

# Volleyball star gets full ride at Music City university

By IAIN COLPITTS  
Staff

Mississauga's Samantha Beltran believes she'll fit in perfectly at Tennessee State University.

She loves the campus in Nashville and is excited about joining an elite volleyball program after recently signing a full athletic scholarship that comes into effect next year.

And since she's a big country music fan, she's excited about soaking up the atmosphere in the music city.

"That wasn't a big reason (I signed), but it happened to be perfect for me," said Beltran, a Streetsville Secondary School student who lists country stars Blake Shelton, Jason Aldean, Hunter Hayes and the Zac Brown Band as some of her favourite performers.

"When I told people (the school) is right

in Nashville, they said 'Wow, that's for you.' That helped make it a great fit."

Coming from a family with an extensive volleyball background, signing an NCAA scholarship has been a dream of hers since she started playing as a child.

Her father, Franz, is the president of the Peel Selects Volleyball Club in Brampton and she has two older sisters who have played volleyball at a high level.

"I wanted to (earn a scholarship) for my parents because then they wouldn't have to pay for me to go," said Beltran, who plays club volleyball for the Lakeside's under-18 team in Oakville.

"It's been my number-one goal since I was little, so knowing that I achieved it is a great feeling."

The accomplishment makes Franz proud as both a parent and a coach. Beltran drew atten-

tion from several universities across North America and had to think long and hard before finally signing with Tennessee State.

She said she had to keep asking for an extension on the deadline to accept the offer from Tennessee.

Franz said it was an "overwhelming experience" to be sending a daughter to the States.

"I have three girls and they've all competed at a high level.... The past few months, all the Ontario schools wanted her, several schools in the U.S. wanted her and ones throughout Canada as well."

Beltran has realistic expectations for her first year with the team. She hopes to absorb as many pointers from her coaches and vet-

erans on the team as she can while she adjusts to the pace of university volleyball through the first couple of months.

"I'm not necessarily expecting to start on the team, but I definitely want to compete for my spot and prove to everyone that I deserve to be there," she said.

"I know it's going to be hard managing my time and practising every day while staying on top of my studies, but I look forward to doing all that."



**Samantha  
Beltran**