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2022 season previews: Scouting DuPage County girls volleyball

Addison Trail

Coach: Katie Inzinga (2nd year)
Last year's record: 12-23, 3-3
Top returning players: Elena Papanicolaou, sr., MH; Erica Severino, sr., OH; Caitlin Muhr, sr., OH; Stephanie Petrbok, jr., OH
Top new players: Itzel Gamboa, so., DS

Worth noting: Inzinga is in her second year as the head coach but has been coaching volleyball at Addison Trail since 2012. "The girls have been working hard and are excited for a new season to begin," she said.

Benet

Coach: Brad Baker
Last year's record: 32-6 overall; 6-1 in East Suburban Catholic (co-champions); lost to Plainfield North 25-14, 18-25, 25-18 in Oswego sectional semifinals

Top returners: Annie Eschenbach sr. M; Caroline Carens, sr. M; Peyton Turner, sr. L; Kristin Krammer, sr. OH; Gabija Staniskis, sr. RS; Ava Novak, jr. OH; Christine Pullen, jr. L; Evie Blancha, jr. OH; Val Sarros, jr. M; Gabby Stays, so. M; Audrey Asleson, so. S; Aniya Warren, so. L; Morgan Asleson, so. L

Top newcomers: Charlotte Torres, jr. L; Marikate Ritterbusch, so. L; Ellie Stiermagle, fr. S; Sophia Chinetti, fr. OH; Lyn Tarnow, fr. M

Worth noting: Benet's wave of success has included seven trophies, eight sectional titles, 12 sectional finals appearances, 14 regional titles and eight conference titles over the last 14 postseasons. Thirteen returnees are determined to add to those streaks after graduating

three lineup seniors. While there's a solid senior group with Xavier recruit Eschenbach (160 kills, 48 blocks in 2021) and Texas-San Antonio recruit Turner (97 digs), Carens (150 kills, team-best 53 blocks), Krammer (99 kills) and Staniskis (21 kills), this is another roster fueled by strong underclassmen, such as 2021 All-ESCC players Novak (team-best 249 kills) and Warren (team-best 392 digs). Another rugged schedule includes the defending 4A, 3A and 2A state champions (Metea Valley, Montini and Nazareth) as well as Nebraska's Skutt Catholic, which has won eight straight state crowns.

Back-row defense should be among the Redwings' strongest suits. "It should be an exciting year as our team has been working hard in the offseason to get better," Baker said.
Downers Grove North
Coach: Mark Wasik
Last year's record: 21-17 overall; 3-3 in West Suburban Silver (tied for 4th); lost to Willowbrook 25-18, 22-25, 25-22 in 4A Bartlett sectional semifinals

Top returners: Colleen Engstler, sr. RS; Cailyn Myers, jr. RS; Emma Barton, sr. MB; MacKenzie Mastalarz, sr. L
Key newcomers: Jenny Buehler, so. OH; Kelley Crowley, fr. OH; Sarah Rutkowski, so. OH
Worth noting: Seeking a fifth straight regional crown, the Trojans have third-year starter Barton (86 kills, 38 blocks in 2021), second-year starter Mastalarz (274 digs, 43 aces, 55 assists) and returning part-time left-handed starters Engstler (95 kills) and Myers (43 kills) leading a younger group looking for outside punch. Four-year starter Gwen Wolkow (431 kills, 772+ 1,000-plus career kills) has graduated. New outside hitters include Buehler, whom Wasik said has made tremendous strides since last season, Crowley, among the program's most talented freshmen ever, and Rutkowski, a transfer from Benet who can contribute all-around. New setters will run a 6-2 offense.

Downers Grove South
Coach: Madisen Babich
Last year's record: 13-24 overall; 5-1 in West Suburban Gold (2nd);

seven returnees while graduating seven seniors. Manning (149 kills, 166 digs, 23 aces in 2021), Sommes (130 kills, 113 digs, 33 blocks) and Meyer (216 assists, 59 digs) compiled triple-digit totals and Michelon (45 kills), Lee (29 kills, 19 blocks) and Kale (17 aces, 44 digs) also made significant contributions. The influx of last year's sophomore team will play a factor. "We will be a well-balanced team both offensively and defensively. In our returners, we have strong leadership and a great group of girls," Cardoff said.

