

## Ambridge

**Coach:** Glenn Freed (13th year)

**Returning Starters:**

5-9 junior setter/outside hitter Karson Merlina  
6-0 senior opposite Donovan Bober  
6-1 senior setter/outside hitter Sam Miller

**Season Outlook:**

With three returning players having playoff experience plus the new players completing for court time, the team will need to mesh together in order to be a top contender. We are solid at several positions on the court, including setting and pin hitting.

**Section Favorite:**

North Catholic and Ambridge.

**WPIAL Favorite:**

Returning champion North Catholic, Ambridge, and Mars.

**WPIAL Players to Watch:**

Ambridge: Karson Merlina, Donovan Bober, and Sam Miller.  
North Catholic: Lucas Gunther, Drew Palmer.  
Mars: Ryan Ceh, Derek Piatek  
Latrobe: Sam Kiesel

## Montour

**Coach:** Nolan LaSota (2nd year as head coach)

**Returning Starters:**

6-2 senior setter Luke Stahurski  
5-9 senior libero Jaxon Camp  
6-1 senior middle hitter Austin Bigger  
5-6 sophomore defensive specialist Brayden Vlasach

**Season Outlook:**

Last year, we had a mix of veteran seniors and freshmen/first year players. After graduating seniors who contributed to our offense, we are excited to see how our returning players will step up to the plate. Between a talented younger class and a hard-working varsity squad, we are looking to vie for a playoff position.

**Section Favorite:** Ambridge and North Catholic

**WPIAL Favorite:** Mars

**WPIAL Players to Watch:**

Jaxon Camp, Montour; Donovan Bober, Ambridge; Drew Palmer, North Catholic; Lucas Gunther, North Catholic; Will Stewart, Thomas Jefferson; Derek Piatek, Mars; Colton Riska, Mars; Eric Bisignani, Latrobe; Darius Farrar, Gateway.

## Hopewell

**Coach:** Rob Hall (4th year)

**Returning starters:**

6-2 senior middle Hitter Max Bridgman  
6-0 senior libero/defensive specialist Richy Polovina  
5-11 senior outside Hitter Seth Young  
5-10 junior setter Paul Thompson  
6-3 sophomore opposite Jake Pollick

**Season Outlook:**

Alot of people are underestimating Hopewell this spring. But with an experienced senior class mixed with some talented underclassmen the Vikings will look to be in the mix again this year and prove people wrong.

**Section Favorite:** North Catholic

**WPIAL Favorite:** North Catholic or Mars

**WPIAL Players to Watch:** Lucas Gunther, North Catholic.

## North Catholic

**Coach:** Stacie Ball (9th year)

**Returning Starters:**

6-1 senior outside hitter Lucas Gunther  
6-0 senior right side hitter Nate Ball  
5-11 senior middle hitter Trey Purnsley  
6-4 junior outside hitter Drew Palmer  
5-9 junior libero Evan Cmiel

**Other players that will make an impact:**

6-4 senior middle hitter Luke Shoemaker  
5-10 senior setter Liam Cooke

**Season Outlook:**

We are a veteran group, with 5 returning starters from our WPIAL Championship team. We are led by outside hitter Lucas Gunther (1st team section 1-AA/1st team WPIAL/1st team All State), outside hitter Drew Palmer (2nd team section 1-AA/3rd team WPIAL) and right-side hitter Nate Ball (2nd team section 1-AA). Libero Evan Cmiel and middle hitter Trey Purnsley are both in their 2nd year as varsity starters. We graduated 2 important all-WPIAL players, a setter and a middle hitter, from last season. We have two current seniors, Liam Cooke and Luke Shoemaker, that had limited varsity action last season but are stepping up to fill those positions.

**Section Favorite:** North Catholic or Ambridge.

**WPIAL Favorite:** Mars, Latrobe, North Catholic, or Ambridge.

**WPIAL Players to Watch:**

Lucas Gunther, North Carolina; Drew Palmer, North Carolina; Nate Ball, North Catholic; Ryan Ceh, Mars; Sam Kiessel, Latrobe; Donovan Bober, Ambridge; Karsen Merlina, Ambridge; Sam Miller, Ambridge; William Stewart, Thomas Jefferson.

## O.L. Sacred Heart

**Coach:** Mike McDonald: (39th year, including 6 years at North Hills)

**Returning Starters:**

5-10 senior libero Lucas Vittorino

6-0 junior outside hitter Noah Wheeler

**Season Outlook**

OLSH is very young (by age and by experience) this season. The current varsity line-up includes three freshman, two sophomores, a junior and two seniors. The starting setter is a freshman and his back-up is also a freshman. We will have to grow as we play, and experience the game as it happens. This will include the speed of the game and the volleyball IQ needed to be able to compete with our opponents. We will need to limit our unforced errors and force our opponents to earn their points. There will be a lot of learning by doing! going on this season.

**Section Favorite:** Ambridge.

**WPIAL Favorite:**

Mars, Latrobe, North Catholic, Ambridge, Thomas Jefferson, Seton LaSalle

## Beaver County Christian

**Coach:** Maggie Townsend (1st year)

**Returning Starters:**

6-3 senior outside hitter Daniel Lutz

5-6 senior libero Jaiden McDade

6-0 junior Hunter Mozley