

Ambridge

Coach: Tim Buresh (1st year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior outside hitter Keira Chambers
5-11 senior middle hitter Jacee Serak

Season Outlook:

This is my 1st year as Ambridge girls head coach. Previously I spent five years as Hampton girls JV coach and two years as a North Allegheny boys varsity assistant. The team lost six seniors from last season and have two returning starters. The leadership I have seen from the current seniors so far during this weird year has been amazing to watch. I think this will help us be successful while having a lot of new starters joining the lineup.

Section Favorite:

I am not familiar with a few of the teams, but I know Beaver was very successful in AA.

WPIAL Favorite:

I think the usual teams of Thomas Jefferson, West Allegheny, Knoch, and Franklin Regional will probably have a shot. It will be interesting to see how the new sections change things.

Young Players to Watch:

Ambridge sophomore setter Annie Hrinko

Armstrong

Coach: Andrea Lasher (8th year)

Returning Starters:

5-5 junior outside hitter Jaide Dudek
5-6 sophomore outside hitter Cassidy Adams
5-6 junior libero Layne Miller
5-6 junior setter Olivia Pawk

Section Favorite:

I think we are going to have a strong section this year. I know Knoch and Freeport have always been strong in the past and I'm expecting Mars and Burrell to be competitive as well.

WPIAL Favorite:

With the way things have been this year, I would say there are many possibilities for teams to get to the WPIAL championships.

Young Players to Watch:

I can only speak for Armstrong. We have two young freshman on our team that will be contributing to our team's success this year: Sarai Weaver and Kali Allensworth.

Beaver

Coach: Tyler Szymanski (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-11 senior outside hitter Eden McElhane
5-11 junior middle hitter Payton List
6-0 junior middle hitter Kylie Haczela
5-7 senior setter Talia Gallagher
5-11 senior right hitter Emilee Hohenshel
5-8 senior defensive specialist Bri Sevcik
5-6 senior defensive specialist Lanie French

Season Outlook:

We have a lot of starters returning from last years team so we hope to be able to compete and give ourselves a shot to win each game

Section Favorite:

We are new to AAA I'm not to familiar. I know hopewell has some studs on their roster so I expect them to compete at a high level.

WPIAL Favorite:

Thomas Jefferson, Freeport, Franklin Regional and South Fayette always seem to be in the hunt. I'm sure there will be others with some breakout seasons as well. But I am not to familiar with AAA.

Young Players to Watch:

I have a 6-0 freshman outside hitter Chloe List who I expect to make a immediate impact on our varsity roster that only graduated two seniors the past season.

Belle Vernon

Coach: Jon Barr (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

5-5 senior setter Sarah Bury
5-8 senior middle hitter Mia Lubrani
5-5 senior outside hitter Kirsten Brooks
5-2 junior backrow specialist Gabriella Serrao
5-2 sophomore libero Gianna Anderson

Season Outlook:

We lost seven seniors last year, so we have a lot of young girls eager to step up. Our system runs all the way down to JV and through 7th/8th grade, so we know the girls coming up will fill in those spots nicely. We are excited to see where we are to start the season. Even though we are a young team, I think we will give some teams trouble this season. Don't count us out!

Section Favorite:

Thomas Jefferson is always the favorite.

WPIAL Favorite:

I'd go with Thomas Jefferson. They are usually in the finals.

Young Players to Watch:

I can name a few girls from my team that I think will have an impact for us, specifically. As far as the rest of WPIAL goes, I'm not entirely sure who will step up.

Blackhawk

Coach: Dan Muir (5th year)

Senior Players:

5-6 outside hitter Julianna DeChellis
5-8 outside hitter Cara Greco
5-3 libero Lily Hartline
5-8 opposite Erika Michael
6-0 middle hitter Chase Young

Season Outlook:

We have a lot of experienced seniors that are looking to have a great season. Our section has changed from the past four years and the team is looking forward to the new challenges. The competition is strong and we believe we will be very competitive as a team.

