

Ambridge

Coach: Tim Buresh (2nd year with Ambridge, 7th year overall)

Returning Starters:

5-8 junior outside hitter Annie Hrinko
5-6 junior outside hitter Mady Mihalic
6-1 senior opposite Ang Bratton

Season Outlook:

We had a lot of young players contributing last season. It will be exciting to see them take the next step in competing for a playoff spot.

Section Favorite:

Beaver or Hopewell

WPIAL Favorite:

I am not sure after not getting to see other teams last year.

Young Players to Watch:

Ava Timmons Ambridge Sophomore Setter

Armstrong

Coach: Andrea Lasher (5th year at Armstrong, 7th overall)

Returning Starters:

5-2 senior outside hitter Jaide Dudek
5-4 senior libero Layne Miller
5-6 senior setter Olivia Pawk
5-7 senior opposite Mackenzie Egley
5-6 junior outside hitter Cassidy Adams
5-9 junior middle hitter Kate Remaley
5-10 sophomore middle hitter Kali Allensworth

Season Outlook:

Armstrong will be a very competitive team this season, and we are all looking forward to the season!

Section Favorite:

Top teams in our section probably will be Armstrong, Mars, Freeport, Hampton, and Knoch

Young Players to Watch:

A few young players that will be making an impact this year from Armstrong will be Cassidy Adams, Kali Allensworth, Sarai Weaver, and Kate Remaley, but in all honesty, this is probably one of the best all-around talented team that I have coached.

Beaver

Coach: Suze Pollins (1st year)

Returning Starters:

6-0 senior middle hitter Kylie Haczela
5-11 senior outside hitter Payton List
6-1 sophomore outside hitter Chloe List

Season Outlook:

We have a great group of girls this year that have been working very hard all summer to fill some big shoes that were left behind with the loss of our senior class from last year. We have three starters returning and the rest of the line up will be made of upperclassmen who have been on varsity for a couple years that will finally get the opportunity to become big players for us. Our underclassmen are a very talented group and will at some point crack the varsity lineup.

Section Favorite:

I would say we are the favorites to win our section.

WPIAL Favorite:

Thomas Jefferson, Montour, South Fayette should all compete for a championship.

Young Players to Watch:

Chloe List, a sophomore outside hitter for us was an all-section player and I expect her to have a breakout season. I feel that she is the best underclassmen in the WPIAL.

Belle Vernon

Coach: Jonathan Barr (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior outside hitter Ally Sedlak
5-8 senior right side hitter Cassi Nickelson
5-2 senior defensive specialist Gabby Serrao
5-4 junior libero Gianna Anderson
5-3 sophomore defensive specialist/setter Nina Francia

Season Outlook:

I believe we have a bright future ahead of us. The girls have worked extremely hard this off season. We added an extra day of conditioning per week, and most of the team joined a club in the off season. We focused a lot of our energy on improving our system, as well as working on specific techniques. I feel like we have an opportunity this year to make a splash in our section. I'm cautiously optimistic, but I'm excited to see what the girls can accomplish. Our goal is to make the playoffs.

Section Favorite:

Top 3 in our section are usually Thomas Jefferson, Elizabeth Forward, and Laurel Highlands. I think any one of those teams can win the section.

WPIAL Favorite:

I would say Montour, Armstrong, Freeport, and Thomas Jefferson are all top contenders.

Young Players to Watch:

I would keep an eye out for Lily Shahan. She's a sophomore for us and has worked hard all off season. She will make an immediate impact in our lineup at middle hitter this year.

Blackhawk

Coach: Dan Muir (6th year)

Returning Starters:

5-5 senior setter Emma Muir
5-5 senior defensive specialist Hannah Bielawski
5-7 junior outside hitter Amanda Jones
5-9 junior middle hitter Alanah Marsilio
5-7 junior opposite Natalie Tusick
5-8 sophomore middle hitter Mrgan Darno
5-8 sophomore outside hitter Layla Funkhouser
5-4 sophomore libero Taylor Krepps

Season Outlook:

We are young. Girls are excited for the season and hope to rack the top four in our section to make a playoff appearance

Young Players to Watch: Megan Darno, Blackhawk

Central Valley

Coach: Candace Glumac (2nd year)

Returning starters:

5-9 senior outside hitter Abigail Glumac
5-6 senior defensive specialist Maggie Brown
5-4 junior libero Ava Weber
5-10 junior middle hitter Taylor Godshall
5-11 junior middle hitter Alyssa Porter

Section Favorite:

Beaver is coming off of a great season with returning players. Hopewell is always a solid team as well. We are hoping to be competitive as well.

