest accomplishment yet.

He has over 1,000 career kills, as well as, three section titles and is currently working on a fourth. This past season, Dixon was the WPIAL MVP and All-State selection in volleyball.

Being named the WPIAL MVP was a proud moment for Dixon. "It was always a goal of mine and hearing it become a reality was a very special feeling," he said.

Playing football and basketball has helped Dixon excel in volleyball. He said the strength and power from football along with the quick lateral movement from basketball has made him a better volleyball player.

Dixon said, "I have the same attitude on the volleyball court as I had on the football field. Playing football and basketball has created a very unique competitive edge inside of me that most volleyball players do not have."

When asked about a key moment in his high school career, Dixon said he remembers the start of game five in the WPIAL championship game, a 2-3 loss to North Allegheny his freshman year.

"The gym was so loud we could not talk to each other on the court," Dixon said, "And I have yet to play in an atmosphere like that, in any sport, again."

He planned on continuing with football until playing in the Junior National Championships during the summer entering his senior year. At times there were 15-20 major Division I college coaches watching his match. This made Dixon realize that he could go somewhere "big" for volleyball.

"I was being looked at by many NCAA powerhouses in volleyball," he said, "And that definitely made me want to play volleyball in college."

However, Dixon admitted that he was not very familiar with Lewis University until they started to recruit him. He had only heard about them playing in the 2015 National Championship, but knew little about the university or volleyball team.

After his official visit, Dixon "fell in love with everything about the school." He said, "The coaches, as well as, the team chemistry that they already had made a huge impression on me."

Dixon said he wants to impact the team as early as possible and play a key role in Lewis' success. "I definitely need to be a student of the game and take it all in," he said.

Academics also played a role in his final decision to attend Lewis University. Dixon will be studying Information Security and Risk Management. Lewis offered this major so it seemed like the "perfect fit." He said he has developed a strong work ethic from athletics.

"Athletics has also taught me how to work together with people that you may not work with off of the court," Dixon said.

Setter for the Bethel Park Black Hawks Brandon Thorsen said, "Jake is a tremendous player whose skill allows him to be a reliable player in any situation. He also displays great leadership qualities on and off of the court, which makes him such a great teammate."

When asked what he hoped his legacy would be as a high school athlete, Dixon said, "I want to leave high school knowing that I gave everything that I had...whatever legacy that my coaches, administrators and peers want to say that I left will be fine with me."

Dixon has had an impact on the Bethel Park volleyball program. The team has been in the WPIAL Final Four every year that he has played.

He said, "I believe that I have brought aspects of football and basketball into the volleyball gym that will stay there even after I leave."

With a scholarship to Lewis University, Dixon has already accomplished one of his goals, but he said he has another goal that he is hoping to accomplish this season: winning a WPIAL championship.