Section Favorite:

Beaver or Ambridge are most likely the favorites in this new section

Burrell

Coach: Kylie Shields (2nd years)

Returning Starters:

5-8 junior outside hitter Anna Novak
5-11 sophomore middle hitter Avery Bain
5-2 sophomore libero Quinn Oswald

Season Outlook:

We lost three seniors, two of which were our setters, but we have had some young girls really step up. I definitely think we are going to be able to hold our own.

Section Favorite:

We are in a new section this year. I believe Knoch is most likely the favorite. The only team in our section that we have played against before is Freeport, who always has a very impressive team as well.

WPIAL Favorite:

Young Players to Watch:

I think my own sophomore, Avery Bain, made quite an impact last year and is going to make even more of an impact this year.

Central Valley

Coach: Candace Glumac (1st year)

Returning Starters:

5-7 senior setter Morgan Laughner.

Season Outlook:

Morgan is the only returning starter that started every game. The other starters were seniors last year. We have two outside hitters that both played a good amount. They are juniors, Abigail Glumac and Paige Elmer. We also have a sophomore libero who played some games, Ava Weber. We are a young team and this year has been a rebuilding year. We were fortunate enough to be able to practice all summer and I have high expectations of these girls. They have worked very hard.

Section Favorite:

WPIAL Favorite:

I don't know of a favorite for the WPIAL since this is my first year. But I believe I have some high impact girls on my team.

Chartiers Valley

Coach: Amanda Burgess (1st year as a head coach, 7th year coaching)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior outside/middle hitter Katelyn Campbell
5-8 senior defensive specialist Abby Copeland
5-4 senior defensive specialist Paige Cousley
5-8 senior outside Hhtter Mia Giammatteo

Season Outlook:

We are excited to get the opportunity to play this year. With covid-19 we weren't sure it was going to happen.

Young Players to Watch:

We have a pretty young team that is already showing skill. We have two freshman: Kylie DeSalle and Sarah Harris that will be making their varsity debut this year.

Elizabeth Forward

Coach: Lindsay Lesofsky (1st year back, 10th year overall)

Returning Starters:

6-2 senior middle hitter Kaitlin Fournier
5-7 senior setter Sarah McCall
5-5 senior defensive specialist Bri Sersevic
5-8 senior middle/right hitter Gianna Tour

Season Outlook:

I expect us to do very well in section play and playoffs. We have an experienced group of seniors and very talented juniors. Our middle position with Kaitlin and Gianna is very strong and they are both playing really well with Sarah. Bri will be a strong leader for us in our back row. The other positions will be filled by the girls in our junior group and they are very good players also.

Section Favorite:

Probably a battle between Elizabeth Forward, Thomas Jefferson and Laurel Highlands.

Freeport

Coach: Tom Phillips (20th season)

Returning Starters:

x-x junior libero Erica Lampus

Season Outlook:

We lost seven senior starters from last year's WPIAL Championship team. Junior libero Erica Lampus is our only returning starter with experience. She is one of, if not the best libero in the WPIAL. Moving up in classification should prove a challenge for us. We have nine freshman, seven sophomores, five juniors, and two seniors. Young talent that combines athleticism and size is a positive for us. Missing our middle school season completely has robbed the experience factor. I'm very pleased with the commitment that has been shown and hoping for a positive season.

WPIAL Favorite: I think Franklin Regional and Thomas Jefferson are names that I feel are the teams to gauge your season on their performance.

Franklin Regional

Coach: Mike Feorene (8th year at Franklin Regional, 13th overall)

Returning Starters:

5-5 senior libero/outside hitter Alexa Feorene
5-5 senior setter/opposite Ashley Feorene
6-1 senior middle hitter Aly Kindelberger
5-8 senior setter/right hitter Renee Baldy
5-5 junior defensive specialis Sydney Breikreutz

Season Outlook:

We have a ton of experience coming into this season. Our passing game was very good last year and we have everybody back. We will be lead up front again by Aly Kindelberger, who will be playing next fall at DePaul. This group loves to play defense and they are fun to watch. We bring in two new setters, with Ashley Feorene and Renee Baldy taking over. They both have plenty of experience as they both set for their club teams and play opposite. Our libero, Alexa Feorene has played there for three years. We have physical outsides with Nicole Currens leading the way. Depth is usually an issue but I have a group of girls at all grade levels that can step in and are just waiting for their chance. We have some pieces to the puzzle to complete but that's the fun part of coaching.

