

## Ohio Preview 2009: Northeast Ohio Looks to Continue Volleyball Successes

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Kori Moster has Ursuline Academy positioned to reach the Division I final once more. Photo by [www.arcticferret.com](http://www.arcticferret.com)

This has been a memorable year for northeast Ohio volleyball.

It began on November 8 when Parma Padua Franciscan defeated Kettering Archbishop Alter for the Division II state championship. In addition to winning their school's first girls' state title in a team sport, the Bruins became the first northeast Ohio team since 1991 to defeat a Greater Girls Cincinnati League opponent in state tourney action.

What followed was breathtaking as Olmsted Falls gunned down top ranked Cincinnati Ursuline Academy 39-37, 16-25, 25-21, 25-12 for the Division I state title. In so doing the Bulldogs ended the frustration that had bubbled over the years as representatives from the northeast were shown the door by GGCL opponents. They also became the first team from Cuyahoga County to win a Division I or Class AAA state volleyball crown.

The Bulldogs played with an intensity seldom seen in any sport. Witnessing them open up game four leads of 3-0, 8-2 and 19-8, and seeing the incredulous looks on their fans faces, was even more stirring than watching them hang on to win game one after letting a 24-21 lead slip away.

Fast forwarding to this summer, the Cleveland Volleyball Company captured its first national title when the CVC 17 Black won three hard-fought matches over California powers in the 2009 USA Junior Olympic Girls' Volleyball Championships held in Miami.

Christine Fritsche, who played a key role in Padua's win last fall, was named tourney MVP. Dayna Roberts, the sophomore who put up 63 assists and had a team-leading 23 digs for Olmsted Falls, was also selected to the All-American team.

The CVC 15 Black took a second place, as did an Ohio Elite 17 team of players from schools in the vicinity of Wooster. Northwest Ohio got into the act with Black Swamp Volleyball Club 13 and 14 teams placing second and third.

Meanwhile, Cincinnati's Team Z notched another title when their 16 Orange won the JVDA championship held in Louisville, Kentucky.

We've talked about growing parity the past few years, and the results from last fall and this summer bear this out.

Last year's preview opened with "The talent pool just keeps getting bigger and bigger...the explosion of talented teams has turned this preview pretty much into a guessing game". That was the only thing we got right as all four of our preseason picks bit the dust, and this year is no easier.

Actually, our preseason choices weren't that far off. Ursuline and Jackson Center were runner-ups, and Lima Central Catholic reached the final four. Walsh Jesuit fell to Padua at the regional.

Picking winners this time is complicated by the reorganization of divisions to reflect enrollment changes, and by the altering of some districts.

Cincinnati Ursuline Academy returns an awesome array of talent and gets our nod again in D-I over a tall and fully loaded Dublin Coffman. Defending champion Marion Local is an obvious D-IV choice with their stellar returning cast (but don't tell St. Henry or Norwalk St. Paul). The other divisions offer a tantalizing array of choices. Archbishop Alter in Division II and Orrville in Division III are educated guesses.

### **Division I (Cincinnati Ursuline Academy, Dublin Coffman, Toledo St. Ursula, Brecksville-BroadviewHeights)**

Ursuline Academy returns most everyone from the team that roared through most of a very difficult schedule. The Lions went five only twice, their closest call a 25-16, 25-19, 17-25, 18-25, 18-16 squeaker over against Mount Notre Dame in early October. Taking no prisoners in their state semifinal rematch, they clawed the Cougars in three. Then came the buzz saw of Olmsted Falls.

With "everyone and then some returning", as one rival coach described it, Ursuline should be expected to again take the GGCL Scarlet division. The Lions did graduate five seniors including two starters, so "everyone" isn't really correct. But with a surfeit of letter winners augmented by varsity hopefuls from undefeated junior varsity and freshmen teams, "then some" more than fits the bill. Any open spots in their lineup will be fiercely contested.

Ursuline will be strong at the corners with 5'10" seniors Jade Henderson and Winthrop University recruit Lauren Marlatt. Henderson paced the Lions in kills in the final four and was second in digs. An all-Ohio selection in 2008, she holds the school record for kills in a season with 306. Marlatt earned national honors this summer on Team Z's 17 Orange.

Also back are two All-American hitters from the Team Z 16 Orange that won JVDA gold in Louisville, 6'0" middle blocker/outside hitter Christina Beer, the school record holder with eight blocks in a match, and 5'8" outside/setter Jamie Goldschmidt.

With Cincinnati Player of the Year 5'10" all-Ohio senior Dani Reinart back at setter, the attack should be withering. Reinart, who has committed to the University of Buffalo, put up a school record 904 assists last year.

The Lions will also be hard to score on - what else is new? - with PrepVolleyball Soph79 and Team Z 16 Orange libero Kori Moster picking up where she left off. Quite possibly the best back row player in Ohio, she had a whopping 39 digs against Olmsted Falls and a school record 607 for the year. She just committed to Michigan State. Helping out will be serve receive and defensive specialist Anna Prickel.

Henderson and Reinart were nominated for Gatorade Player of the Year.

Leading a long line of strong challengers will be Mount Notre Dame and Lakota West.

Mount Notre Dame graduated all of its height, and in marked contrast to recent years will be undersized with a starting lineup mostly around 5'8". Also gone is Coach Donna Mechley who architected four state champions. Her replacement is Joe Burke, who was last seen helping Archbishop Moeller garner another Boys state championship.

