

USC Personal Statement

Awaiting the nod from the judge to begin the competition routine, I face a deluge of different challenges. Competition has constantly challenged me to prepare myself mentally, physically, and emotionally. With towel ready to handle the perspiration from the intense warm-up routines squeezed in the limited time between the different events, I concentrate on keeping my mind and muscles and timing. While on the competition floor, the my future is in my hands and the judge opinion. No one who has helped me prepare for this moment is physically on the floor with me at this moment -- not my coaches, or parents, or friends, it is just me. Alone, and the true test begins to see what I have learned and my response to this pressure. One of the hardest aspects of competition baton twirling is the fact of never knowing what will happen when stepping onto the floor to perform. It is easy to identify or sympathize with the batter stepping up to the plate, the performer at the opening curtain, or the dance on the ice.

When I entered the sport of baton twirling, I expected to simply have fun and twirl, yet my naïve assumption has brought me a deeper perspective. More than just surface qualities, it is a combination of mind, coordination, and heart, with a helping of music understanding, gymnastics and dance. I have definitely seen a major difference in my maturity now compared to my beginning six years ago. Something magical about this art is that it demands only the best from the competitor, and disciplines me to use many of my studies from my life, from gymnastics, to hand and eye coordination, ballet, dance, yoga, music, and even martial arts. For someone who loves to do a combination of everything, like me, this is an ideal sport.

As well as working to improve my techniques, I have gained so much more knowledge and self-realization. The best advice I share from my experience is that the attitude is what truly wins – once the right attitude (the “winning attitude” is accomplished) then one way or another, the person will succeed. It amazes me to see how one sport that is not so widely popular can be so connected to everything in my life and it amuses me when I remember that this all started with a park class that my friend and I decided to take one fall. (She gave up twirling to concentrate on water polo.) What I have learned in twirling I can apply to my study of music, my schoolwork, and even life’s challenges.

It is a wonderful feeling when a performance has gone smoothly, and sometimes it can be a devastating moment when things go awry. Learning about judges and their personalities and subjective decisions has given me time to reflect on many aspects of life that would never have realized existed. I have learned how to step back from myself and not take myself too seriously, to shake hands with other competitors and wish them luck, knowing that their ability and hard work pushed me to practice and grow in my sport and in myself. The true award comes from the satisfaction of accomplishing a goal whether or not I attained the first place trophy, when this is set and with the right attitude and balance of heart, coordination, and soul, one will always be a winner.

Another benefit has been making friends with other girls (and guys) from around the country and the world. I hope that I am able to spread the joy of twirling to others whether performing or teaching a neighborhood beginning team of young kids. Being a part of a nationally winning team has taught me the value of working together with other members to produce an exciting and pleasing performance. I know that I have much more to learn in twirling as well as life, and more training will be needed to prepare me to become a winner, not necessarily for a judge, but for myself. I strive to keep my motivation while keeping my physical and mental energy high. The most valuable lesson I have learned from my experiences is that, other things being equal, the right attitude wins. I give the judge my ending salute, and walk off the floor hoping to keep my poise and still catch my breath. Another event is on the horizon and I must stretch and flex and prepare myself for what is ahead.