Section Favorite:

There are some new teams in our section and I know Plum is strong. I would say it is up for grabs between Plum, Indiana, Kiski and us at this point.

WPIAL Favorite:

There are a lot of unknowns this year. South Fayette.

Greensburg Salem

Coach: Taylor Guido (5th year)

Returning Starters:

5-2 senior libero Annie Zahorchak
5-6 senior middle hitter Abby Miller
5-4 senior outside hitter Maura Ebersole
5-9 junior outside hitter Abby Mankins
5-3 senior setter Kayla Klingensmith
5-6 senior middle hitter Courtney Kaufman

Season Outlook:

We are looking forward to another season with a larger portion of our roster and starting line up returning to the court together.

Section Favorite: Franklin Regional

WPIAL Favorite: Knoch

Young Players to Watch:

Knoch's Morgan Jack, Thomas Jefferson's Lily Rockwell, Franklin Regional's Aly Kindelberger

Hopewell

Coach: Terry Borkovic (31st year)

Returning Starters:

5-11 senior outside hitter Leah Driscoll,
5-9 senior middle hitter Lexi Thompson,
5-5 senior libero Haley Barkovich,
5-9 senior middle hitter Rachel Katekovich,
5-6 junior outside hitter Sierrah Nicol,
5-4 senior defensive specialist Vianna Walton.

Season Outlook:

We are an experienced team with strong senior leadership. This team is balanced both offensively and defensively. An inexperienced setter is a concern. We are expecting a great season.

Section Favorite:

I'm not sure about a section favorite. This is our first year in AAA in quite some time. Beaver had a great season in AA last year and should be strong with many players returning. I'm not familiar with the other teams in our section. Knowing many of the coaches in this section, they have strong programs year in and year out. This section should be very strong!

WPIAL Favorite:

Knoch won the AAA title last year. They should be the favorite. Freeport is now in AAA. They are always strong. Not familiar with many other teams in AAA.

Young Players to Watch:

Azure Humphries, a 5-7 freshman opposite/middle. "Zu" is an outstanding athlete. She is very quick and jumps extremely well. She can play any position. "Zu" reminds me of former Hopewell player, Shatori Walker-Kimbrough.

Hampton

Coach: Annie Bozzo (1st year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior outside hitter Addie Syglowski
5-8 junior setter Claudia Braun
5-4 senior libero Julia Resch

Season Outlook:

Being new coach, my goal is to change the culture by working hard, having a positive attitude, doing what is required to be successful. We want to win. If they trust the process, the winning will come. We are hoping to build off the winning season they had last year.

Indiana

Coach: Dana Kundla (3 years)

Returning Starters:

5-4 senior libero Megan Brocious
5-6 senior setter Taylor Sheesley
5-6 senior defensive specialist Teagan Merriman
5-9 junior middle hitter Lizzy Lubold
5-7 junior middle hitter Sarah Madey
5-9 junior outside hitter Peyton Ream
5-8 junior right hitter Mia Ciocca
5-4 junior defensive specialist Lily Cunningham
5-3 sophomore setter Emily Madey
5-10 sophomore outside hitter Abbie Huey
5-0 sophomore defensive specialist Lauren Brocious

Knoch

Coach: Diane Geist (35th year)

Returning Starters:

5-2 senior setter Morgan Jack
5-9 senior middle hitter Quinn Hughes

Season Outlook:

After graduating nine seniors, including three All-State hitters, we hope to gain experience and battle for a playoff spot.

Section Favorite: Could be Mars.