The Cougars will compensate their lack of height with great defense, speed and ball control. Leading the way will be three seniors, Ohio State bound outside Marissa Otto, middle blocker/outside hitter Kate Eckels, and setter Kristen Caccimelio. The backcourt looks solid with sophomore libero/outside Kelsey Wolf, and senior defensive specialist twins Lauren and Megan Rohlf. Eckels stands the tallest of that group at 5'9".

Otto averaged close to three kills and digs per game, served 93 percent and her hitting efficiency was .281.

The remainder of the GGCL will be strong as usual, and any one could rise to the top.

McAuley is poised to grab third or higher with four returning starters. At outside will be two 5'9" seniors. Hannah Vanarsdall is two years removed from shoulder surgery and looks to attain the promise of her sophomore year. Lindsey Criswell enhanced her serving and defensive skills in club this year. Lauren Krabacher, a 5'10" senior blocker/outside hitter has strengthened her all-around play and should be a vocal leader. Junior setter Kelley Namaky has two varsity years under her belt. If newer players like middle hitter Kaitlyn Gerrity blossom, we might see the Mohawks this November.

Mother of Mercy reloads around a core group with extensive club experience. Megan Wanstrath, a 5'10" junior opposite who played for Northern Kentucky Volleyball Club 16 Tsunami, will be a big part of the offense. Lindsey Dinkelacker, a 5'11" sophomore middle who started last year, came on this off season with Team Z 15 Orange. Starting at setter will be last year's libero Carly Mazza, and taking over the number one left side spot will be Julie Murray.

2003 PrepVolleyball National Champion Cincinnati St. Ursula will field a young and talented team. The Bulldogs will be led by senior outside hitter Catherine Janszen, an all-around player in her fourth varsity season. Also of note are third-year starting senior outside Nicole Hall, and junior setter Jenna Moeller.

Seton will try to improve on last year's 8-18 mark with Sara Bachus Redman taking over as head coach. She spiked the Saints to a state title in 1996. Seton finished 0-10 in the GGCL and 4-17 in the regular

season. Coming alive in October, they knocked off Fort Ancient Valley frontrunners Cincinnati Turpin and Kings, surprised 19-5 Greater Miami Conference champ Lakota East and won the district title from Lakota West.

Back for Seton are senior libero Emily Averbeck, and 6'2" middle hitter/blocker Sarah Ritter, daughter of Mary Ritter, who coached the Saints to three straight state titles and 102 consecutive wins in the mid-1980s. Other players of note are senior defensive specialist Katelyn Kraft and 6'1" junior outside Andrea Book.

Elsewhere around the River City, Lakota West has been steadily improving the past two seasons, and with ten returning lettermen this could be their break out year.

The Firebirds will be a huge force in the middle with two junior PrepVolleyball Soph79 selections, 5'11" setter and University of Michigan recruit Lexi Dannemiller, and 6'7" (she keeps growing) middle hitter Liz McMahon. The two were teammates on Team Z's Orange national champion team. McMahon was selected as an All-American, and was also chosen to play for the National Youth White Team. Dannemiller, who was honorable mention all-Ohio in 2008, was named Tournament MVP.

Returning in back row is sophomore libero Mel Stewart. Other Firebirds of note are 6'0" senior opposite Kristie Kaaa, 5'10" freshman outside Annie Bierman (an AAU All-American who played for Sports Express), 6'0" sophomore middle Corri Muha, junior outside Taylor Anderson, and junior defensive specialist Shannon Breen. This team is loaded.

2007 GMC champ Oak Hills is armed, literally, with four stellar junior hitters having national club experience, and will give Lakota West all it wants with their three-middle offense. For starters there is 5'11" PrepVolleyball Soph79 outside Rachel Eubanks, a three-year starter who averaged three kills per game last season. Caraline Maher, a 5'11" right side who can do it all, will hit from left, right and middle, and set if she has to. After making huge strides in off season, 6'1" Lauren Engleman may become one of the top five middles in Cincinnati. Adding depth is 5'11" middle/right side Rachel Ruehl.

Also threatening from the Greater Miami Conference are Sycamore, Mason and Lakota East.

Sycamore has all their key players back for what could be their best season ever. And they have one of the top hitter-setter combinations in the state in 5'11" senior outside Gaby Gray. One of four PrepVolleyball Fab 50 juniors in Ohio, and a former Frosh 59 and High Performance Team selection, Gray touches 10'1". Her JO team took 5th in Miami in 18 American and she made the All Tourney Team. She recently committed to Northwestern University.

Watch for Sariah Suryadevara, a 5'7" junior outside with hops who could be a college libero. Playing opposite Gray will be 5'10" setter/hitter Jessica Wolfe, and making big strides is 6'0" sophomore hitter Annie Blood.

Mason lost a cannon but last year's GMC runner-up still has front row fire power with 5'9" senior outsides Sanaya El-Naggar and Colleen Raga. Both have college offers on the table. An all-around, El-Naggar led the Comets with 213 digs last season. Returning at setter where she put up 665 assists is senior Hillary Melnick. One middle is 5'9" junior Lauren Ketron.

Defending GMC champion Lakota East will rebuild around senior setter/defensive specialist Meredith Garda.

Harrison is bursting with seven seniors thirsting to get out of the District. The Wildcats were a perfect 10-0 in the Fort Ancient Valley Conference Buckeye last season, and wound up 18th in the state. But post season hopes were abruptly ended in their first outing by Lakota West, and they finished 20-3.

