

Student Ambassador Spotlight: Theresa Strano of Gloucester County Tech



Theresa Strano is a person who likes to capitalize on opportunities, especially when it involves her endeavors as an athlete and student at Gloucester County Institute of Technology.

As a standout tennis player in the fall and track athlete in the spring, sports competition keeps her very busy. She also takes advantage of the curriculum offered at her school to study Engineering, which is the major that the junior aims to pursue in college.

Balancing those interests made Theresa an ideal candidate to become a NJSIAA Student Ambassador. She applied for a position last year, and was one of 19 student-athletes from throughout the state who were selected to serve as a voice for the state's nearly 283,000 high school athletes, through their meetings and discussions with fellow ambassadors and NJSIAA staff.

"When the athletic director for GCIT messaged me about applying for the Student Ambassador position, I immediately submitted mine because it would give me the opportunity to show my passion for sports," she said. "I've been playing sports for as long as I can remember, and I wanted to share my opinions as a student-athlete."



Photos provided by Theresa Strano

Theresa has been a standout on the tennis court, having won the past two Gloucester County singles championships. She's achieved her success despite dealing with lingering hamstring and back injuries that have helped strengthen her character and resolve.



"At some points, it can be very stressful trying to manage tennis, school, work, engineering competitions, and then track in the spring," she said. "But in the end, putting in the work and time is very rewarding. Tennis season is my favorite time of the year because I know I'll be playing the sport I love with my favorite people, and it's always a fun time. The last season was more difficult due to my back injury, but I had the greatest support system. Without my parents, coaches, teammates and even their parents, the whole situation would have been so much more difficult. After the season, I did go into a couple weeks of rehab for my back, and then went into strength training. I returned to tennis lessons in mid-December. During track, I still play tennis simultaneously, but not as intense as training in the summer. I only throw discus, so it is not too much physically, but it does keep me in shape for tennis. High school sports have taught me a lot about time management and being happy with every minute I am able to play tennis and to not take it for granted."

Theresa has also enjoyed her time thus far as a Student Ambassador.

"I am hopeful that the group can keep athletics fair and make athletics something that everyone wants to be a part of," she said.

"It's really interesting to see everyone's passion for sports," she added. "Everyone wants to be there to improve the games, and the administration is interested in what we have to say."



Getting to know Student Ambassador Theresa Strano:

Favorite subject: Math.

Favorite team: Philadelphia Eagles. "I've grown up going to Eagles games, and I've even gone to the NFC Championship games."

Do you have any superstitions or pre-match rituals?

"Freshman year I did have a pair of lucky socks that had Frankenstein on them, but I haven't done that since."

How do you spend time on the bus on the way to an away match? "I always just talk to my teammates and coaches. Sometimes I'll listen to music if it's a long travel."



The best thing about my school is ... "Being a technical vocational school, I'm able to get a feel for engineering and the material before I go to college."

Favorite thing about being a high school athlete:

"Representing my school and getting to play with some of my best friends."

What's the best quality in a teammate? "Being cooperative and willing to work their hardest to do their part for the team."

Favorite sports memory: "One memory was playoffs my freshman year, and the team score was 2-2 and I was the deciding match. I won the match 3-6, 7-5, 6-1 and it was also GCIT's first girls tennis playoff win in school history. Another one of my favorite memories was winning the Gloucester County championship for the first time sophomore year."

What's the best place you've ever traveled to?

Camden, Maine

Do you have any pets? "I have two Chesapeake Bay Retrievers named Groot and Rocket."

Do you have a career ambition yet? "I want to go to college majoring in Engineering, and in the last couple of years, I have found that I really enjoy manufacturing."