

Avonworth

Coach: John Skarpa (2nd at Avonworth, 3rd Overall)

Returning Starters:

5-8 senior outside hitter Maggie Colenbrander
5-8 senior middle hitter Maggie Goetz
5-4 senior setter Abbi Holjes
5-8 sophomore outside hitter Nora Kate Gavin
6-0 junior middle hitter Sophie Culley
5-4 junior defensive specialist/setter Sam Blose

Season Outlook:

We lost some key players from our 2020 graduating class but we return a strong core with six players who saw significant playing time for last year's 3rd place WPIAL finish. This being only my second year at Avonworth I got a great glimpse of what AA teams look like and have some time to correct some flaws to be a stronger defensive team. We have a difficult schedule including three of the top tournaments in the state with Moon, State College and NA so we will be challenged every week to make another deep run into the playoffs.

Section Favorite:

North Catholic is still the team to beat

WPIAL Favorite:

North Catholic looks to be a very strong team again. Laurel, Deer Lakes and South Park all had great teams and do not have a lot of turnover so I expect them to be in the top 5 this season.

Young Players to Watch:

Laurel had a great outside hitter last year with Regan Atkins, I am excited to see what she is able to do this year.

Beth-Center

Coach: Stephen Beyer (11th year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior setter Julia Ogradowski
5-3 senior libero Anna Knizner
5-7 sophomore outside hitter Brianna MacFann

Season Outlook:

We are a very young and inexperienced team. We had 7 seniors graduate from last year's team. This year's team will have several sophomores and freshman playing varsity.

Section Favorite: Frazier, Southmoreland

Brentwood

Coach: Kayla Hubsch (7th year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior outside hitter Paige Mortimore
5-11 junior outside hitter Olivia Trent
5-5 junior libero Mackenzie Castiglione
5-4 junior setter Brianna Folino

Season Outlook:

This season we are rebuilding with the loss of 7 seasons from last year. We have to replace both of our middle blockers and a right-side hitter for our starting lineup. The team has been working hard this summer at open gyms to prepare for the upcoming season. We are eager to come in stronger and more prepared this year as a team for the competition that we will face. Last year was the first year since 2015 that we did not make it to the WPIAL playoffs so we are preparing to earn a spot this year.

Section Favorite: North Catholic

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Brownsville

Coach: Cameron Coffey (5th year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior outside hitter Emma Seto
5-2 senior libero Martele Nuckels
5-7 junior outside hitter Ciara Williams
5-6 junior setter Skyler Durst
5-7 junior setter/outside hitter Kami Franks
5-9 sophomore middle hitter Kendra Franks
5-8 sophomore middle hitter Mackenzie Wade

Season Outlook:

After being a young team that struggled last year we have a positive outlook on this season. We have been working hard in the gym and did well playing over the summer. Our seniors have been setting the bar and with a lot of talent on a roster we know we have to work hard to secure our spot.

Section Favorite:

We are in a tough section. Waynesburg and Frazier both did really well last year. Carmichaels lost some seniors but look to be tough again as well. Southmoreland always seems to be a contender as well. I think it will be interesting to see where this season goes!

WPIAL Favorite:

After last year I'm not sure. We have some really good teams in AA that can easily make a good run in the playoffs.

Carlynton

Coach: Aaron Cygnarowicz (1st year at Carlynton, 6th year as a head coach)

Returning Starters:

5-3 Junior Setter Tanner Kephart

Season Outlook:

We are a young team with good team chemistry. We hope to continue our string of playoff berths and make a deep run in WPIAL's this year.

Section Favorite: North Catholic

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Young Players to Watch:

I am new to this section but I know for our team freshman Jordynn Carter and Olivia Thompson should make an immediate impact for us this season.

Chartiers-Houston

Coach: Carrie Hansberry (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-7 senior setter Cate Hansberry

5-11 junior outside hitter Jess Scott

5-6 junior defensive specialist Kate Smith

5-11 sophomore middle hitter Mia Mitrik

Season Outlook:

We are returning more than half of our starting line-up. They will lead this team in a positive and supportive manner. Other hard working team members joining them are senior defensive specialist Reece George, senior middle hitter Mya Miller and sophomore defensive specialist Emily Harvey. There are underclassmen that will contribute as well, juniors Margarette Russo and Angelina Taylor, sophomores Alicia Kolson, Molly Schuetz Emily Swarrow, Sydney Thielet, Emily Winters and freshman Meadow Ferri.

Section Favorite:

South Park and Serra Catholic would be the favorites.