Leading their attack will be 5'7" setter Annie Robben, 6'0" middle blocker Susannah Jonas, 5'8" outside hitter Brittany Hall, and 5'10" outside hitter/defensive specialist Hannah Volkerding. The attack will start with libero Ashley Hoeffler. Volkerding and Hoeffler were members of a 2007 Nationals Top 8 team. Volkerding was second on the team last year in every offensive category behind FAVC Player of the Year Kim Rosen who graduated, and she and Hoeffler led in digs and passing efficiency. Four of the five play club ball. Robben decided to concentrate on track last spring and placed 14th in the state in pole vault.

Challenging the Wildcats in the FAVC will be Anderson, which tied Harrison for the 2007 title. Top returnees for the Redskins are 6'0" junior middle hitter Grace Boothe, junior libero Emily Ellis, senior left sides Ashlee Rupp and Monica Chaney. Also of note are senior right side Emily Lemaster and 6'0" junior middle Emily Nelson.

Kings is looking to grab the FAVC Cardinal crown away from Turpin, and to improve on last season's 18-5 mark. The Knights' top players are 5'10" middle hitter Alex Shipley, who contributed 246 kills and 53 blocks last year, and 5'7" setter Austyn Phelps, who established the school record for assists with 567. Shipley has participated at nationals the past three years. She will study either graphic arts or photography at Savannah College of Art & Design, and play volleyball – she's already been selected as a "Sand Volleyball Partner" by one of their players.

Turpin lost five seniors, but has a great freshman class. Leading the Spartans will be two seniors, 5'8" outside Tara Jones and 5'10" middle Amanda Ernst.

GWOC champion Lebanon lost heavily to graduation, but may surprise some folks. Their top returning player is 5'9" senior middle Adrienne Wray. She'll lead three stud sophomores, outside hitters Mandee Ehrlich and Alex McPherson, and setter Heather Seifker. Joining the Warriors is a Hoosier move in from the Muncie Volleyball Club, 5'10" junior middle hitter Jerrica Krupa.

Several teams in the Dayton area will vie for a district crown.

Greater Western Ohio Conference Central division co-champ Beavercreek returns lots of talent. The Beavers will be led by three seniors, 5'10" outside hitters Brianna Swan and Cassie Kalman, and 5'11" middle Megan Burling. Add 6'1" junior middle Kelsey Van Oss and you have a formidable attack. Setting will be sophomore Carri Kapaku, an honorable mention all-district mention as a frosh.

But co-champ Centerville will be right there with strong serving and outside hitting. The Elks will be led by two-year Team Z 5'10" setter Ashley Sarmiento, and 5'10" outside Katelyn Versen, both seniors. Coming on is Heather Adams, a 5'11" junior middle who developed nicely with the Dayton Juniors. All three are getting college looks. And the back row icing on the cake is sophomore Janna Krafka, a top libero in the Dayton area.

Kettering Fairmont has height and talent and could surprise some folks. The Firebirds were 13-11 last year against a rugged schedule, and won a game from Ursuline. Leading Fairmont will be 6'3" middle Cassie Sant, a University of Dayton basketball recruit. Senior libero Kim Seitter can flat out dig. With top notch juniors like 5'11" lefty outside/right side Rachel Specht (she can attack from anywhere), 6'2" middle Lauren Kraemer and setter Nicole Ray, the Firebirds could sneak in.

While Centerville's sectional will likely be a dog fight between several teams, in Tipp City it will come down to Vandalia-Butler and Troy.

Vandalia-Butler returns two senior studs in 5'10" outside/middle blocker Kerry Winchester, and 6'1" middle blocker Brianna Innocent. An outstanding versatile player with a power swing and leaping ability, Winchester is on pace to set the career kill record and will likely own a single season record as well.

She has committed to Cleveland State University. Innocent is also a power hitter and excellent blocker. She will play basketball at Western Michigan.

Key returnees for Troy are 5'11" senior middle blocker Kristen Rice, sixth all-time at the school for kills in a season, and senior outside Madison Reiser, third in both career digs and kills. Both played for Team Atlantis.

Springfield looks to better last season's district semifinal appearance with three top returnees. One is Springfield News-Sun Player of the Year 6'0" senior middle hitter Lindsey Butterfield. She committed to Bowling Green State University. Also back are outside hitter Jacki Furay and middle Jaylene Berrien, both juniors.

Another team on the rise is Piqua, which finished state runner-up in 1992 and 1993 but has not been heard from of late. The Indians will be led by sophomore outside hitter Brooke Reinke, who played on an Atlantis 15's Elite Team that was one match away from qualifying for Nationals. Reinke led last year in kills, was second in aces and third in blocks as a freshman. Also back is 5'9" senior right side/setter Kayle Quinter. She led in assists and aces, and was second in blocks.

Three incoming freshman have played JO since they were nine, and have qualified for nationals for the past 2 years: setter Jasmine Davis, libero Taylor Bachman, and outside hitter Shelby Vogler.

A player of note is Cincinnati Colerain third-year starting setter Megan LaFary. She led the softball team in hitting last spring, batting around .430.

Western Brown returns Southern Buckeye Conference Player of the Year Lauren Davis, a 5'6" senior middle/outside who high jumps in track and stars in basketball. Also back is 5'11" middle/outside Jeanette Cunningham. She holds the school record for kills, thanks in part to Davis having played soccer her freshman year. Third-year starting senior Lindsey Leist returns as libero.

In the northwest, Toledo St. Ursula and Rocky River Magnificat are the region favorites with Findlay, Bowling Green, Amherst Steele, and defending state champ Olmsted Falls leading a large pack of challengers.