Chartiers Valley

Coach: Amanda Burgess (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior outside hitter Rachel Bayer
5-4 senior defensive specialist Maddie Bell
5-7 senior middle hitter Becky Stevens
5-4 Junior defensive specialist Nina Ajello
5-11 junior middle hitter Kelliann Mutschler
5-7 junior opposite Abi Opalanko
5-5 sophomore opposite/defensive specialist Abby Baumgart
5-8 sophomore setter/outside hitter Sarah Harris
5-4 sophomore setter/defensive specialist Delaney Rodella

Season Outlook:

Step into the team leadership positions. Our girls have a lot of heart, are dedicated to the team, and they play well together. I'm excited for a fun season!

Section Favorite:

I have faith in my girls.

WPIAL Favorite:

Again, I have faith in my girls. I'm interested to see how all the teams do this season.

Franklin Regional

Coach: Rachel Frye (1st year)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior defensive specialist Sydney Breikreutz
5-6 senior defensive specialist Kami Marcus
5-7 senior setter Julia Kubera
5-10 junior middle hitter Ella Evans
5-5 sophomore defensive specialist Brooke Feorene

Season Outlook:

We have a lot of talent this year and are a solid well-rounded team. We are going to be strong and competitive.

Young Players to Watch:

5-10 junior middle hitter Ella Evans
6-1 freshman middle hitter Toryn Fulton
5-7 junior setter Madison Nguyen
5-5 sophomore defensive specialist Brooke Feorene

Freeport

Coach: Tom Phillips (21 years)

Returning starters:

5-6 senior outside hitter/defensive specialist Erica Lampus
5-10 junior setter Cassidy Dell
6-1 sophomore middle hitter Josie Russo
5-7 sophomore outside hitter Sydney Selker
5-7 junior outside hitter Natalie Volek
5-5 junior defensive specialist Ava Soilis
5-6 junior defensive specialist Kayla Carnahan
6-2 sophomore middle hitter Addy Rusek
5-6 sophomore setter Grace Beach

Season Outlook:

Our section is one of the strongest sections in the WPIAL. Competing in a tough section prepares the team for playoffs and we accept the challenge. Freeport is very young and we're looking to be a playoff contender.

Elizabeth Forward

Coach: Lindsay Lesofsky (11th year, in second stint)

Returning Starters:

5-6 senior outside hitter Skyler Shoben
5-7 senior outside hitter Faith Gregory
5-11 senior opposite Lily Barker
5-8 senior setter Grace Smith
5-8 senior middle hitter Tamar Herchelroath
5-6 senior libero Maura White

Others Expected to See Playing Time:

5-5 senior defensive specialist Avrey Parkins
5-9 Junior outside/right hitter Joselyn Dawson
5-11 sophomore middle hitter Maya Martell
5-6 sophomore setter Kylie Mooney
5-9 senior middle/right hitter Brionna Bender

Young Players to Watch:

We expect to have other girls contribute from the juniors and sophomore classes.

Greensburg Salem

Coach: Rachel Brannigan (1st year)

Returning Starters:

6-1 senior middle hitter Sarah Danley
5-10 senior outside hitter Abby Mankins
5-7 senior defensive specialist Olivia Sheffler

Season Outlook:

We have 8 seniors who are looking to make an impact and leave their mark with Greensburg Salem volleyball. Many of these girls had limited varsity court time last year. They have worked all spring and summer and have grown into an amazing team. We have a big front row and are excited to make a statement this year.

Section Favorite:

Probably Franklin Regional considering their amazing year last year.

Young Players to Watch:

Not many on other teams, but Kaitlyn Mankins is a 6-1 sophomore who is competing for some time on the varsity court.

Hampton

Coach: Annie Bozzo (2nd year)

Returning Starters:

5-8 Senior setter Claudia Braun
5-8 senior outside Taylor Fiscus
6-0 senior middle Kai Herchenroether
5-11 sophomore outside Emmy Schrom

Season Outlook:

We lost some key players with our senior class and we are working on closing those gaps. We are a bit of a younger team, but I am excited to see what we can accomplish.

Section Favorite:

We have a strong section and I think there are a few teams fighting for the section title.

Young Players to Watch:

Emmy Schrom from Hampton worked hard in the off season and will be a force on the outside.