WPIAL Favorite:

North Catholic, Ellwood City and Avonworth.

Young players to watch:

We have some amazing sophomores that will see court time and will make major contributions this year. Also, Serra Catholic sophomore setter Emerson Trahan.

Carmichaels

Coach: Julianne Speeney (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-11 junior outside hitter Beth Cree

5-7 junior setter Kendall Ellsworth

5-5 senior outside hitter/defensive specialist Aliyah Thomas

Season Outlook:

With the successes of the past few seasons, we are looking to evolve and elevate our game. With that being said, we are focused on being adaptable and persistent towards being a contender yet again for the section title, and making another strong playoff run in the WPIAL playoffs.

Section Favorite:

You need to show up ready to play in our section. It's never an easy night.

Derry Area

Coach: Brock Smith (24th year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior setter Megan Baker

5-8 senior opposite Makenzie Eades

5-6 senior outside hitter Hannah Ruffner

5-9 senior middle hitter Tianna Moracco

5-3 senior libero Sydney Williams (ACL injury)

5-5 junior outside hitter Sasha Whitfield

Season Outlook:

At this moment, we have a solid core returning from last year's abbreviated COVID season. We are going to be undersized compared to most teams we face. I believe that in order to do well, we will have to improve our ball control and defense from last year significantly. So far we seem to be trending in the positive direction. Believe that with enough contribution from role players and a total team effort, we could be successful.

Section Favorite:

Deer Lakes won it last year, we split with them. Ligonier Valley and South Allegheny each beat us the one time we played them. They all return solid teams that will make competing for the section extremely difficult.

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Ellwood City

Coach: Jenna Ricciuti (5th year)

Returning Starters:

5-10 senior middle hitter Angelina Ricciuti
5-7 senior setter Angelina Nardone
5-5 senior libero Jenna Vetica
6-0 sophomore outside hitter Claire Noble
5-6 junior outside hitter Morgan Bungar
5-10 junior outside hitter Morgan Hooker
6-0 junior middle hitter Gabrielle Davis

Season Outlook:

We are eager to play this season with a new lineup. We worked extremely hard off-season to keep up with the standard we set for our program last year. We have a good mix of rookies and veterans this year and are looking to our 3 senior leaders to bring us back to the championship game!

Section Favorite: Ellwood City

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic.

Young Players to Watch:

I am unsure of other teams in the WPIAL but if I speak for my own team, freshman middle hitter Emma Figurel, sophomore outside hitter Claire Noble, and sophomore setter Lana Nocera can be key players for us.

Freedom

Coach: George Bellinger Jr. (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-10 senior middle hitter Olivia Evans
5-11 junior middle hitter Journey Welling
5-8 senior outside hitter Sarah Mengel
5-6 senior setter Emily Frashure
5-6 senior libero Audrey Lawrence

Season Outlook:

Last year was an extremely disappointing season with Covid-19 shorting the amount of competitions and also working through a losing section record. The girls have been working extremely hard, are motivated, and are prime to be extremely competitive this season. The goal is to make run at the playoffs and the section Championship.

Section Favorite:

Ellwood City, Shannago, & Laurel would have to be the favorites.

WPIAL Favorite:

North Catholic would be the AA favorite.

Frazier

Coach: Mandy Hartman (24th year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 junior setter/outside hitter Jensyn Hartman
5-10 junior middle hitter Braylin Salisbury
5-4 junior opposite Maddie Stefansk
5-7 senior middle hitter Abby Scott
6-2 senior middle hitter Eliza Newcomer
5-2 junior defensive specialist Maria Felsher
5-1 sophomore defensive specialist Molly Yauch

Season Outlook:

We are returning a very athletic group of athletes this season. We look for All-State player Jensyn Hartman to carry the offensive load along with Maddie Stefansk and Braylin Salisbury. With the addition of some talented freshmen, I am excited to see this group come together. We did lose some key players to graduation and are working to fill those roles. I expect us to be very competitive and continue to grow as the season progresses.

Section Favorite:

Waynesburg was the section winner last year, and they are returning most of their players. I look for them to be very strong once again. Southmoreland and Carmichaels also have great programs and should be in the running.

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Young Players to Watch:

With so many girls playing club ball in our area, I look for there to be many freshmen that will come in and make immediate impacts on their high school teams. At Frazier, freshmen Grace Vaughn and Gracen Hartman will come in and make impacts at the varsity level.