Toledo St. Ursula is still young, but their lineup has been honed by club ball and actual varsity experience. Regulars at the Nutter Center from 2000 through 2005, the Arrows' quiver is brimming with returnees from the freshman and sophomore dominated squad that Olmsted Falls rallied to beat 18-25, 21-25, 25-14, 25-20, 15-11 in the regional semifinal.

Two juniors, 5'9" honorable mention all-Ohio setter Veronica Zimmerman and 6'2" middle Maggie Burnham, will lead St. Ursula, along with 6'0" senior outside/right side Marissa Tashenberg who recently committed to Eastern Kentucky. Also back are 5'10" second-year starting sophomore outside hitter Erin Williams, and 5'8" senior defensive specialist/libero Molly Pfohl.

Sophomores to watch are 5'11" lefty setter Katie Felix, libero Madison Haupricht, 5'9" setter Madison Strall and Cassidy Croci. Coming up is freshman Maddie Burnham.

Toledo Notre Dame Academy will defend its City League crown and will challenge in the region with a smaller and much different team, having lost nine seniors to graduation and Isolde Hannan to Dublin Coffman. But the Eagles possess stellar hard working athletes with a great gym culture.

Their top returnee is 6'0" senior outside Paige Roback, an Eastern Michigan recruit who played for the Ohio Elite 17 national runner-up squad, was named to the national All Tourney Team and can touch 9'6". Also at outside will be 5'10" junior Meghan Smyth, who bided her time last year with two all-state outsides in

front of her. She led TVC 16-1 to nationals and is getting some strong D1 looks.

Setting will be senior Kelsey Fitzpatrick, one of those kids with fantastic ball control along with great intangibles that is so hard to find. Joining her will be 5'11" sophomore Shelly Dehenning, who has strong hands, a natural feel for the game and endears herself to teammates and coaches alike with dances and jokes.

Others to look for are sophomore libero Lisa Urbanski and junior transfer right side Alexa Bowyer. They were TVC 16-1 teammates of Smyth. Providing depth are sophomore right side Jocelyn Uchic, and some youngsters from a strong freshman class.

Complicating things is the return of Toledo Central Catholic after a two year hiatus in Division II during which the Irish garnered the school's first state volleyball crown in 2007. Central has for two years running lost the City League tourney final to Notre Dame Academy after going 10-0 in the regular season.

Also fairly young, Central will look for leadership from three seniors, 5'11" middle Julia Haupricht, 5'10" outside Molly Vetter and libero Alyssa Pelish. Haupricht saw action as a sophomore in Central's 2007 state championship win over Bishop Hartley. Coming up are two 5'11" sophomore outsides with great JO experience, Hannah Hendricks and Abby Wietrzykowski.

Also in the City League, Toledo Whitmer has two top returnees in 5'8" junior left side Jamie Howald and 6'1" senior middle Laura Walter. A player of note is Toledo Bowsheer junior right side Mariah Truscinski.

Bowling Green is great to go for its sixth consecutive Northern Lakes League crown. We thought the Bobcats reign was in jeopardy last year after key graduation losses. But they avenged an early five-game home setback to Sylvania Southview with a 25-20, 30-28, 25-23 road win, and took the NLL outright with a 25-9, 17-25, 25-22, 21-25, 18-16 home win over Anthony Wayne in the last match of the season.

The Bobcats' trademark ball control will be stellar as usual with 5'9" outside Ashley Dunn, a four-year letter winning Bowling Green State University recruit and 2006 PrepVolleyball Frosh 59 selection. Dunn contributed 27 aces, 283 digs, 377 kills and 20 blocks in 2008, and received All-American honors with her Premier Volleyball Club team. At setter will be her 5'7" cousin and fellow JO national All-American Jordan Dunn. She accounted for 144 assists, 110 kills, 20 blocks, 31 aces and 160 digs.

Bee Gee will have height with 6'1" sophomore Chelsea Watson, a 2009 PrepVolleyball Frosh 59 selection, who recorded 76 kills and 19 blocks as a starting frosh. Bolstering the Bobcats are returning seniors, middle hitter Paige DeVriendt, libero Jordan Garza, and defensive specialist Olivia Goza. Coming up is sophomore outside hitter Kelsey Lahey.

With many key returnees from last year, Sylvania Northview is looking to dethrone the Bobcats, whom they pushed to five in their second match-up. Top on the list is 5'10" senior outside Katie Bartlett who paced last year's team with 247 kills on 87 percent attacking. A float server, Bartlett racked up 97 percent serving. Helping her will be 6'0" junior middle Valerie Sohasky. Also back is defensive mainstay libero Stephanie Yarnell, who was at 81 percent with 608 digs. Yarnell also had a serve receive ratio of 1.902. Helping in back court will be senior defensive specialist Becca Turley.

Perrysburg will put up a fight with Bailey BredenbeckCorp, a setter/outside who turns not-so-hot passes into amazing sets. She and 5'10" senior outside Erin Mesker connect well at the net. 5'10" sophomore middle/right side Emily Treece should also be a force. Senior defensive specialist Stephanie Messenger will again lead the back row, and with some up and coming youngsters the Yellow Jackets may surprise.

Anthony Wayne returns four players with varsity experience. Ball control and defense will be in evidence with senior libero Alex Butts in back row. Setting will again be 5'10" junior Molly Hilfinger. At the outsides

are Hayley Hutchinson and Mary Marzec who doubles as a defensive specialist. Newcomers expected to play key roles are junior middle/outside Jillian Pellek and freshman outside Kaitlyn Ward.

