

BUCKS COUNTY Courier Times

Courier Times 2017 girls volleyball previews: Team-by-team capsules

By Tom Pfaff, correspondent

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Archbishop Wood

Coach: Maureen Thorpe (second year)

Last year's record: 17-8 (10-2 PCL)

Key players: Sr. Shauna Matthews (OH), Sr. Molly Prior (MB/MH), Sr. Samantha Link (MB/MH), Sr. Francesca Filippo (OH), Sr. Laura Prajzner (OH), Sr. Cara Coughlin (S), Sr. Megan Noonan (Libero).

The season: Led by a pair of first-team, all-Philadelphia Catholic League selections last year in Matthews and Prior, the Vikings should have even more continuity in Thorpe's second season. The main challenge will involve how quickly the remaining talented, if mostly unproven, players can step up around Matthews and Prior.

Bensalem

Coach: Tim Linehan (first year)

Last year's record: 2-19 (2-16 SOL National)

Key players: Sr. Emily Cook (S), Sr. Riley Gray (OPP), Jr. Grace Fan (Libero), Jr. Tamia Harvey-Martin (MH/MB), Jr. Meghan Klaiss (OH); Jr. Sarah Streng (MH/MB).

The season: Linehan, also the boys volleyball coach, has coaching expertise to help these Owls improve significantly on the court. Still with the goal of increasing their win total from last year, the Owls might not see progress translating immediately against an increasingly competitive SOL National.

Conwell-Egan

Coach: TBA

Last year's record: 1-11 (1-11 PCL)

Key players: Jr. Jessica Wilcox (OH), Soph. Cori Jones (OH), Soph. Kaylee Seslar (MB/MH), Jr. Cait Wickham (S), Sr. Steph Kleinfelder (MB/MH), Soph. Elizabeth Shire (OPP/OH), Soph. Rylee Worthington (Libero/DS), Soph. Alyssa Fagans (DS).

The season: For the Eagles — whose lone victory last year, 3-0, on Oct. 18 at West Catholic, was the first for the program since 2013 — their coaching search went into late August. So the Eagles likely will face adjustments to their new coach's system, a tough road against the competitive PCL.

Council Rock North

Coach: Mike Adams (third year)

Last year's record: 23-4 (18-0 SOL National champion)

Key players: Sr. Maddy Moore (OH), Sr. Mackenzie Tinner (MB/MH), Sr. Kaelin Mealey (OPP), Sr. Sarah Caola (S), Sr. Grace Schweizer (Libero), Jr. Jill Schweizer (DS), Sr. Alyssa Coates (OH), Jr. Jill Adams (OH/OPP), Sr. Julia D'Apolito (S).

The season: The Indians lost no fewer than seven players to graduation, which could bring them back somewhat to the rest of the SOL National pack. But North still has plenty of talent back from the first SOL National squad in seven years that qualified for states.

Council Rock South

Coach: John Wright (third year)

Last year's record: 11-10 (9-9 SOL National)

Key players: Sr. Hannah Sullivan (MH), Sr. Hannah Devlin (S), Sr. Lauren Koestler (OPP), Sr. MaKayla Kelly (MH), Jr. Bria DeSaro (Libero), Jr. Celina Varian (OH), Jr. Paige O'Connell (S), Soph. Ariana Ranieri (OH).

The season: The Golden Hawks have the potential to contend in the SOL National. Having lost only one senior to graduation, the Hawks have an experienced nucleus with four returning all-SOL National selections in Sullivan, DeSaro, Varian and Devlin.

George School

Coach: Tim Major (first year)

Last year's record: 6-6

Key players: Sr. Ashley Silver (OH), Sr. Hannah Witts (MB/MH), Sr. Nadia Arenas-Purvinis (S).

The season: Between a coaching change and the graduation of four players from the squad last year, the Cougars face a season of transition, as they again play an independent schedule, apart from the Friends School League, as part of the Pennsylvania Independent Schools Athletic Association.

Harry S Truman

Coach: Alex Rysak (fourth year)

Last year's record: 0-21 (0-18 SOL National)

Key players: Sr. Briana Cliney (MH), Sr. Manilyn Lalo (S/RS), Sr. Tiera Lloyd (MH), Jr. Alissa Tressler (S/RS), Jr. Mirasol Bandong (RS), Soph. Daisha Campbell (OH), Sr. Karydja Jean (OH), Sr. Breanne Margerum (S/RS/DS), Fr. Kayla Dawson (OH).

The season: The Tigers should be deeper and athletically improved from their squad a year ago. But against the SOL National, wins remain hard to earn.

Neshaminy

Coach: Jeff Wetzel (first year)

Last year's record: 6-16 (4-14 SOL National)

Key players: Sr. Courtney Arcidiacono (OH), Sr. Avery Dunkley (MH), Sr. Samantha Helstrom (S), Jr. Isabelle Catapano (MH), Jr. Lizzy Fay (DS), Jr. Coryn Oswald (OH), Jr. Jenna Gerace (OPP), Sr. Lauren Kane (Libero), Jr. Emma Lauerson (OPP/OH).

The season: Wetzel, who was JV coach all three seasons of Tom Farquharson's tenure, has coached most of the up-and-coming players seeking to earn playing time. Despite facing an uphill climb in the SOL National, Neshaminy can build around Arcidiacono, a third-team, all-SOL National selection last year.

Pennsbury

Coach: Michael Falter (sixth year)

Last year's record: 15-8 (15-3 SOL National)

Key players: Sr. Julia Vreeswyk (OH), Sr. Sydney Buell (S/OPP), Sr. Kiley Bucknum (S), Sr. Shelby Hastings (MB), Sr. Heather Linker (Libero), Soph. Elley Torres (OH), Soph. Brooke Burns (OPP), Jr. Kate Mix (MB), Soph. Ashley Parry (DS).

The season: With a proven track record of overcoming graduation losses annually — this time, six seniors from last year — the Falcons aim to contend in the SOL National by relying on their current senior leadership, while the mostly untested remainder of their roster gains experience.

Villa Joseph Marie

Coach: Doug Campbell (fourth year)

Last year's record: 6-16 (3-11 AACA)

Key players: Sr. Elayna Tsiouplis (OH), Sr. Kat Mangione (OPP), Sr. Chikodi Ebo (MB/MH), Jr. Holly Gola (Libero), Jr. Juliana Littley (S), Soph. Abby Wyatt (OH/MB).

The season: With senior outside hitter Cecilia Barreca potentially out for the season with a knee injury, Tsiouplis seemingly will step into that role. Otherwise, the Jems also will aim to build on the second half of last season, when they played about .500 after getting their first win in late September.

William Tennent

Coach: Brian Bassler (13th year)

Last year's record: 12-10 (8-10 SOL National, seventh)

Key players: Sr. Nicole Long (OH), Sr. Stephanie Woolston (Libero), Sr. Kelly Scipione (S), Sr. Shaina Gattton (OH), Sr. Devyn Cobb (MH), Sr. Kelsey O'Shea (DS).

The season: With six players graduating from the squad last year, the Panthers will face the challenge of getting back to the top half of the SOL National. Their mission starts with a pair of all-SOL National selections in Long (third team) and Woolston (honorable mention), as part of an unprecedented class of 10 seniors.