Glenbard South

Coach: Chad Grant
Last year's record: 12-25, 6-3 in Upstate Eight (3rd); lost to Kaneland 19-25, 25-11, 25-9 in 3A Glenbard South regional semifinals

Top returners: Sofia Alcalá, jr. OH; Megan Dacca, jr. MB; Mia Lake, sr. DS
Top newcomers: Mira Hines, so. S; Brooklynn Moore, so. MB; Yanna Chavez, so. OH/DS; Abby Frieling, so. DS; Natalie Montes, fr. OH; Edie Skibbe fr. DS

Worth noting: With four sophomores and two freshmen, the Raiders will strive to minimize any growing pains. "We will be very young this year," Grant said. "We will need to develop into a strong defensive team if we are going to be successful. We also have a lot of work to do with our serve receive." Alcalá (94 kills, 27 blocks in 2021) moves to outside hitter after two seasons playing middle. Dacca (59 kills, 17 blocks) missed half of last season. Lake (138 digs, 23) hopes to return by mid-September from a torn ACL playing basketball. The 5-11 Moore is among the most promising newcomers.

Glenbard West

Coach: Dan Scott
Last year's record: 26-12 overall; 3-3 in WSC Silver (tied for 4th); lost to Wheaton Warrenville South 25-10, 25-23 in 4A Bartlett sectional semifinals

Top returners: Marin Johnson, jr. OH; Avery Herbert, jr. OH; Breccan Scheck, jr. M; Penny Vilkama, jr. DS; Demi Carpio, sr. DS; Liz Murray, sr. DS; Haydon Green, sr. S; Lizzie Halkyard, sr. OH; Hannah McGurk, sr. DS

Top newcomers: Lindsey Street, jr. M; Ivy Toth, jr. OPP; Tea Alles, jr. DS
Worth noting: Scott, who takes over for retired longtime head coach Pete Mastandrea, most recently was his varsity assistant after coaching on the sophomore level. With several key returnees, the Hilltoppers should challenge for their 14th 20-win season in the last 15 full seasons and eighth regional in the past 10 full seasons. The 6-2 Johnson emerged as one of the area's top hitters in 2021. Herbert and Green also were among leaders in kills and assists, respectively. Carpio and Murray have played varsity since freshman year and anchor a strong defensive corps. The Hilltoppers could surprise after being the only team to beat 2A champion Montini in 2021 and winning York's summer league.
Fenton
Coach: Adam Bioniarz (1st year) in the Upstate Eight)
Last year's record: 18-12, 5-4 (5th in the Upstate Eight)
Top returning players: Joanna Kukiello, sr., OH; Jordan Brown, jr., OH; Melina Lira, sr. OH; Gracen Haska, jr., MH; Gianna Krygler, sr., S; Geolia Valegurschi, jr., RS
Top new players: Lailah Stevens, sr., MH; Giselle Garcia, jr., RS
Worth noting: Bioniarz takes over as head coach with Dave Mello back as assistant, who notes that the girls have responded well to the coaching change and worked hard during summer camp and into the start of practices. "We are all excited for this season," Mello said. "Look for a couple Bison to continue playing volleyball at the college level though none have committed yet."



The best teams throughout the Daily Herald's circulation range. Rankings determined by our sports staff.

Girls volleyball

Team Comment

- 1. Barrington 34-8 Third in Class 4A last year with skill back
 - 2. Willowbrook 37-2 Six starters return
 - 3. Huntley 28-12 Four Division I commits
 - 4. Metea Valley 40-2 Hutson back for Class 4A state champs
 - 5. Benet 32-6 Seven state trophies in last 14 years
 - 6. St. Viator 33-6 Valera one of several key players back
 - 7. Montini 40-1 Memphis recruit Heatherly leads 2A champs
 - 8. WW South 28-11 Tigers are tall — and talented
 - 9. Hersey 30-8 New era begins without Lill (1,046 wins)
 - 10. Glenbard West 26-12 Won York's summer league
 - 11. St. Charles North 23-14 Libero Scherer committed to Maryland
 - 12. Stevenson 25-12 Returns five from last year's rotation
 - 13. Naperville North 26-10 Huskies 2nd last year in DVC
 - 14. IC Catholic Prep 30-8 OH Falduto committed to Penn State
 - 15. Libertyville 23-14 Finished last year on a roll
 - 16. St. Francis 24-14 Ten losses in three sets last year
 - 17. Maine West 22-11 Won Central Suburban North
 - 18. Carmel 21-6 Adds basketball standout Wood
 - 19. West Chicago 25-8 Bell takes over as coach
 - 20. Fremd 37-3 Lost 14 seniors, four Division I players
- Others to watch:** Warren 23-15, St. Charles East 17-17, Kaneland 34-4, Grayslake Central 23-13, Cary-Grove 21-16, Hinsdale Central 21-14, Downers Grove North 21-17, Antioch 20-13, Central 22-16

— Capsules compiled by Bill Stone of Shaw Local and John Lemon

season.

