

Experienced group ready to lead Wildcat volleyball under new head coach



Senior middle blocker McKenna Lohse is one of six seniors on the Louisburg volleyball this season as the Wildcats return three all-league players from last season's team.

The Louisburg volleyball team found itself just one victory away from another trip to the state tournament last season before falling in the sub-state championship to eventual state runner-up Rock Creek.

However, despite losing a 5-member senior class, the Wildcats are loading up for another state run as they return six seniors under new head coach Rich Brown, who replaced former

coach Leanna Willer.

It is an experienced group as five of the six played crucial varsity minutes a season ago and the Wildcats are excited for what the season has in store.

“I think we have a very experienced group this year, not just from playing in high school but also playing in some very high level clubs,” Brown said. “Some of the court responsibilities are different from what they experienced all winter, but they are accepting the necessary changes without complaint.”

Louisburg’s experience will show at the net as they return five hitters with varsity experience and it starts with seniors McKenna Lohse and Caileigh Kilgore.

Lohse was a starting middle blocker for the Wildcats and did several things well as she led the team in four different categories. She led the way with a team-high 211 kills, along with a team-best 56 aces and a hitting percentage of .236 and was tops in blocks in league matches.



Louisburg senior Caileigh Kilgore was the Wildcats' top outside hitter a season ago as she earned second team all-league honors.

Kilgore was another weapon at the net for the Wildcats as she was the top hitter from the outside and was second on the team with 205 kills. Both players were second team All-Frontier League selections a year ago.

Senior Delaney Nelsen will also return at the net after being limited to just back row play a season ago as she was recovering from an injury. Senior Addi Mallett, who played all six rotations at times in 2024, will also be a threat at the net for the Wildcats.

Another senior, Rylee Telken, will also see time on the right side as she returns for her second year on the varsity level.

"I am honestly struggling to get used to how well this group

works together and celebrates each other's success," Brown said. "Caileigh and Kenna have been healthy and helpful to the rest of the group. Delaney is much better than last season and has had a little bit of a setback with an ankle injury last week. But she should be healthy again by the Frontenac tournament.

"Rylee has had a good summer and winter club ball where she has improved on her blocking and passing. It's shown so far this season and I hope everyone will be able to see the difference in our matches. Addi has improved her consistency and we have been working with her on her defense as well."

Along with all those returning hitters, will be an experienced returning setter as junior Adelyn Moore is back for her third year as a starter.

Moore earned second team All-Frontier League honors and will be one of the best in the league again this year. She led the Frontier League in assists a season ago with 743 and had 31 aces and 186 digs.



Louisburg junior Adelyn Moore returns for her third season as the team's starting setter after leading the Frontier League in assists last year.

It is on defense where the Wildcats will see some new faces as they lost two starters from the back row a season ago, including a pair of all-league players.

Junior Regan Williams will step in to help lead the defense and serve as the team's libero, while senior Stella Bohnenstiehl is the team's defensive specialist. Junior Breck Nielsen is the team's second middle blocker behind Lohse.

"Defensively, we are using Regan as libero and I've been happy with what I have seen from her this season," Brown said. "The addition of Regan, Stella and Breck have been pretty seamless so far, I think because those 3, along with Addi sometimes, have been with me on JV and know my expectations. We've emphasized playing a style of defense that is more aggressive than before. Hopefully that will pay off when game day gets here."

Louisburg will open its season on Sept 2 when the Wildcats host Baldwin for a Frontier League dual. The Wildcats are hoping the mix of experience and new faces will help them take a step forward this season.

"We haven't talked much about team goals and season expectations so far," Brown said. "I think we will have to take a look at where we are after our Baldwin dual to see what our goals will be. I know these players were not happy how the season ended at Rock Creek. I hope I can do my part to get us into a better mental state when substate gets here."