

In hopes of filling the spot vacated by twirler Halie Hart, who graduated in May, Esters came to MU in April to try out. She was offered the position. In a casual conversation alongside McCormick, former band director Dr. Brad Snow officially offered Esters the position.

As for how she felt, “it was excitement and relief together because I was like I can finally just relax and say I achieved my goals,” Esters said.

Esters began twirling at the age of 6 after a teacher at her afterschool program saw potential. She was 9 when she decided it was her passion.

From second grade until junior year of high school, Fornadel estimates her daughter spent five hours practicing every day after school—two to three hours of dance or twirling lessons and then another couple hours practicing at the gym. Having to pass up play date invitations and finish homework assignments in the car was just part of the routine for the budding twirler.

“At that point in time, I hated it,” Esters said. “But

“ I’VE COMPETED ALL OVER THE WORLD, DONE ALL KINDS OF STUFF, BUT NOTHING COMPARES TO [TWIRLING ON GAME DAY]. ”

looking back on it, I’m really glad my childhood was the way it was because now I feel so much more prepared for other things in life.”

Her mother, a former college basketball player for the University of Pittsburgh, knew the importance of commitment to athletics and was quick to help Esters achieve her goals. As soon as Esters decided to twirl competitively, Fornadel made it a point to attend her daughter’s twirling lessons, videotaping and taking notes at each one.

“She would just really try to make me the best I could be,” Esters said.

Fornadel is a single mom and Esters is an only child, making them exceptionally close.

“It’s always just been me and her,” Esters said. “I want to be like her when I’m older. And it’s so funny because now we are like turning into the same person.”

And twirling has only strengthened their bond.

“We’re a lot closer than most...just because the sport has enabled us to spend a lot of time together,” Fornadel said.

Now, even from four states away, Fornadel continues to do her part for Esters.

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THE TRICKS OF THE TRADE

BASIC BATON TWIRLING TRICKS

Want to know what it takes to be a featured twirler? Learn a few basic tricks with these steps.

ILLUSION



With the arms out. Point your right toe and pivot to face that side.



Kick the back leg up and lower your body until it is parallel to your planted leg.



Turn toward the back and shift until facing the other side.



Stand back up to complete the move.

ELBOW POP



Roll the baton over your elbow.



Once the baton hits the bend in your elbow, pop the elbow upward.



The movement should be similar to nudging someone.



To complete the trick, catch the baton with the opposite hand.

LONG ARM ROLL



Start with your arm extended upward and the opposite foot pointed.



Release the baton, allowing it to roll down the arm.



Shift your feet, transferring the weight to the other side. This allows the baton to continue to roll onto the other arm.



Catch the baton in your other hand.

HORIZONTAL TOSS



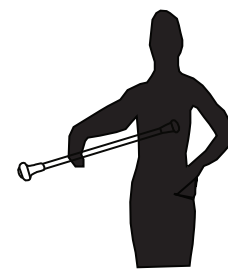
Start by twirling the baton horizontally in one hand.



Toss the baton when the palm is facing upward.



In order to complete the toss, it is important to release the baton when your hand is parallel with your shoulder.



Catch the baton with the other hand and continue twirling.

DOROTHY SEDOVIC/Missourian

SOURCE: COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN REPORTING