Sylvania Southview will reload with talented youngsters around senior libero Ellie Comes.

Holland Springfield moves back into contention with most of their stat leaders back. They are 5'9" junior right side Cheryl Kimmet (hitting percentage, attempts and kills), 5'10" senior middle Keyonna Gregory (all blocking categories), and senior libero Melissa Gearig (all defensive and passing stats).

Findlay will be short, but with five seniors could return to the regional, and even go further if it can control the tempo. The Trojans beat Anthony Wayne, Bowling Green and Ashland last year, but fell in three to Magnificat in the regional semifinal despite leading in every game.

Top seniors are hard-hitting outside Kristen Davidson, middle hitter Becca Feczer, middle/outside Krystan Krucki, and setter Hannah Gephart who is getting college looks. Much improved Kelsi Romatowski, a 5'11" middle who average two blocks per game will, unfortunately, miss most if not all the season with an injury. Watch for Kayce Krucki, a 5'7" freshman with a heavy arm who also plays phenomenal defense. She comes off the Black Swamp 14 American JVDA national runner-up team.

Top contenders for one of two berths from the Cleveland area will be Magnificat, Amherst Steele, North Royalton, Elyria, Amherst Steele and defending state champ Olmsted Falls.

Magnificat beat Amherst State to reach state in 2007, but lost to Olmsted Falls in last year's regional final. The Blue Streaks will be strong in the middle with two returning blockers from the Cleveland Volleyball Club 17-Black team that won at nationals, 5'10" senior Michelle Chakirelis (her match point block gave CVC the title over Sports Shack of Southern California 25-23, 26-24), and 6'2" junior Brittney Balsler (she ended game one with a kill). Other returnees include defensive specialist Catie Lambert, who played up on the Maverick 18 National team that placed third in Miami, and outside/right side Jennifer Misencik.

Amherst Steele looks to regain the form of 2007. That was the year they tied Olmsted Falls for the league championship, surprised Notre Dame Academy in a regional semifinal and battled Magnificat to five games in the final. Steele will be led by 5'7" PrepVolleyball Soph 79 junior all-Ohio outside Deme Morales. A 5'7" leaper with a 28-inch vertical, she played a big role as a frosh in the win over Notre Dame.

Also back for Steele are two juniors, defensive specialist Kaylee Koller, and setter Marissa Harned. Adding offensive punch will be senior hitter Abby Burgdorf.

Olmsted Falls lost big parts of its offense, but an all-Ohio setter like Dayna Roberts can work wonders. Senior hitter Corinne Manly is also back, and she set the season blocking record last year. Coming up is sophomore Kelsey Snider, whose sister Brittany played a big role in last year's state championship.

Beating North Royalton will be a tall order, literally, with the senior-sophomore sister act of 6'3" Amy and Sara Schwarzwaldler patrolling the net. A powerful outside hitter and great blocker who can touch 9'7", Amy holds school records for kills in a match with 31, and in a season with 375. She was all-Ohio in 2008 and has a full ride to Ohio State. Her sophomore sister Sara is best described as an "unbelievable blocker" with an "incredible vertical". Sara has no school records "yet" according to her coach. Both play for Maverick/A.C.E. National teams, and Amy was on the 18 National team that finished third in Miami.

Fueling the offense will be Elissa Foster, a 5'5" senior libero who holds records for digs in a match (36), best serve receive in a season (91 percent), digs in a season (356), career digs (1027) and service aces in a match (26). She can be summed up as a natural passer who reads well and serves a great floater.

A player to watch is Strongsville senior Elise Robertson, a right side/middle for the Maverick 18 National

team that took third in Miami.

Elyria may have its strongest team of the past few years with two top seniors, 5'10" middle hitter Brigitte Jones and 5'9" right side middle Jazmyn Corlew. Also back is athletic 5'7" junior outside Kristen Boros. Her grand slam paced the Pioneers to a 10-1 win over Hudson in last spring's state softball championship game. Coming on is 5'8" sophomore outside Shelby Obitts, from the Maverick 16 national qualifier.

Medina, which was ousted by Olmsted Falls last year, looks to improve with a three middle offense. Emily Witsaman, a 6'2" senior middle hitter who helped the CVC 17 Black win nationals in Miami (her block kill broke a 23-23 game one tie), will lead the attack. She recently committed to the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. Rotating with her will be two sophomore outside/middle hitters, 5'11" Ally Peters who played for the CVC 15 Black National runner-up, and 5'9" Kaitlyn Witsaman from the Maverick/ACE 15 National qualifier. 6'0" senior right side Leslie Giordan will provide options.

A player of note is Grafton Midview 5'11" sophomore outside hitter Arrianna Cumberledge, and a team to watch is St. Joseph Academy.

Volleyball fans in Ohio have grown accustomed to seeing two teams from the same league reach the final four. Southwestern Ohio has long had a preponderance of strong teams and the GGCL is the top big school volleyball conference in the state. With five districts, one GGCL team usually goes to the Hilliard regional, while another slogs through Vandalia.

Last year the Cleveland area got in on the act when Olmsted Falls and Brecksville-Broadview Heights showed up at the Nutter. The teams are members of the same league, which is ironically named - are you ready for this - the Southwestern Conference!

Brecksville knocked off Lodi Cloverleaf in the regional final and those two are again frontrunners in a region that has for years been dominated by Stow, Wooster, Mentor, Austintown-Fitch and Solon. Brecksville made three final four appearances in the 1980s, the last in 1987, and then slid into mediocrity. When Coach Rob Cline arrived three years ago, the Bees were coming off a 6-win season.