WPIAL Favorite: The usual teams. Keep your eye on Franklin Regional.

Kiski Area

Coach: Jodie McCartney (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

senior outside hitter Alexis Caldwell
senior middle hitter Brooke Endress
senior libero Rebekah Fowler
sophomore setter/outside hitter Sydney Joyce

Season Outlook:

We should be competitive in our section, we have a young team that is developing every day.

Section Favorite:

Franklin Regional

WPIAL Favorite:

There are a bunch of teams switched around this year (due to realignment changes). It should be an interesting year.

Young Players to Watch:

From our team, Sydney Joyce, a sophomore setter/outside hitter, should make a solid impact on our team. Sophomore Brynn Bires has also worked her way into the starting line up.

Mars

Coach: Tami Caraway (8th year)

Returning Starters:

5-11 senior outside hitter Beth Long
5-8 senior setter Sydney Bucknum
6-0 senior middle blocker Katie Schlegel
6-2 junior middle blocker Ava Black
5-5 senior defensive specialist Emily Mayer
5-3 junior defensive specialist Yumeno Ikeda

Season Outlook:

As a very young team, we gained a great deal of experience last year and have worked hard over the summer. Our goal is to compete well against the best of our section and AAA.

Section Favorite:

Knoch and Freeport are both returning as WPIAL champions and in spite of graduation losses have a great tradition of winning in November.

WPIAL Favorite:

There are a number of new teams in AAA this year making picking a clear favorite almost impossible. The quality of play across the board is very strong and it should be an exciting season.

Laurel Highlands

Coach: Emily Kontor (4th year)

Returning Starters:

5-5 senior setter Maddie Wheeler
5-8 senior outside hitter Alison Humberston
5-11 junior middle hitter Bella Buwawa
5-8 sophomore middle hitter Morgan Wheeler

Season Outlook:

Looking to remain competitive like last year and pick a little more edge. Girls are coming back from a long off season ready to play and compete.

Section Favorite:

Thomas Jefferson and Elizabeth Forward are always are our strongest competitors in the section.

Lincoln Park

Coach: Sarah Stadina (5th year)

Returning Starters:

5-7 senior outside hitter Kamden Miller
5-4 senior opposite hitter Bianca Jijon
5-7 senior opposite hitter Lauren Clark
5-7 senior defensive specialist Mackenzie Milkovich
5-5 senior middle hitter Jordan Blake
5-5 junior middle hitter Mattalyn Shriver
5-3 junior setter Anna Tanner
5-8 junior outside hitter Kennedi Miller
5-0 junior defensive specialist Skylar Van Winkle

Season Outlook:

It will be interesting this year with the new section organization. We have a really experienced team for the first time in my coaching time at Lincoln Park. Usually we have one or two seniors, this year we have 5 that will all make huge contributions to this team and a well-rounded group of juniors to support them. I'm confident in our potential this year!

Section Favorite: Beaver

Montour

Coach: Mike Marchionda (4th year)

Returning Starters:

5-11 senior middle hitter Alex Liese
5-8 senior outside hitter Amber Collins
5-7 senior outside hitter Jenna Caliguiri
5-11 junior middle hitter Olivia Lyscik
5-4 junior defensive specialist Paytun Wiernik
5-8 sophomore setter Kylie Barto
5-7 sophomore setter Raegan Kadlecik
5-4 sophomore libero Mia Arndt
5-9 sophomore outside hitter Olivia Persinger

Season Outlook:

We are excited to have our entire roster back for this season. Top to bottom we feel we have the most athletic roster in the 4 years our staff has been here. We feel we will be more balanced offensively and will be able to take advantage of having our two setters get a year of varsity play under their belts last year which will make our offense smoother and more diversified than last season. Overall, we feel we can contend for the section championship and get to the WPIAL playoffs again.

Section Favorite:

Two teams I'd say that would be in the hunt for a section title would be South Fayette, a team that always is well coached and has great athletes and Trinity, another well coached group that has experience together at the varsity level over the last few years.