Highlands

Coach: Caroline Bain (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 junior outside hitter Eve Johnson
5-8 soph. defensive specialist/outside hitter Jocelyn Bielak
5-7 junior setter Cassidy Davis
5-9 middle hitter Mikayla Neilen

Season Outlook:

Is there a favorite in your section? I may be bias, but I thoroughly enjoy playing Burrell, as my younger sister Avery Bain, and my cousins Reese and Rory Pallone are players there. It's a particularly memorable experience, being able to coach against a team made up of your own family.

Section Favorite:

Hampton. They're a dominant and dynamic team, thriving in one of the most competitive WPIAL sections. Their coach, Annie Bozzo, is a good friend and former section rival, and I think she's done phenomenally. It's great to see someone younger like me achieve so much early on.

Young Players to Watch:

I may be bias, but my sister Avery will undoubtedly impact in the WPIAL. Her experience, athletic ability, and on court IQ will take Burrell far.

Hopewell

Coach: Terry Borkovic (32nd year)

Returning Starters:

senior outside hitter Sierrah Nicol
senior outside hitter London Ross
senior setter Jadya Sakson
sophomore opposite Azure Humphries

Season Outlook:

We are very athletic, although not very tall. Back court defense and serving will be vital to our success. The team is focused on improving in these areas. We always expect a successful season with a deep playoff run.

Section Favorite:

Probably Beaver, but all the teams are very good and capable of winning the section.

WPIAL Favorite:

Not familiar with many of the teams. Montour is very good! The traditional powerhouses with long time coaches will be in contention, Franklin Regional, Beaver, Freeport, Armstrong, Thomas Jefferson, Plum, Mars, and West Allegheny. Staying COVID free is also a concern for many programs.

Young Players to Watch:

Hopewell's Azure Humphries. Azure is a dynamic player with great potential.

Indiana

Coach: Dana Kundla (3rd year)

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 opposite 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

Kiski Area

Coach: Jodi McCartney (3rd season)

Returning Starters:

5-4 senior defensive specialist Emma Beck
5-9 senior outside/middle hitter Carlee Kuhn
5-6 junior setter Sydney Joyce
5-4 junior defensive specialist Madalyn Polka
5-9 junior middle hitter Brynn Bires
5-6 junior serving specialist/defensive specialist Bryn Hewitt

Season Outlook:

The Lady Cavaliers are coming back with some valuable experience in our returning starters. We look forward to a season full of potential!

Section Favorite:

Indiana will be strong with most of their front line back. Plum & Franklin Regional will always be tough competition and Penn Hills is returning all their starters. I like to put us up there in the conversation as well.

WPIAL Favorite:

2020 Runner Up Montour is my pick. I also think the talent in AAA is spread out in all the sections, so really it could be up for grabs. It will be an exciting season.

Young Players to Watch:

Our own 5-4 freshman defensive specialist Maddie Joyce will make an immediate impact for us. Kiski Area sophomores Abbie Johns, Izzy Ondish, and Cora Coleman, who are all fighting for varsity positions, should make an impact as well.

Knoch

Coach: Diane Geist (36th year)

Returning Starters:

5-3 senior setter Brynnae Coe
5-3 senior defensive specialist Nicole Critchlow
5-6 senior middle hitter Krystle Ekas
5-9 senior outside hitter Adelyn Seibel

Season Outlook:

Building a team to become competitive in a tough section.

Section Favorite:

Freeport, Armstrong, Mars and Hampton all tied for first last year. Take your pick!

WPIAL Favorite:

The WPIAL is up for grabs.

Young Players to Watch:

Knoch freshman middle hitter Karlee Buterbaugh is making an impact on our team.

Laurel Highlands

Coach: Breanna Mehall (1st year)

Returning Starters:

5-7 setter/right hitter Adrienne Matthey
5-7 outside hitter Emily Fleenor
5-3 defense specialist Katie Martin
5-8 middle hitter McKenzie Nicklow
5-8 right side hitter Bella Scott
5-8 middle hitter Mia Pierce
5-8 outside hitter Morgan Wheeler

Season Outlook:

We have a lot of new starters this season due to losing several starting seniors from last year and also a starting Middle moving out of state.

Section Favorite:

It is going to be close between Laurel Highlands and Thomas Jefferson.

WPIAL Favorite:

Montour

Young Players to Watch:

Mia Pierce and Morgan Wheeler

Lincoln Park

Coach: Sarah Saut (6th year)

Returning Starters:

Senior setter Anna Tanner
Senior outside hitter Kennedi Miller
Senior middle hitter Mattalyn Shriver
Senior defensive specialist Skylar Van Winkle
Senior defensive specialist Amauri Jeter

Season Outlook:

We have a bit of a younger team than we did last year after losing five seniors, but we've had some sophomores and juniors really step up and work hard throughout the summer so we're hoping to continue to path onward and upward!