Cline said that upon arriving "I noticed we had size and talent. We just worked very hard and began re-teaching skills and fundamentals". Brecksville finished 13-9 his first season, and lost to Solon in the district semifinal. Then the Bees, who are 35-14 under Cline, went all the way to Fairborn! And this summer they finished first out of 32 mostly eastern schools at the Penn State Camp.

Returning for Brecksville are 6'0" sophomore middle Abbey Brinkman, who twice recorded eight blocks, once in a league match with Amherst and again in the regional final, 5'11" junior outside Olivia Chrzanowski who was second in attacking and digging, 5'10" senior outside Lindsey Remington, and the team leader in serve receives and digs, senior libero Melanie Smith.

Solon will provide the biggest challenge in the district with a stronger team from last year, led seniors: middle hitter Bethany Lobaza, and outsides Mea Anton, Kayla Woo and Dana Coleman..

Cloverleaf has also achieved a dramatic turnaround under the direction of Coach Jim Vaughn, going 45-5 the past two years, after posting the first winning season in school history in 2006. The Colts captured their first ever Suburban league crown in 2007 with a perfect 14-0 mark, and they performed an encore last season. But they'll have to battle their way out of the very competitive Barberton district.

The Colts return their three top hitters from last year. Two of them played on the Ohio Elite 17 National runner-up squad in Miami, 5'8" outside Corrine Early and 6'0" Morehead State bound middle hitter Laura McDermott. Megan McCarthy, another 6'0" senior middle, has really improved and will surprise some folks this year. Coming up and expected to make an impact is 5'10" junior setter Sarah Schliech.

However, the Colts' hold on the district is precarious - last year they beat Massillon Jackson in five. Jackson had just beaten North Canton Hoover in five. And those two are loaded.

Jackson returns ten seniors who will be under the tutelage of new Coach Jeff Walck. He guided Tallmadgeto six consecutive final four appearances in the 1990s. Top returnees are outside hitter Britney Terrell and middle Caroline Houston. Setting will be junior Mackenzie Moss.

Hoover returns three all-District selections on a team with great chemistry, and most with JO experience. Maggie Desrosiers, a 5'9" middle hitter/all-around, was named to the all-tourney team at last year's Cloverleaf Tournament. She already holds school records for blocks in a match (25), serving points in a match (23) and season aces (55). 6'0" junior middle Laura Wheeler holds records for kills in a season and match (26). The two hitters also boast GPAs of 4.3 and 4.1 respectively. Also back is senior outside/all-around Brittany Palomba.

Massillon Perry will be in the mix. Their top players are senior outside Maria Sutton, and Felicia Guilliouma. Both are 5'6", but don't be fooled. An outstanding defender, Sutton has a 30-inch vertical, and once was state runner-up in the 100-meter dash when she ran track. Guilliouma has long arms, plays smart and is very versatile. Another Panther of note is 5'10" lefty junior setter/backside hitter Meghan Vodopich.

Canton GlenOak returns five seniors led by libero Kara Filicky, outside Alex Caley and middle Emily Mellie.

With some athletic kids, former volleyball power Canton McKinley could turn heads. The Bulldogs, who won state in 1987, will be led by 5'11" junior middle Dayleesha Jackson, senior libero Mariah Green, and junior setter Ayanna Stinson.

Wooster was hit by graduation. But with one of Ohio's top setters, 5'11" lefty Jade Craycraft, the Generals will produce some offense. Craycraft played on the Ohio Elite 17 National runner-up team, and will play for Liberty University next year.

Wadsworth will cause more trouble with a solid defensive team that plays well together. The Grizzlies handed second ranked (in Division II) Kenston its only regular season loss in the final match last year, but fell to Wooster in a district semifinal.

A player to watch is Green junior outside Logan Pastor.

Perennial northeast power Mentor graduated its entire starting lineup. In addition, longtime coach Rich Woodman retired, leaving with a career mark of 477-107. Under Woodman,

Mentor won 21 consecutive district titles and made five final four appearances.

Mentor surprisingly has nine seniors and should be a force. Strongest all around is outside/setter Samantha Muzic. Two 5'10" middle blocker/outside hitters, senior Katie Sullivan and sophomore Kara Burger, will provide power and defense at the net. The Cardinals also possess two senior setters, Tia Corder and Kori Prokop.

If Painesville Riverside is ever going to wrest the district crown from Mentor, this is the time. The Beavers will be led by 2008 team MVP senior outside Erika West, who averaged 2.6 kills and 3.91 digs per game and served 49 aces. 5'9" senior outside/middle Teresa Noewer added 2.3 kills and 3.34 digs a game, and 5'10" junior setter Nicole Bayer led the offense with 447 assists and matched West with 49 aces. Both were on club teams that qualified for nationals, as was up-and-coming 5'9" sophomore middle Elizabeth Maczuzak.

Ashtabula Lakeside lost six seniors from a team that produced consecutive 20-win seasons and Premier Athletic Conference titles. But the Dragons will still contend with two prime holdovers, 6'0" Holy Cross bound setter/right side Christiana Blakeslee and libero Angela DeGeorge.

Youngstown Boardman looks to advance beyond the district final this year with a good, albeit young group back. Their top gun is three-year starting senior outside Nicole Biagetti. She led in kill proficiency last fall and set a Federal League record this spring in the long jump. Second year junior starter Stephanie Sfara led the Spartans in kills, qualified for regionals in swimming last winter and played club this spring. Leading the attack will be junior setter Amanda Volosin, a top athlete who played right side last year.

