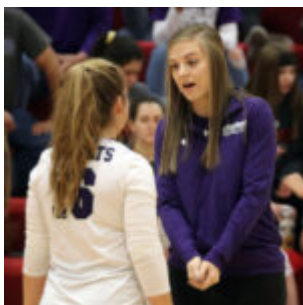


Willer excited for opportunity to lead Louisburg volleyball



Leanna Willer is in her first year as head coach of the Louisburg volleyball program, as she takes over for former head coach Jessica Compliment, who spent 15 years leading the Lady Cats.

Louisburg High School volleyball has always had a proud tradition.

The Lady Cats have become a regular fixture at the state tournament since the program's inception and expectations are high every year.

It was that way under head coach Jessica Compliment as she guided Louisburg to eight state tournament appearances and placed in the top four in seven of them in her 15 years at the helm.

Now it is Leanna Willer's turn to create her own mark on the program. Willer was hired to replace Compliment, who stepped down last spring, and has nearly completed her first summer with her new team.

"It means the world to me to be able to take over a program with such a rich history of success," Willer said. "Louisburg has been a volleyball powerhouse with a tradition of winning that we aim to keep moving forward. I recognize that I have

some very big shoes to fill, but having Coach Compliment's support is helping to make this a smooth transition. I am beyond excited for my first head coaching job."

Willer is a graduate of Washburn University where she was one of the top players during her time with the program. She is the individual career leader in attempts (4,980), second in kills (1,666) and third in kills per set (3.62) and overall points scored (1,870.5).

She also earned All-MIAA honors all four years and was a 2-time unanimous selection. She twice earned Academic All-American honors, was a two-time All-American and was the team MVP on two different occasions.

"I have such a love for the game of volleyball and I can't wait to share that with the whole program," Willer said. "I feel very fortunate to have a lot of experience as a volleyball player and as an assistant coach (in volleyball and other sports) that I can take on this role at my age. I am sure that there will be bumps along the way, but I know that I am prepared to rise to the challenge."

Willer has spent the last four seasons as the junior varsity coach under Compliment and learned a lot during that time.

Unlike some new head coaches, Willer will already have the advantage of knowing the players, which she hopes will make for a smoother transition.

"I know the traditions and experiences these girls have had throughout high school, so it's nice that we can dive right into the game this summer already knowing a lot of each other's tendencies as players and as a coach," she said. "We won't have to spend as much time getting to know each other as I would if I began coaching at another school. Naturally, we'll have to make some adjustments as we get used to our new roles, but I think we are all excited to continue right where we left off."

She will also benefit from a five-member seniors class. Setters Rinny McMullen, Davis Guetterman and a defensive specialist in Chase Kallevig are returning senior starters that will help lead the way in Willer's first season.

"I'm also very excited about the senior leadership we'll have this year," Willer said. "I know I'll be able to rely on them throughout my first year as a head coach. I met with them separately, and they've shared some awesome ideas. This will be their team and I'm impressed with the ownership they're taking already. Their commitment and dedication to Louisburg volleyball will not go unnoticed."

As far as any changes within the program, Willer believes it would be unnecessary to change things up much, but there might be a few minor differences than what some are used to seeing.

"With the amount of success we've experienced, it seems silly to reinvent the wheel and change things up a bunch," she said. "However, people will see little changes here and there as Coach Compliment and I are different people with different personalities and coaching styles. Though I would love to sit here and say I have it all figured out, this will be a continuous learning process for me as well and I will constantly be learning, reflecting, and developing as a coach.

"I am so grateful for the opportunity to be the head coach of this program. The overwhelming support from the players, the school, and the community has me itching to get back out there on the court so we can show everyone what we're made of."