Section Favorite: Beaver

WPIAL Favorite: Beaver

Mars

Coach: Tami Caraway (9th year)

Returning Starters:

6-2 senior middle blocker Ava Black
5-3 senior defensive specialist Yumeno Ikeda
6-3 junior outside hitter Lauren Atwell
5-3 junior libero Anna Pietrusinski
5-10 junior setter Ava Donnelly
5-11 junior outside hitter Megan Yanief
5-9 junior middle blocker Lucie Morlino

Season Outlook:

We graduated four talented seniors and will be looking to see who can step up to fill those spots. Like last year, it will be important to bring our best effort night after night in such a difficult section. We've been working hard over the summer and look forward to the challenges that await.

Section Favorite:

It would be tough to pick a favorite with so many talented teams in the section. Nearly every match will be a battle.

WPIAL Favorite:

There is quite a bit of parity in AAA so it will likely be whichever team peaks at the right time.

Montour

Coach: Mike Marchionda (5th year as girls coach)

Returning Starters:

5-11 senior outside hitter Olivia Lyscik
5-7 senior defensive specialist Paytun Wiernik
5-10 junior middle hitter Olivia Persinger
5-9 junior setter/opposite Kylie Barto
5-8 junior setter Raegan Kadlecik
5-5 junior Libero Mia Arndt

Season Outlook:

We are excited to have the opportunity to compete this season. We return 6 starters from last year's squad and have several other players including 6-0 senior Morgan Cholewa, 6-1 junior Sara Faith, 5-11 junior Ava Vietmeier, 5-3 junior Delaney Brennan, 5-10 sophomore Danielle Caligiuri, and 5-10 sophomore Nicolette Lyscik who all will play prominent roles for us as well. We feel we can build on our experience and hope to compete for the section title and compete well in the playoffs.

Section Favorite:

South Fayette is always a tough team to beat and some solid young squads from last year like Chartiers Valley and West Allegheny will be more experienced. We will need to play well against everyone to defend our section title from last year.

WPIAL Favorite:

Freeport, Thomas Jefferson, Armstrong, South Fayette and Mars are all well coached and are a yearly threat to win the title.

New Castle

Coach: Michael Spelich

Returning Starters:

senior outside hitter India Bailey
senior outside hitter Davion Blanchard
sophomore setter Alyson Cioffi
senior opposite Logan Holmes
senior middle hitter Julianna Evans
junior middle hitter Jayden Hawkins
senior libero Sarah Hunyadi

Season Outlook:

Made up of mostly Seniors, our team looks to use our experience this year to strongly compete in our section.

Section Favorite: Beaver

WPIAL Favorite: Franklin Regional

Penn Hills

Coach: Jay Mitlo (25th year)

Returning Starters:

5-4 senior setter/outside hitter Larissa Shelby
5-2 senior libero Angel Calloway
5-6 junior middle hitter Taylor Slaughter
5-8 junior outside hitter Sarah Miller
5-6 junior outside hitter Ameira Smith
5-3 junior setter/outside hitter Ava Adamski

Season Outlook:

We have a good number girls back from last year. We should be competitive with most every team. We have the goal of returning to the playoffs.

Section Favorite: Franklin Regional

WPIAL Favorite: Franklin Regional

Plum

Coach: Kelsey Bonk (6th year)

Returning Starters:

5-4 senior defensive specialist Grace Thompson
5-10 junior middle hitter Dannika Susko
5-6 junior setter Sam Glatz

Season Outlook:

We lost eight seniors, including six who had large roles on the team last year. We lost the vast majority of our varsity lineup and have lots of positions to fill.

Section Favorite: Franklin Regional

WPIAL Favorite:

Freeport or Armstrong It's hard without seeing nonsection teams last year it's hard to gage what teams lost or had coming up.

Ringgold

Coach: Adam Thomas (4th year)

Returning Starters:

5-5 senior libero Aleah Siwula
5-9 junior middle Zoey Mundorff
5-4 junior setter Alyssa Connolly
5-10 junior middle Lacey Kalinowski
5-8 sophomore outside hitter Aubrey Siwula

Season Outlook:

The 2021 Ringgold Lady Rams are looking to build off their young but experienced team, and a strong summer. The Lady Rams won their summer league down in Washington, Pa. and are looking to ride that momentum into the season and continue their success. The goal for the Lady Rams is simple: compete and earn a spot in the WPIAL playoffs. It won't be an easy task, but they will without a doubt be battling during every point of every match to obtain to that goal.

