

# LIV'N SPOTLIGHT

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LIV'N



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# HOW YOU LIV'N? WHAT DO YOU DO? HOW DID YOU GET STARTED AND HOW DID YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE AT TODAY?



I play professional soccer, currently for Birmingham City Women in England. I started playing when I was six years old when my parents signed me up for the 2nd time (the first time I was 5 years old and was more interested in picking flowers than kicking a ball.) But once I actually started playing, I never stopped. Although I was a multi-sport athlete growing up, soccer was always my number one. I ended up playing for University of Northern Colorado for four years before being drafted into the NWSL (professional women's league in the USA) by the Chicago Red Stars.

I would say that was one of the big events in my career that opened the door to get me where I am today. I was only in Chicago for three months when they offered me a practice player contract with the potential of earning a professional contract as the season went on. It was around the same time that a team in Sweden reached out in search of a player that played my position. In the end I made the decision to pack up my things, leave Chicago and play for ODFF in the Swedish 2nd league. This was my first professional contract and the foundation of my career as a professional soccer player. From there I played two seasons in Iceland's top league with IBV before making the jump to Italy. I joined Atalanta Mozzanica who played in Serie A (Italy's top league), which set me up perfectly to move to England in the Summer of 2019 to join Birmingham City.



## WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FROM?

My inspiration comes from a lot of different places. But I think the most powerful of them all comes from my family. Being older now, I can really reflect on all the time, money and support my parents gave me growing up (and now) to set me up for success, so for me it is really important that I make the most out of the opportunity that they proved me with. I also live with my brother in mind who passed away in 2011. From the day he was physically was no longer with us, my family created the saying "Live for Luca." To me it means doing what I can to live my best life because his was ended too soon. It is a heavy reminder that you never know when your time will come, so enjoy yourself and do everything to your best ability. One of his dreams was to play in the Bundesliga (top league in Germany) and buy my mom a house and a car and so on. Even though at the time I had no idea how I would make it happen or if I was even good enough to play at that level, I wanted to play in Germany in honor of his dream. So I told myself that I would do my absolute best to achieve that dream. From that moment on I live and play for me, with him.



## WHAT'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW? WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE?

I want to play soccer until I can't run anymore, and when that time comes I really like the idea of having a little farm where I grow my own food and have farm animals kinda like a sanctuary for rescued animals. BUT I have never owned any farm animals or grown my own food- I am always open to learning new things though, so maybe I can make that happen.

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## WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF YOUR JOURNEY?

The most challenging thing has been building myself back up after being broken down, whether it is from losing a loved one or being rejected by someone. It has taken me 9 years to get to where I am now in regards to my mental and physical health as well as finding a spiritual balance where I feel that I can be my most authentic self on a daily basis.

Along with that, I have never had strong sense of self- belief, so the times when I was told I didn't make the top team after tryouts, I wasn't good enough to play D1 soccer, or I wasn't quite ready to be part of the professional team I was drafted to, my confidence dropped to the point where I questioned if I should continue playing. I thought that maybe I had kid myself thinking I could make it to the next level and really began questioning if that was where I as meant to be. Luckily, I have had a strong support system and my parents never let me quit because of self- doubt. This is something I still struggle with to this day even after I have made it as far as I have and have bigger goals I want to achieve. I still battle with my inner demons that say things like "You're just Adrienne, how could I think I can compete with world class players?" But that is just something that I have to continue to work on.

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## WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR JOURNEY? WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Being paid to play a sport that I love has been the ultimate reward. I still have days where work sucks, but there's nothing I'd rather do than play soccer. It has also given me the opportunity to play and live in countries I never would have imagined as well as meet people from all walks of life. I am most proud of how far I have come and am excited to see what is next.



## WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR JOURNEY? WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I have quite a few things that I want to accomplish, but just like playing soccer at a professional level, at this point in time I am not sure how exactly I want to do them. The main thing is to be a part of something bigger than myself; up until this point I have bopped around from country to country enjoying my time and living my best life. But I've also come to the point where I would like to provide a better foundation for the next generation that has aspirations of playing at a higher level (especially from my hometown). I want to be an inspiration for them, but also (somehow) help them achieve their goals whether that is through soccer drills, or advice or using my connections, if that makes sense? It's hard for me to put into words because I am not even sure what it is I want exactly, but I want to give back to the community that helped shape me into the person and player I am today and those that I am representing at that time.

## WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT LIFE THAT COULD HELP SOMEONE ELSE?

Your relationships with others can make or break you. A lot of times knowing the right people and leaving them with good impressions can help down the road. This is something that I think many people can attest to. One example from my experience is having a coach from an opposing team promote me to the Chicago Red Stars coach when asked about any "diamonds in the rough" because he believed I deserved a chance to play after college. Essentially that coach put me on the radar for the NWSL coach, just based on my performances on the field. Obviously after that it was up to the Chicago coach to check it out for himself and for me to just keep doing what I was doing.