One challenger could be Louisville with returning all-district middle hitters Jessica Lairson and Alyx Crislip.

Austintown-Fitch, Cuyahoga Falls and defending district champion Stow-Munroe Falls could also pose problems.

Akron Firestone won the Akron City Series last year and should do so again. The Falcons will soar on the wings of two big hitters, junior middle Senicia Reid and senior outside Gretchen Von Koenig.

Heading south we come to the Central District, which is the home of Dublin Coffman. The Shamrocks finished last year at 25-2 after a five-game regional semifinal loss to Lewis Center Olentangy, who in turn fell in a three-game final to Ursuline (game three was 26-24). Coffman's other loss was to Mother of Mercy, and they beat the likes of Magnificat, Cincinnati Oak Hills and Toledo Central Catholic.

The other two Central District champions, Olentangy and Marysville, graduated a lot, and Olentangy also departed for Division II. Bishop Watterson was hard hit as well. Coffman has, however, grown stronger.

The Shamrocks will be led by 6'1" all-Ohio senior outside Andrea Baylin (Southeast Missouri State University), 6'1" senior right side Meredith Stranges, 5'11" junior third-year starter and setter Lindsey Zitzke, 6'2" middle/outside Alex Blair (Xavier University) and 6'1" senior middle Bailey Farthing. All played on club teams that went to nationals.

Coffman did graduate a few seniors, but Isolde Hannan, a junior middle hitter who jump touches 10'3", moved in from Toledo Notre Dame. As if that wasn't enough, Julia Mindlina transferred from Dublin Scioto. The third-year starter will take over at libero.

Several teams will vie for the other two regional slots.

Bishop Watterson always reloads and this year should be no exception. Leading the Eagles will be 5'9" team captain and outside hitter Taylor Ely, who played on the Columbus Volleyball Academy National team.

With only one senior, Gahanna-Lincoln will be led by two-time all-district junior setter Abby Aeston. Other Lions of note are senior libero Lauren Arnett and 5'10" outside Mackenzie Carder.

Olentangy Liberty is on the rise, literally, with 6'2" middle Brittney Wex and 6'1" senior right side Megan Van Farowe. Most of the lineup has played club, including 6'0" junior outside Andrea Noe (Columbus Volleyball Academy 16 National qualifier), junior setter Brynn Erdy and 5'11" junior middle Morgan Stewart.

Hilliard Davidson's prospects have brightened considerably with the addition of three-time all-OCC Capital Conference senior setter Julie Shives. She played for the national qualifying Columbus Volleyball Academy 17s this summer, and transferred from Central Crossing where she led last year with 73 aces, 572 assists, 29 blocks, 272 digs and 107 kills. Senior libero Lindsey Sumrell will get things rolling for Shives, whose top

targets will be senior outsides Ashton Krajewski and Addie Goodwin.

Pickerington North will field its usual solid team led by 5'6" libero Audrey Sanders. The Panthers finished 24-1 last year, their only loss to Olentangy in the district final.

Top returnees for Westerville Central are 5'10" outside Rhayne Smithermen, and right side Jaimee Neal, both seniors.

Newark will have its youngest team in recent memory. Freshman all-around Anne Thomasson will lead the Wildcats, and returning setter MacKenzie Wheeler will run the offense. Both have club experience.

Delaware Hayes will have height with 6'0" honorable mention all-Ohio outside Ashley Sprau and 6'1" middle Liz Palmer, both seniors. Sprau played for CVA 17 national team, as did Upper Arlington 5'11" outside/middle blocker and Indiana University of Pennsylvania recruit Kadie Koeneman.

Dresden Tri-Valley, which hails from east of Newark but goes to Central District, has three all-District seniors back, 5'10" Ashland University basketball recruit and middle hitter Alyssa Miller, setter Jess Moyer, and defensive specialist Taylor Martin.

## **Division II (Kettering Archbishop Alter, Parma Padua Franciscan, Walsh Jesuit, Columbus Bishop Hartley)**

Northeast Ohio was atop the high school volleyball world in 1992. Archbishop Hoban had just captured its third straight Division II crown, and powerhouse Stow-Munroe Falls had retaken the Division I crown, its second in three years, from Canton McKinley. Then, overnight, a drought descended on the region as the GGCL began its reign (pun intended) over the big school volleyball.

From 1993 through 2007 GGCL schools won at least one state title a year and garnered 25 of 30 total Division I and II trophies. West Chester Lakota, from suburban Cincinnati, took one of the others.

So when Parma Padua Franciscan middle hitter Kaitlyn Leary spiked her 23rd and match ending kill in last year's state final against Archbishop Alter that gave Padua its first girls' team sport state title, she ended fifteen years of frustration.

(Two hours later, Dayna Roberts would set Olmsted Falls hitting sensation Lauren Whyte for the kill that would send the GGCL home empty handed.)

Padua and Alter are the strongest teams in their regions and a final four rematch is a tantalizing possibility. (Due to the restructuring of the northeast region into six districts, a Padua-Walsh Jesuit final four match-up is also possible.)

Last year we picked Walsh Jesuit over Padua by a nose, and this time we're going with Archbishop Alter. The Knights have oodles of talent with which to pursue their fourth state title.