Keystone Oaks

Coach: Mike O'Leary (5th year)

Returning Starters:

5-8 junior outside hitter Eriona Neal
5-8 senior opposite Jillian Reynolds
5-8 senior outside hitter Hannah Charlton

Season Outlook:

We lost a lot of experience to graduation last year so we will have a lot of new faces on varsity this year. We want to lean on the experience we do have with our returning starters and rely on some younger girls to provide a spark as well. We're looking to work hard, improve each day, and compete for a playoff spot in a very tough section

Section Favorite: North Catholic

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Laurel

Coach: Jim Aggas (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

5-8 senior libero Mackenzie Miles
5-7 senior middle hitter Jaeleigh Henderson
5-10 junior outside hitter Reagan Atkins
5-10 junior middle hitter Reese Bintrim
5-8 junior opposite hitter Johnna Hill
5-8 junior setter Jose Fortuna

Season Outlook:

We are an experienced team returning 6 starters. I feel we are poised to have a strong regular season and prepared to go deep into the playoffs.

Section Favorite:

There are no easy nights in our section as all the teams come well prepared each night. If I had to pick a favorite, it will be a battle between Shenango, Ellwood City, Neshannock and us.

WPIAL Favorite:

Until someone can knock them off their perch, North Catholic.

Young Players to Watch:

Our own libero Mackenzie Miles and middle hitter Reese Bintrim will be among the top players in the WPIAL at their positions.

Ligonier Valley

Coach: Emily Daugherty (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-10 senior outside hitter Haley Stormer
5-5 senior libero Sarah Sheeder
5-8 senior outside hitter Taylor Meier
5-2 senior defense specialist Paige Hickman
5-9 junior outside hitter Ruby Wallance
6-1 junior middle hitter Lizzy Crissman
5-9 sophomore outside hitter Abby Tutino

Season Outlook:

We are returning a majority of our lineup this year and some new faces will see the court also as we enter our second year in the WPIAL. Now that we have our first year under us and know what to expect, our team's goal is to continue to make their name and make a run at our section and into playoffs. The girls have been putting in the work all summer to improve their game and chemistry and are excited to get this season started.

Section Favorite:

Deer Lakes finished 11-1 in our section last year.

Mohawk

Coach: Anna Fadden (1st year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior opposite Ryleigh Logan
5-5 senior defensive specialist Cassidy Lehman
5-10 junior middle hitter Audrey Magno
5-4 junior setter Jenna Barth

Season Outlook:

We are a young team. We lost nine seniors last year. We have been working hard and have seen great progress. Looking forward to a competitive season with fresh players on the court.

Section Favorite:

Being a new coach, I know that the following teams have built successful programs. I'd have to go with Ellwood City, Laurel, Neshannock and Shenango as the front runners.

Other players to watch on the Varsity roster include:

5-5 junior opposite Morgan Fry
5-4 junior defensive specialist Ariana Smiley
5-9 sophomore middle hitter Deyani Revis
5-8 sophomore outside hitter Chloe Fadden
5-5 sophomore setter Estelle Winck
5-6 sophomore defensive specialist/hitter Dominique Walko

Neshannock

Coach: Jenny Bolinger (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-11 senior middle hitter Maya Mrozek
5-10 senior outside hitter Addi Watts
5-11 junior outside hitter Marian Haggerty
5-9 junior outside hitter Katie DiMuccio
5-5 junior defensive specialist Jenna Glies
5-10 junior middle hitter Xan Kwait
5-6 junior setter Aaralyn Nogay

Season Outlook:

I am really excited for this team this year, we have been working hard during the off-season and had some great wins at tournaments during the summer. This is a team that has synergy. We work well together and they are a quick team. We had big shoes to fill and our girls our stepping up to the challenge and showing grit.

Section Favorites:

Our favorite rivals - Ellwood City & Laurel

Young Players to Watch:

Bella Perod, a sophomore defensive specialist.

New Brighton

Coach: Wes Remley (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior middle Ayanna Bell
5-6 senior right side Neriah Foster
5-6 senior setter Jensyn Main

Season Outlook:

We have a few upcoming underclassmen that will be stepping into roles that will give our team the edge we will need this season, and a few returning players that will be starting for the first time this season. Overall, I think we will give the teams in our section good competition.

Section Favorite: Ellwood City

WPIAL Favorite: Ellwood City

Young Players to Watch:

There is a tremendous outside hitter for Laurel that I have seen get better and better each year.