Montini

Coach: Irish Samolinski
Last year's record: 40-1 overall; 6-0 in Girls Catholic Athletic (champions); won 2A state championship by beating Pleasant Plains 25-16, 25-17
Top returners: Jordan Heatherly, sr. S; Izzie Evenson, so. OH; Sophia Boumans, jr. DS/L; Sienna Skarda, so. MB; Audrey Kinney, so. OH; Ella Hermann jr. DS/L

Top newcomers: Francesca Lorenzo, fr. MB/Pin
Worth noting: Montini climaxed its greatest season ever with its first state title to reach 40 victories. Four key starters graduated, but the Broncos expect to again be formidable. "We have a younger team than most teams might, but they are all highly skilled and our bench is deeper than we have had before," Samolinski said. Memphis recruit Heatherly is a returning team captain who had a team-best 642 assists and 53 aces for the champs and was second in digs (201) and third in kills (269) and total blocks (43). Evenson (72 digs), moving into a new role as a six-rotation outside

hitter, libero Boumans (135 digs, 198 serve receives) and the quick Skarda (36 total blocks) also played more than 80 sets. The McAuley Challenge and Benet Tournament will provide great tests.
Naperville Central
Coach: Brie Isaacson (17th year) in the Upstate Eight)
Last year's record: 15-22 (4th in DVC)
Top returning players: Sophia Zanca, jr., MH
Worth noting: The Redhawks graduated 10 players from last year's team. "Our roster will have 10 new players with some young talent," Isaacson said.

Neuqua Valley

Coach: Jamie Buhnerkemper (first year) in the DVC)
Last year's record: 18-17, 6-4 (third in the DVC)
Top returning players: Bryanna Jones, sr., OH; Ania Kelly, sr., OH/RS; Skylar Fildew, sr., S
Top new players: Eleanor O'Neal, Jr.,

state runners-up. Homer led the 2021 Spartans in kills (208), aces (45) and was second in blocks (42) and assists (223) to Dumptit's 353. McMillen (186) and Everett (136) were 2-3 in kills and Schmidt was third with 41 blocks. While returning players accounted for most of last season's kills, Schuele helps the graduation of more than half of their digs and serve receives.

Timothy Christian

Coach: Scott Piersma
Last year's record: 20-16 overall; 3-3 in Metro Suburban Blue (4th); lost to Montini 25-15, 25-7 in 2A Montini regional finals

Top returners: Abby VanderWal, so. OH; Sadie Orange, sr. M; Hope Huizenga, jr. OH; Addy Vogelzang, jr. M; Sierra Rieger, sr. S; Lindsey Anderson, sr. DS; Sofia Jadua Gonzalez, sr. RS

Top newcomers: Bella Potempa, fr. OH; Clare McQuade, jr. L

Worth noting: Last year's Trojans resumed their 20-victory streak for the first time since 2018. They bring back several seasoned players. A 2021 All-MSC player, VanderWal also is a 1st Alliance 15 Gold club player invited to the USA National Training Development Program. For the Trojans, VanderWal had a team-high 285 kills and .404 attack percentage with 147 digs and 30 aces. Orange (team-high 41 aces and 52 total blocks with 109 kills), Huizinga (134 kills, 163 digs), Vogelzang (51 kills) and Rieger (team-high 517 assists, 146 digs) also played at least 60 sets last season.

Waubonsie Valley

Coach: Kari Galen
Last year's record: 6-32
Top returning players: Katie Godo, sr., S; Ashlyn Hickey, sr., OH; Alex Skurka, sr., RS; Lexi Barbier, sr., MB
Top new players: Sam Miserendino, jr., L/DS; Asia Mitchell, so., L/DS; Naomi Dowd, so., S/RS
Worth noting: The Warriors have four returning starters including Godo who will play in college at North Central. ... Galen is expecting the back row to be a strength. "We will have a solid back row in both serve-receive and defense. We have seen how well this has looked during summer league, and will benefit from a stronger, more consistent back row ... Galen expects the Warriors to run a more efficient and less predictable offense ... Hickey provides a go-to option to put balls down. "(She) will continue to be a force for us on the outside and has improved greatly in power and consistency since last fall," Galen said. "We will be a young team with a lot of potential for growth."