WPIAL Favorite:

With the additions of Freeport and Beaver to AAA as well as teams like Franklin Regional, Knoch and Thomas Jefferson as well as several others, it will be a wide open race to win a WPIAL title.

New Castle

Coach: Michael Spelich (13th year)

Returning Starters:

junior outside India Bailey (captain)
junior outside Davion Blachard
junior right hitter Logan Holmes
junior libero Sarah Hunyadi
junior setter Julianna Evans

Season Outlook:

This offseason was quite different than past ones. We practiced as much as possible over summer. Our goal is to make the playoffs for the first time in school history. The girls are focussed and looking forward to do that.

Section Favorite: Beaver

Young Players to Watch:

We have a strong core group of juniors hungry and anxious to make a run at a playoff berth.

Penn Hills

Coach: Jay Mitlo (24th or so)

Returning Starters:

5-9 sophomore outside hitter Sarah Miller
5-4 junior setter Larissa Shelby
5-4 junior defensive specialist Angel Calloway

Season Outlook:

We are very young. We have no seniors only 3 juniors. We will have a nice combination of size and speed. We will need to get experience and control the ball well to be able to compete.

Section Favorite:

Franklin Regional for sure but Plum will be right there as well.

South Fayette

Coach: Scott Sundgren (19th year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior outside hitter Lilah Specia
5-9 senior setter Izzy Franjione
5-6 senior middle hitter Rachel Phoennik
5-10 senior middle hitter Liv Foreman
5-4 junior defensive specialist Kaylin Goldstrohm
5-7 junior right hitter Annika Henkel
5-8 junior outside hitter Haley Nicholson

Season Outlook:

I'm simply hoping that we can get the season played. We graduated some key players, but I feel the athletes returning this year will fill in well. We are fortunate to have some excellent athletes who are willing to work hard and put in the extra time to excel. I'm looking forward to seeing what we can do this season.

Section Favorite:

We continue to have a good section where any one of the teams could take it on a particular night. I think Trinity is going to surprise people this year. Erin is a really great coach and she returns some key players from last year. West Allegheny is always tough with Yoko preparing her players very well. Mike always seems to get Montour to a high level of play, so they will be good competition. Chartiers Valley is solid and returns a good group of young players. Their new coach, Amanda, benefitted from the tutelage of the great Jason Ferri for several years, so I know we can expect a battle. Ringgold was in our section several years ago, but I haven't seen them in a while. I'm also not sure what West Mifflin will bring this year.

WPIAL Favorite:

The team that manages to make it through the whole season healthy.

Plum

Coach: Kelsey Bonk (5th year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior outside hitter Megan Bologna
6-2 senior middle hitter Makayla Jackson
6-1 senior right/middle hitter Jennifer Taylor
5-2 senior defensive specialist Julia Vargo
5-4 junior defensive specialist/setter Grace Thompson

Season Outlook:

After two seasons of being really young, we will finally have a team with more upperclassmen than lowerclassmen. We have eight seniors and are hoping they can lead us to a competitive year in our new section.

Section Favorite: Franklin Regional

WPIAL Favorite:

I think some of the top teams in 3A are Franklin Regional, Thomas Jefferson, Elizabeth Forward.

Do you know of any young players in the WPIAL expected to make an impact this year?
Freeport's Cassidy Dell.

Thomas Jefferson

Coach: Ron Kelly (21st year at Thomas Jefferson, 32nd overall)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior right/middle hitter Lily Rockwell
5-8 junior outside hitter Julia Palmer
5-1 sophomore libero Cate Galiato

Season Outlook:

Well I lost ten seniors and five starters, three were three-year starters, so we will have a very different look this year. On the plus side I have the best freshman class I ever had at anyplace I coached. We will have a great outside game with a lot of competition at all positions. I look for us to get better and better as the season progresses. We might surprise some people by years end.

Section Favorite:

Our section is probably a 3 team race. Laurel Highlands returns the most, Elizabeth Forward has an exceptional middle and we will be pretty good by mid season.