North Catholic

Coach: Amanda Fetter (4th year at NC, 10th season overall)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior opposite Mackenzie Blackwell
6-0 senior outside hitter Riley Warda
6-1 junior middle hitter Katie McNelly
5-10 junior outside hitter Allison Feczko
5-9 junior setter Sydnei Jones
5-11 junior middle hitter Stephanie Lynch
5-6 junior defensive specialist Gabby Cozza

Season Outlook:

This year we have an incredible group of young women that are working very hard to prepare for a tough season. The girls are focused on getting better every day that they are in the gym and have been focused on building the habits and structure that is necessary for a successful season. They are excited to play and are looking forward to some new and fun opportunities this year.

Section Favorite:

We know that Avonworth is always very talented. Brentwood and Quaker Valley should also be strong.

WPIAL Favorite: I would say Shenango.

Quaker Valley

Coach: Mike Vavrek (11th year at QV, 17th overall)

Returning Starters:

5-10 senior middle hitter Elise Berry
5-5 senior libero Anna Weisser
5-7 junior outside hitter Kathryn Karwoski

Season Outlook:

We lost a lot of experienced varsity players last year to graduation, So this year we will be a very inexperienced varsity team, who hopes to improve every time we take the floor and compete in a tough section.

Section Favorite: North Catholic

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Serra Catholic

Coach: Keith Trahan (9th year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior right side hitter Lydia Valentine
5-8 senior outside hitter Jenna Revak
5-4 sophomore setter Emerson Trahan
5-10 sophomore setter Olivia Hussein

Season Outlook:

We graduated nine seniors last year, several of whom had started for 2-3 years. We have four returning varsity players who played in high leverage situations and in the playoff run last year. This season, we have a much deeper team than in the past. We have 12 players competing and playing quality minutes on varsity. That level of competition should help players build experience and the team build chemistry to maintain the competitive level that we have built over the past ten years.

Section Favorite:

South Park took section from us last year. We are chasing them this year.

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Young Players to Watch:

We have a very strong group of sophomores and an incoming freshman with a ton of experience. If they can keep working, gaining experience, and build chemistry with the upperclassmen we have, they will help us continue the tradition of success here at Serra.

Seton LaSalle

Coach: Jenna Potts (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior middle hitter Sydney Kirk
5-7 senior outside hitter Keira Sipe
5-8 Junior outside hitter Mia Pasquale
5-10 senior MB Grace Warner
5-2 senior defensive specialist Kenzie Canavan
5-4 senior defensive specialist Sam Achille

Season Outlook:

We're going to have a well-rounded team with a lot of depth.

Section Favorite: North Catholic

Young Players to Watch:

I don't know the names of girls from other teams yet, but I'm sure there will be a few young stars emerging.

South Allegheny

Coach: Jack Kelley (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior outside hitter Madison Pikula
5-3 senior libero Payton Limley
5-11 senior opposite Payton Linhart
5-7 senior middle hitter Paige Keller
5-5 senior outside hitter Taylor Martin
5-8 senior middle hitter Bethany Matlos
5-5 junior setter Angelina Cortazzo

Season Outlook:

Last season we were 9-2 and finished 2nd in our section. We had 6 players voted to the all-section team and 1 voted to the WPIAL Class-AA All-Star team (Madison Pikula - 2nd team). We were seeded 10th in playoffs. All of these achievements were firsts for the SA volleyball program. This year, we might be better. We only lost two seniors—and one of those seniors missed most of last season due to injury. We're a more experienced and deeper team than last year and we've improved offensively. I think we have a chance against anyone on our schedule. Who knows how it will actually turn out, but I think we can say that the days of South Allegheny being an easy W are over.

Section Favorite:

I would like to think that we would be in the discussion, but Deer Lakes is the obvious favorite. They only lost one section match last year and they beat us twice. Derry and Ligonier Valley took us to five games last season so they scare me, too.

Young Players to Watch:

South Allegheny has two sophomores who are ready to be introduced. Lexi Lundburg (5-7, outside hitter) and Bri Hayes (5-7, middle hitter) both played club volleyball this winter (another first for SA) and got bigger, stronger and more confident, and we expect both to make some noise at the varsity level.

Shenango

Coach: Greg Dugan (30th year)

Returning Starters:

5-11 junior outside hitter Kylee Rubin
5-8 junior outside hitter Emilee Fedrizzi
5-7 junior libero Ashley Decarbo
5-8 junior middle hitter Julia George
5-9 senior Setter Kassidy Peters
5-6 sophomore defensive specialist Maria Bryant

Season Outlook:

Working hard preparing for a very competitive section.

Section Favorite:

Laurel, Neshannock and Shenango all have very good teams.