West Chicago

Coach: Mackenzie Bell (1st year)
Last year's record: 25-8, 8-1 (2nd in the Upstate Eight)
Top returning players: Brianna Gromos, sr., OH/MB; Trinity Nelson, jr., S; Ava Lowell, jr., OH
Top new players: Gianna Deconcilis, sr., MB; Aidan Gerster, jr., OH
Westmont
Coach: Jennifer Gliwa-Bell
Last year's record: 7-24 overall; lost to Timothy Christian 23-25, 25-12, 25-15 in 2A Montini regional semifinals
Top returners: Rylee Szyzska, jr. L/ OH; Dieliza Dalipi, sr. OH
Top newcomers: Gianna Riccardi, jr. S; Defne Barkan, jr. OH/MH; Cate McDaniels, sr. OH; Jade Curtis, so. S/ RS; Cal Landwehr, sr. MH
Worth noting: Third-year starter Szyzska and three-sport athlete Dalipi set the tone for a fairly inexperienced lineup. Szyzska, the libero for the Sports Performance 16 team's AAU club title this summer, will split time between libero and outside hitter and handle serve receive with Dalipi, an All-MSC Red basketball player noted by Gliwa-Bell for her leadership and enthusiasm. At setter, Riccardi takes over a 5-1 offense and may receive help from Curtis.

Top returners: Audrey Brcka, sr. OH; Paige Syswerda, sr. S; Mia Benson, sr. OH; Libby Hornof, sr. MH; Addie Lee, sr. DS

Top newcomers: Olivia Zamis, so. MH; Juju Fender, jr. S; Halina Istanbuli, so. OH; Paige Amwoza, sr. DS; Delaney Ingretson, jr. DS; Caroline Marchis, sr. MH; Grace Markese, sr. RS; Anne Alexander, sr. OH; Erica Alexander, sr. OH

Worth noting: The Falcons seek to continue last season's turnaround toward their first 20-win season since 2017. Leading the way are William & Mary recruit Brcka, a 2021 All-DKC and IVCA honorable mention all-starer with a team-best 322 kills and 189 digs, and fourth-year starter Syswerda (team-best 649 assists, 34 aces, 191 digs). Further experience comes on the outside with Benson (team-best 35 aces, 177 kills) and Lee and Hornof, who saw limited action. First-season varsity seniors and underclassmen are ready to fill many spots left vacant by graduation.

Wheaton Warrenville South

Coach: Bill Schreier
Last year's record: 28-11 overall; 7-0 in DuKane (champions); lost to Willowbrook 19-25, 25-21, 27-25 in 4A Bartlett sectional final

Top returners: Rebecca Bellows, jr. S; Lilly King, sr. OPP; Lauren Coyne, so. OH; Maddy Mady, jr. MH

Top newcomers: Aubrie Krzus, sr. OH; Brooke Allred, jr. MH; Kelly Cortez, sr. L

Worth noting: The Tigers possess one of Schreier's tallest teams he can remember. They may need time to combine four starters with strong newcomers but are expected to be area powers again. The 6-foot Bellows, verbally committed to Wake Forest, and 5-11 King are third-year returning starters and co-captains. Bellows was a pleasant surprise last season, leading the Tigers in kills as an outside hitter, but now will be looked "to quarterback the offense" as she replaces graduated standout Darby Harris (Rice) at setter. Bellows' more natural position. The 6-3 Coyne and 6-0 Mady, named last season's Most Improved Player, also will help that transition offensively as returning starters. Libero Cortez was injured last season but is coming off an 18 national title in club with Sports Performance. Krzus, a 6-2 transfer, was a two-year varsity starter for Glenbrook North.

Willowbrook

Coach: Irene Mason
Last year's record: 37-2 overall; 6-0 in West Suburban Gold (1st); lost to Mother McAuley 25-18, 25-21 in 4A McAuley supersectional
Top returners: Calli Kenny, jr. S/ RS; Hannah Kenny, so. S/RS; Natalie Cipriano, sr. OH/RS; Hope Reckamp, sr. MB; Elle Bruschuk, jr. MB; Grace Conley, sr. L
Top newcomers: Eliza Ramey, jr. MB; Anna Mariner, so. OH
Worth noting: With six starters returning from Willowbrook's best season ever, the Warriors should keep the success coming. The Elite Eight finishers lost to the 4A state runners-up after winning their first regional since a comparable district title in 1978. The Kenny sisters were All-WSC Gold with graduated back-row standout Elizabeth Bruschuk and setter Kate Linnig. "Our team has high expectations for ourselves and the girls are all focused on doing everything we need to do," Mason said. The 5-9 Calli Kenny led Willowbrook in kills (321) with a .306 attack percentage and aces (70) and was second in digs (232) and serve receptions (262). "Calli's leadership, court presence, and skill set continues to improve," Mason said. Add to that the progress of Hannah Kenny (243) and Cipriano (122), who were 2-3 in kills. Hannah Kenny also was second in assists (325) and third in digs (214). Reckamp and Elle Bruschuk were 1-2 in blocks and Conley third in serve receptions. Mariner has shown "flashes of