

Ambridge

Coach: Glenn Freed

Projected Starters:

6-3 senior middle hitter Reed Fisher
5-9 senior setter Jake Kotula
5-11 senior outside hitter Ronin Kittrell
5-9 senior outside hitter Levi Baker
5-6 junior libero Josh Hovan
5-11 junior outside hitter Austin Merlina

Season Outlook:

We had two returning all-state player for the 2020 season which did not happen because of Covid. This year, we will have basically a brand new team. While we lack experience, we have strong senior leadership. It will be a very interesting season.

Section Favorite: Unknown.

WPIAL Favorite: Unknown.

Players to Watch:

My top three players should be Reed Fisher, Jake Kotula, and Ronin Kittrell.

Beaver C.C.

Coach: Christen Adels

Projected Starters:

6-0 senior middle hitter Michael Stephens
5-10 senior opposite Grant Rice
5-8 junior setter Micah Guevara
5-9 junior outside hitter Grant Witterman
5-7 junior outside hitter Dan Thoman

Season Outlook:

We have 19 guys on the team this year, 13 of which are first-year players. While we are very inexperienced, the guys are working hard to quickly learn the game of volleyball and are hoping to see significant improvement by the end of the year. Frankly, we are just happy to have a season this year after last year's season was cancelled.

Section Favorite:

Ambridge, OLSH and North Catholic (new to our section) will be in the mix.

WPIAL Favorite: Seton LaSalle

Hopewell

Coach: Rob Hall (1st year)

Projected Starters:

6-3 senior outside hitter/setter Justin Guerruccio
6-4 senior middle hitter Conner Wayne
6-6 senior middle hitter Jacob Forrest
6-0 senior defensive specialist Chandler Dameron
6-5 senior opposite Nate Given
5-6 senior defensive specialist David Woods

Season Outlook:

With a strong senior class along with talented newcomers junior Jimmy Stone and sophomore's Corey Obeldobel and Jake Strnisa, Hopewell is ready to compete for a playoff spot for the first time since 2016. But that's never easy playing in our section with such great coaches & players. We are up to the challenge.

Section Favorite: Ambridge

WPIAL Favorite: Seton LaSalle

Players to Watch:

Seton LaSalle's Nathan Zini, North Catholic's Richard Kaminski, Deer Lakes' Devin Reiher.

Montour

Coach: Colin Vitale (3rd season)

Returning Starters:

5-8 senior Matteo Cicco
5-9 senior Jake Zoltun
5-11 senior Thor Bowman
5-8 senior Kirk McHugh

Season Outlook:

Even with a year off, I swear all my boys came back taller and looking sharper than ever. I'm endlessly grateful for their hard work, and I can't wait for them to reap the benefits of their dedication.

Section Favorite:

I'm sure calling favorites after the year down and this season still being as odd as it already is will be next to impossible. I remember being well-humbled during our last season of play, though, so Montour is looking forward to scrapping with every team in the section.

WPIAL Favorite:

Unfortunately, I can't cast as wide a net on the whole WPIAL. Each time has likely undergone so much change and adjustment just to make sure the season can be played. I'm praying it's as competitive and exciting as any other year.

Players to Watch:

I'm similarly in the dark on who the rising stars are across the WPIAL. I can only speak to my team. With Cicco's leadership of upcoming guys like middle hitter Bryce Lizanich and opposite Andrew Feeley, our offense has new life ahead of a defensive core I'm overjoyed to have behind them.

North Catholic

Coach: Stacie Ball (6th year)

Returning Starters:

6-1 senior setter, Richard Kaminski
5-11 junior outside hitter, Andrew Ubinger
5-9 senior defensive specialist, Brendan Shantz
6-0 senior outside hitter, Dominic DeLeo
5-11 junior setter, Zach Cozza

Season Outlook:

We have strong returning players, led by senior setter Richard Kaminski, a WPIAL first-team All-Star, and junior outside hitter Andrew Ubinger. We lost 2 strong seniors last season and have a few holes to fill. We have 9 seniors this season, 6 who have never played varsity, but they seem up to the challenge.

Section Favorite:

Not sure, we all lost key players, plus North Catholic moved to section 1, so I am not as familiar with those teams.

WPIAL Favorite: Seton LaSalle

Players to Watch:

North Catholic's Richard Kaminski and Andrew Ubinger, and Seton LaSalle's Nathan Zini.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

Coach: Mike McDonald (35th year, including 7 at North Hills)

Returning Starters:

5-10 junior libero Jeremy Ciaramella
6-3 junior middle hitter Colin Weigand

Other Projected Starters:

6-7 junior opposite Jon Pflueger
6-5 junior middle hitter John Siefarth
6-1 junior outside hitter Cameron Glance
5-11 senior safety Mike King
6-1 senior outside hitter James Benke
6-0 junior opposite Geno Paracca

Season Outlook:

A full year off and only 2 players with previous varsity experience means the Chargers will need to work continuously to attempt to shake off the rust of a year off as well as trying to gain familiarity with each other while they look to improve their skills. Competition is lacking due to the inexperience in OLSH's gym, but we look forward to the opportunity to compete against the teams in AA.

Section Favorite: Ambridge and North Catholic

WPIAL Favorite:

Ambridge, Seton LaSalle, North Catholic, Deer Lakes, and Thomas Jefferson.

Players to Watch:

Top player in AA: Nathan Zinni, Seton LaSalle, opposite.