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

Young Players to Watch:

Shenango's Hannah Krouse, a 6-2 freshman, is rapidly learning to help us be a contender in AA.

Southmoreland

Coach: Heather Meyer (2nd year at Southmoreland)

Returning Starters:

6-0 senior middle hitter Delaynie Morvosh
5-6 senior setter Lizzy Albright
5-10 senior middle hitter/setter Gracie Spadero
5-11 sophomore outside hitter/opposite Kaylee Doppelhauer
5-9 sophomore middle/outside hitter Amarah McCutcheon
5-3 junior defensive specialist Brynn Charnesy

Season Outlook:

We hope to contend for a top spot in our section

Favorite In Our Section:

Our section is very competitive

Steel Valley

Coach: Jamie Dolton (9th year)

Returning Starters:

5-8 senior middle Abby Tester
4-11 senior outside hitter Katie Ligeros
5-10 senior outside hitter Brooke Weber
5-6 junior setter Brooke Farrah
4-11 sophomore libero Isabella Ruston

Season Outlook:

This year we are hoping our experience pays off and translates into wins. The team is ready to work as hard as they can in order to get better every day. We are looking forward to a good season!

Section Favorite: South Allegheny

WPIAL Favorite: North Catholic

South Park

Coach: Chad Farrington: 4th year at South Park, also 6 years at Serra)

Returning Starters:

5-10 senior outside hitter Faith Fetsko
5-4 senior setter Maddie Fiorentini
5-4 senior defensive specialist Jordan Fiorentini
5-5 senior middle hitter/right side Kylene Vas
5-4 senior outside hitter/right side Kristen Villa
5-1 junior defensive specialist Lanie Schultz
5-3 junior defensive specialist Geana Paranzino
5-8 junior middle hitter Maurie Haddad
5-3 junior defensive specialist Libby Vietmeier

Other Members of Varsity Team

5-3 senior defensive specialist Avery Morgan
5-6 junior outside hitter/right side Brooke Kubiak
6-0 junior middle hitter/right side Elliot Oliphant
5-3 junior setter Julia Kuczma
5-11 sophomore middle hitter Riley Zigler

Season Outlook:

We're looking strong. We're returning most of the starting lineup from last year, with the exception of one starter that helped us win our section and got us the second round of WPIAL playoffs. There's a lot of camaraderie within this group as they've been working hard for the past few years to flip the mentality of the team and make this a successful program. Last year was a big step for us with winning our section, something South Park hasn't done since 2014, but it didn't end how we had hoped in the playoffs. However, that's proven helpful coming into this season as it's given the girls purpose, drive and motivation. There's a lot of skill and talent within this group and it's going to be a fun and exciting year to watch them grow and develop even more.

Section Favorite:

With the team mostly intact from last year's section title, I'd have to say we've got a really good chance at repeating. Serra Catholic lost some seniors from last season, but they have some good young talent coming up and Chartiers Houston should be strong again, with Jessica Scott leading that group as well.

WPIAL Favorite:

North Catholic will again most likely be the favorite.

Young Players to Watch:

I know Serra Catholic has some good young talent, but I'm unaware of names or ages. I can only really speak for South Park and there is one that pops to mind, that being Riley Zigler. She saw some limited playing time last year as a freshman, but she's taken some big steps during the off season. She'll be a key contributor for our team in the coming years.

Valley

Coach: April Stone (8th year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 outside hitter Jaylen Thomas
5-6 setter/outside hitter Emily Lewandowski
5-3 setter Mikayla Sanchez
5-7 middle hitter Jessica Staraniec
5-5 setter/outside hitter Halie Walmsley
5-3 libero Giona Campana

Season Outlook:

We have a lot of seniors this year, this team was undefeated at the middle school level. We are hoping they pull it together as this will be the last year they will play with each other.

Section Favorite: Deer Lakes and Derry

Young Players to Watch:

Our own, Halie Walmsley and Jessica Staraniec, both sophomores with excellent skill.

Waynesburg

Coach: Dan Hignbotham (9th year)

Returning Starters:

5-1 senior defensive specialist Paige Jones
5-5 senior outside hitter Morgan Stephenson
5-2 senior outside hitter Taylor Lohr
5-8 senior middle hitter Madison McMaster
5-11 junior opposite Sarah Stephenson

Season Outlook:

I have a very strong, determined team again this year. I expect them to do well with another playoff run.

Section favorite:

Our section is very strong again this year. I expect it will be a true battle for the section title.

WPIAL favorite:

After playing North Catholic in the semifinals last season, I would have to say they are the favorite.