



Kennebec Valley Community College

Capital Mainiacs

Maine Thunder

I have been playing travel softball in the Maine USA/ASA Junior Olympics Softball programs since the age of seven. From the spring I played on my first ever T-Ball team, I have been dedicated to the sport ever since and not a single spring or summer went by that I didn't play. The first travel team I ever played for was M.A.Y.S.A. Pride the summer of 2012, playing with girls many years older than me since I was so young. The year after that I played for the Capital Mainiacs, again with girls that were many years older than me. From 2013 to 2020, I played with the Mainiacs, which really sparked a lot of my love and passion for the game. Over those 7 seasons, I played in every single championship game of the States tournament held by Maine USA/ASA Softball. Of those 7 championship appearances, the first two championships we just came up short, finishing as Runners-Up. The following five years, we were rolling, claiming 5 State titles in a row. Jeff Marshall actually handed our team the trophy every year, juggling between the A and B brackets of all different age groups at various locations, always delivering the trophies to the last teams standing. I believe there was one year while hoisting up the trophy engraved with 'champion', Jeff Marshall stated that he recalled handing out the ASA State Championship trophy to the Mainiacs over the years on many occasions. Statistics aren't everything when it comes to sports, but our accomplishments are something I still am very proud of to this day. The following softball season I played with Maine Thunder, from summer of 2021 to this upcoming season which is my last year of eligibility, 2023. The summer of 2021 was the last time I would play in a State tournament, bringing home the champion title one last time of my travel softball career.

Needless to say, I have been on teams and contributed to many wins, and on the flip side of that, I have had to face tough losses and struggles along the way. Maine USA/ASA Softball has brought many people into my life, supportive and inspiring, but our travel softball programs have been the most influential, inspiring, joyful times thus far that I have experienced. Although I sacrificed many key childhood summers from the age of seven to eighteen years old, there is no other way I would've wanted it because spending 10+ summers at the ballfields, creating our own local community, has shaped me to who I am today. Softball has meant more to me than the wins, losses and personal successes, but what I will forever cherish and remember of my time playing Maine USA/ASA Junior Olympics softball is the memories, friendships I have created, and the life lessons that stemmed from this game. Many people will agree that Maine USA/ASA Junior Olympics Softball just felt like its own community. At the ballfields, you would see familiar faces every weekend; umpires, tournament officials and coordinators, teams, parents, friends from other teams that were made while participating in these tournaments, the list can go on. The impact Maine softball and the game of softball in general has impacted me tremendously, and without Jeff Marshall's dedication, passion, and love for Maine USA/ASA Softball community, myself and many others wouldn't have had the influential, memorable experiences in this community that has created us into the people who we are today.

Mackenzie Toner

Jeff Marshall Scholarship Essay



**Thomas College
Business Administration**

**Capital Mainiacs
Team Attack
Maine Thunder**

Ever since I was a little girl, I have dreamed of playing softball at the collegiate level. With the help of participating in Maine USA/ASA Junior Olympics Softball, that dream is coming true. When I first started competing at Brownie's tournaments, I was just 9 years old. I played for a talented Maniacs team that won states. The following year, I switched teams to a new local organization. I played for Team Attack during the next several years competing at several of Brownie's tournaments and even winning states a few more times. As Team Attack was starting to fall apart, I decided that it was time to take my softball career to the next level. I made the decision to start playing for Maine Thunder.

Participating in Maine USA/ASA Junior Olympics Softball has many benefits. Throughout the years I have been able to make friends that will last a lifetime and make so many memories that go beyond the play on the field. Spending several weekends at the fields has given me one of the best opportunities I have had in my life so far. A few years ago, with the help of Brownie and Dick Dwyer, I was able to become an umpire. Since then, I have not only been able to participate in Junior Olympic Softball, but I have been able to help keep the game going for girls even younger than me throughout the umpire shortage.

Even though Junior Olympic Softball has given me all of these memories and opportunities, it has mostly shaped me into the person I am today. One thing I will always carry with me from Brownie's tournaments is the importance of sportsmanship. Win or lose, every championship game was brought to an end by taking a group photo with the other team and a small speech from Brownie. He will always be my reminder throughout my softball career that it is more important for young athletes like me to have fun while playing as these years only last so long.

Although I am sad that my participation in Junior Olympic Softball is coming to an end, I am extremely grateful for everything it has taught me. Soon enough I will be coaching my daughter out on these very same fields and giving back to the organization that helped give me my passion. Thank you to all of my coaches over the years, Brownie, Dick Dwyer, and several other umpires on the Waterville and Augusta Boards that have helped me get to the place I am today as I truly wouldn't be the player, person, and umpire today without your influence.