WPIAL Favorite:

WPIAL 3A will be pretty opened this year. Franklin Regional, South Fayette, Montour and Beaver will all be strong. I think these teams have a good core back but there always surprises.

Young Players to Watch:

I have a freshman that will be starting outside hitting for me. Mia Fox is a 5'8" freshman very smart hitter sees the whole court. Will definitely help us out. I have three others pushing for starting jobs.

Trinity

Coach: Erin Helmkamp (4th year)

Returning Starters:

senior 5-1 libero Victoria Ealy
senior 5-8 outside/right hitter Bayleigh McCullough
senior 5-7 outside hitter Emma Morgan
senior 5-7 setter/right hitter Vivian Poach
senior 5-5 setter Abigail Verner
senior 5-10 middle hitter Marin Williamson

Season Outlook:

Trinity is returning six starters that have been in starting roles since their sophomore year. We look to improve on our section record and make WPIAL playoffs for the first time in many years. In addition to these six seniors, junior middle hitter Jacqueline Hancher, sophomores outside hitter Rayne and middle hitter Rylee Elling, and freshman outside hitter Maddy Roberts look to make positive impacts for the Hillers.

Section Favorite:

I think Montour is returning a lot of starters and will be a strong opponent. You can never count out the well coached teams of South Fayette and West Allegheny.

WPIAL Favorite:

I know a lot of strong teams lost players to graduation. This provides a lot of opportunities for teams this year!

Young Players to Watch:

I am aware that Thomas Jefferson has some talented young players coming on, and we have our freshman Maddy Roberts that we are hoping to break onto the scene!

Yough

Coach: Emma Olsen (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

senior setter Savannah Manns
senior outside hitter Mady Ritenour
senior outside hitter Kaylyn Odelli
senior libero Kayleah Glesk
junior middle hitter Maria Vanyo

Season Outlook:

We have typically finished near the bottom of our section but are hoping to place higher with the skill level of this group of girls.

Section Favorite:

Laurel Highlands and Thomas Jefferson have done well in the past.

Young Players to Watch:

I have seen quite a few impressive players that I hope will do well this year, assuming that we will be able to fully compete with everything going on with COVID-19. I wish all the teams good luck and a good season.

Uniontown

Coach: Jessy Madison (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

5-1 senior setter Tyannah Eddings
5-5 senior defensive specialist/libero Jada McCargo
5-8 senior outside hitter Cassidy VanSickle
6-0 senior outside hitter Briana Girard

Season Outlook:

We are focused on staying healthy and positive on this upcoming season. Continuing to grow our skills, strengths, and capabilities in order to achieve greatness, not only on the court but in our community and for ourselves. We face every challenge head on, meaning we struggle through until success is achieved.

Section Favorite:

We are most excited to compete against Albert Gallatin this season. We feel they bring the same effort and competition as we do. They are so close to home, we like the short bus drive!

WPIAL Favorite:

We are excited to get the chance to play anyone in the WPIAL.

Young Players to Watch:

No, I think all of the girls have some sort of potential inside of them! I know they all want to get out on that court and give it their best work.

Woodland Hills

Coach: Kristina Lewis (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

5-7 setter Adrianna Sacramento
5-10 middle hitter Mackenzie Moquin
5-11 middle hitter Peyton Pinkney
5-3 libero Nyssa Boyd
5-6 outside hitter Laney Jessel

Season Outlook:

This season will be a test for our athletes as we have a good base with returners, however we graduated a strong class last year. I am excited to see what we can do following the best season in school history.

Section Favorite:

The team to beat in our section will be Plum. They are new to the section but have a strong group this year.

WPIAL Favorite:

Knoch will always hold the title for WPIAL favorite as they are the reigning champs however they graduated an extremely strong class last year. They will have to work in order to defend their title.

Young Players to Watch:

I am not aware of any players in the surrounding teams that will stand out players but I'm sure there will be several to look out for this season.