Section Favorite: Montour

WPIAL Favorite: Franklin Regional

Young Players to Watch:

If Ringgold plays like they are capable of, keep an eye on junior middle hitter Zoey Mundorff and sophomore outside hitter Aubrey Siwula to make some headlines. These two players have played on varsity since their freshmen years, are hungry to win, and have the skill sets to frustrate opponents and set records.

South Fayette

Coach: Scott Sundgren (20th year)

Returning Starters:

6-3 middle hitter Ava Leroux
5-9 setter Haley Nicholson
5-4 defensive specialist Kaylin Goldstrohm
5-6 outside hitter Bella Bowers
5-8 opposite Annika Henkel

Section Favorite:

Our section is usually pretty solid. I think that Montour will be good again this year as they only lost a few players, but return some excellent athletes from 2020. West Allegheny is usually pretty strong, so I expect them to continue this trend. Trinity had an excellent team last year, and they are coached well. Chartiers Valley improves each year. Coach Burgess continues the tradition of excellent coaching having benefited from her tutelage under the great Jason Ferri.

WPIAL Favorite:

I think Montour will be good this year. I heard that Armstrong plays a smart game and has excellent ball control. Thomas Jefferson will probably be good as they lost some players, but have good underclassmen to fill the role.

Thomas Jefferson

Coach: Ron Kelly (22nd year at TJ, 33rd overall)

Returning Starters:

5-5 senior setter Cate Chalovich
5-9 junior outside hitter Delaney Concannon
5-1 junior libero Cate Galiato
5-8 junior middle hitter Julia Territ
5-10 sophomore outside hitter Mia Fox
5-8 senior outside hitter Julia Palmer

Season Outlook:

I have a young but experienced team. We have competition at every position. I think our net play will be strong. The competition in our gym will make us a talented and deep team. We will improve weekly because everyone has someone behind them that wants on the floor. Palmer started as a sophomore was out last season due to an ACL injury. She should be back in September.

Section Favorite:

I think we might be our section favorites. I look at Albert Gallitin as having a good team. Elizabeth Forward and Laurel Highlands have had a good team the last few years.

WPIAL Favorite:

There will be a lot of competition for the WPIAL crown. Montour, South Fayette, Armstrong, Freeport and Thomas Jefferson will be in the picture.

Trinity

Coach: Erin Helmkamp (5th year)

Returning Starters:

5-10 senior middle hitter Jacqueline Hancher
5-10 sophomore outside hitter Maddy Roberts

Section Favorite:

I would give a nod to Montour but South Fayette always has a disciplined team

Young Players to Watch:

We are looking for big things from our sophomore Maddy Roberts

West Allegheny

Coach: Yoko Nagao (6th year at West Allegheny)

Returning Starters:

4-11 senior libero Olivia Pedockie
5-5 senior outside hitter Alexia Pedockie
5-6 senior outside hitter Raena Ferry
5-5 senior opposite Isabella Marsh
5-9 junior middle hitter Kristina Zadrozny
6-0 junior setter/opposite Ashlyn Oswald

Season Outlook:

This year we have young setters, middle hitter and defensive players so rebuilding season.

Section Favorite: Probably Montour

West Mifflin

Coach: Glenn Gougler (2nd year)

Returning starters:

5-7 Junior Setter Riley Boehm
5-7 Senior Outside Hitter Tamyah Ray
5-8 Senior Middle Hitter Rylee Miller
5-6 Junior Libero Catherine Steiner

Season Outlook:

2/3 of our starting rotation last year graduated last year so we knew that we would have a lot of holes to fill. Fortunately, we also knew that we had girls that would be able to step right in. Although our record last year may not have reflected an improvement our compete level took a huge step forward and we hope to continue to improve on that this year by incorporating some of our young talent into the rotation.

Section Favorite: South Fayette

Young Players to Watch:

I'm very excited to watch our very own Freshman Emmy Hilligsberg in game action this year.

Yough

Coach: Emma Olsen (3rd year)

Returning Starters:

5-9 senior setter/opposite Allyson Elkins
5-11 senior middle hitter Maria Vanyo
5-9 senior outside/middle hitter Kaitlyn Milcoff
5-8 senior outside hitter Renah Kozemchak
5-10 junior middle hitter Brooke Croushore

Season Outlook:

We should place better this year, likely in the middle of our section.

Section Favorite:

Thomas Jefferson, Laurel Highlands, and Elizabeth Forward all typically do well in our section.