

Alana Embry | USC Beach Volleyball

Hi my name is Ilana Embry and I am on the women's beach volleyball team for USC The best advice that I've been given by a mentor is that there's life outside of volleyball so make sure that you're working towards the person that you want to be when you graduate When we condition in beach volleyball I think that it's sometimes mental rather than physical I think it's super helpful because in games you get tired very easily especially when there's only 2 people on the court Um so I think sand sprints make us train um for our mental A challenge that I've overcome is having a tear in my right shoulder which just so happens to be my hitting shoulder Um with this tear I have to do a lot of rehab and recovery um which is taking a lot more time out of my day than A regular healthy athletic person so making sure that I'm doing all the little steps to make sure I'm healthy during competition is really important So my recruiting journey is kind of unique I've been to 4 different universities within 5 years out of high school I chose to play indoor volleyball just because they had more money and I was on a full ride So I went to New Mexico State for a year and a half I ended up breaking my pinky um my sophomore year in the fall um which had me be able to reflect and take a step back on my journey and I decided that I wasn't happy for personal reasons related to the coaching so I decided to take a leap of faith and Um quit and then I transitioned to beach volleyball Um I played at Grossmont Junior College in San Diego I moved back home with my family This was really scary because my although my parents um They supported me but they told me that they wouldn't financially support me so I was kind of on my own there So playing junior college my partner was a former University of Hawaii beach bow and that just so happened to be my dream school So I went to junior college for a semester and then I ended up transferring to the University of Hawaii Originally I was offered a walk-on spot which terrified me because I'd have to pay out of state and rent and all this extra stuff Um but luckily I was fortunate enough that within two weeks of practicing the coaches pulled me in and they said that I've already proved myself and they can see me at the top of the lineup so they offered me a scholarship and I remember that exact moment I just broke into tears because I was so excited and relieved that I wouldn't have to pay as much as I thought I would have to Um and then I played at the University of Hawaii for 2 years and then I graduated I struggled with my decision of wanting to take a 5th year Um I had a torn shoulder but I knew that it would be good with rehab

and I wanted to go to flight school and so I decided just to join the transfer portal. If I didn't get picked up by a school I wanted, um, I would go to flight school and if I did I would do a 5th year. Long story short I ended up getting into contact with USC and was able to talk about the campus and the coaches and I decided that this would be a great fit for me. So again I took another leap of faith and I'm here for my 5th year. Some advice that I would give from transitioning to indoor to beach is that you have to go full out in your decision. It is I would say two completely different sports. One sport there's 6 people on a team and you can have subs and the other sport there's only 2 people on the court, um, not only is it sand but you also don't get to be coached unless you're having like a side switch or a time out. But some great advice that I would give is just to go all out. Um, you never know what's possible until you do it. I was able to get a scholarship and instead of a walk on within 2 weeks because I just showed up every day, all the practices we would have little competitions whether it was a game to 7 or 15 and we'd switch partners and I think that I was just very successful in those little games and so I think having that winning mentality and proving it to the coaches that I can do it and I'm fully capable of it really helped me earn that scholarship and I couldn't be happier. Some advice that I would give a high schooler going into college is that nothing is set in stone with the transfer portal being as big as it is now, you can always have the option to transfer if you're not happy. For those who are thinking of transferring and are already in college I would say just go for it especially if you're not happy. I think that taking that leap of faith and choosing your own happiness is worth it in the end. Going into my 5th year and knowing that I only have 10 months of being a college student athlete I want to give it my all. My goal especially being a beach volleyball athlete at the University of Southern California I want to win a national championship. Um, the team has done it in the past. They have won 4 times in a row so I want to add on to that. And then as of 5th year I'm in the entrepreneurship program to get my master's degree. Um, my goal for this year is to go all in as well. I want to show up to all the little events and see if I can meet any business people that could help me get a job straight out of college but if not I plan to go to flight school afterwards. Um, my parents are both air traffic controllers and my auntie is a pilot so I was kind of born into like an aviation family so. Um, as of now I think of that as my backup option but I definitely want to take advantage of being a part of the great business program that USC has. I chose USC because of the prestigious academics that they offer and as well as their volleyball program.

um like I said before they've won I think the most NCAA championships in the nation and I just wanted to be a part of that and be coached by They're legendary coaches um all three of them are so great and welcoming and I just want to be a part of the USC family for my last year My final advice to a high schooler is that there's no perfect recruiting timeline Everyone gets picked up at different times and just because like say you're a senior in high school and you still haven't got picked up there's still opportunities for you Just keep reaching out and no matter where you are in the recruiting process just know that everything happens for a reason Hi my name is Alanna Embry I go to USC and I'm on the women's beach volleyball team