Leading them will be 6'1" sophomore setter/outside Megan Courtney, a PrepVolleyball Fab59 freshman for 2008. One of the top players in the nation for her age, Courtney can "flat out attack" according to one of her club coaches. She is close to impossible to block and dominates the net. Courtney was first team all-district and all-GGCL as a frosh, and in last year's state final against Padua she recorded eight kills on .667 effectiveness, nine digs, seven block assists, and had 27 of Alter's 38 total assists.

Also back is 6'0" junior middle/outside Kelly Westerkamp, a top all-around player and very consistent performer who hits from all over. She's getting looks from MAC schools. Kellie Joseph, a 6'2" senior

outside/opposite hitter, is much improved all around the court and should be a major factor.

The defense will be rock solid with senior libero Kristin Ignozzi, who will also serve as team leader. Coming up are 5'10" junior outside Jackie Kohls, and 5'7" middle/outside Kristen Kaiser, an athletic lefty with hops who can pass and defend with the best.

Tipp City Tippecanoe should again be Alter's biggest threat in the region, despite losing serious talent. The Red Devils knocked Alter out in 2007.

Four seniors return from last year's squad that finished 26-1 following a four-game loss to Alter in the regional semifinal. They'll cover all the bases. Chelsea Dowd saw significant time as one of three setters last year. Libero Evelyn Carus will lead the back row for the third straight year. Outside hitter Chelsea Layman and middle/outside Jordan Browning will assume leadership roles. Of special note are three junior hitters, 5'11" honorable mention all-Ohio outside Amanda Calhoun, 5'10" middle/outside Rachel Bruce and 6'0" middle Breanna Stucke. They've been starting line-up stalwarts since their freshman seasons.

Archbishop McNicholas was hammered by graduation. The Rockets have only two experienced players back from the team that lost a four-game district final to Tippecanoe, and will likely start two freshman, a sophomore and two juniors. But with talented athletes they could be solid by midseason (the freshman class is especially strong). Their two returnees played well at the Maumee Spiketacular in July. One, 5'6" senior libero Alli Kirby, is their strongest passer and defensive player. The other is 5'11" junior middle blocker Rebecca Schaller, a starting middle from last year.

Indian Hill will have height and a lot of hitters with which to pursue its third straight Cincinnati Hills League title. Driving the offense will be 5'11" four-year starting middle hitter/all-around Tracy Striebich, and junior libero Maddie Flynn will start it. Also spiking will be 5'11" senior Kelly Dunham and junior Kasha Viox, both left sides, and 5'11" sophomore middle Liz Becker. Look out for Natalie Sommerville, a 5'9" junior outside who qualified for state in the 300 hurdles.

Taylor will challenge in the CHL with seven seniors and their best team in five years. The Yellow Jackets' top players are outside hitters Sabrina Lemmink and Allyson Rountree, and defensive specialist Melanie Corbett.

Wyoming looks forward to another successful season with the return of two senior team leaders, right side Abby Zennie and 5'10" senior left side/right side Sudy Graham. Two sophomores will be go-to hitters, 6'0" middle Emily Fraik and 5'11" middle/left side Kathryn Policastro. The Cowboys gave Indian Hill its only league loss, but lost their district final rematch.

In the Dayton area, Chaminade-Julienne returns to Division II after a two-year stint battling the biggies. The Eagles lost big time to graduation, but could surprise with a couple of JO standouts. Their top returnee is Mallory Hall, a 6'2" right side who can hit bad sets into holes. Moving up is sophomore Emma Stumpf, an outside who plays every position well including libero. Freshman Grace Kauth can jump into the rafters.

Bellbrook will be led by senior outside Jackie Leetch and 5'11" junior middle Nicole Snyder.

The Mad River Division of Central Buckeye Conference will see another slugfest between Urbana and defending champion Indian Lake, with Benjamin Logan joining the fray.

Urbana will be tough at the net with very athletic hitters and setters. Their number two and three spikers return, 5'10" outside Kelsie Eastham, and strong armed Katie Raterman, a 5-7" junior outside with a 25-inch vertical. Makenzie Laase is back at one setter. Coming on strong is sophomore Mary Hendricks, one of the top setters and back row players in the area. Sophomore 5'10" middle Sierra Moore has a quick arm.

Indian Lake beat out Urbana in the Mad River Division of the Central Buckeye Conference last year. The Lakers will be led by 6'1" senior all-Ohio middle hitter/blocker Sadie Oyer, libero Lauren Brademeyer, and setter Natalie Cornelius, all seniors.

Benjamin Logan will make some noise this year. The Raiders will be led by 5'11" sophomore middle hitting stud Lexi Coughlin. She made all-league as a freshman and is being mentioned in the same breath as 2005 Ben Logan graduate Nicole Fawcett, who last fall led Penn State to its second straight NCAA Division I national title and was named National Player of the Year. Senior Lauren Stahl, a 5'3" super quick libero with D-II or higher college potential, will make sure the passes are there. The Raiders have some good freshmen and we'll hear more about them as the season progresses.

Springfield Northwestern, which fell to Tippecanoe in a district semifinal, returns two top seniors, 5'9" outside Sarah Overholzer, and 5'7" setter Kristin Korab. A three-time all-league selection in volleyball, Overholzer will become a four-year starter in both volleyball and softball. Korab also plays basketball and runs track.

Also back for her second varsity season is one of the Central Buckeye Conference's top players, 5'8" all-around sophomore Janie Kaffenbarger. She can play outside or middle but her best position is libero where she was for her Dayton Junior 16 National team. As a freshman she averaged 2.0 kills and 3.8 digs a game.

Players of note in the CBC are St. Paris Graham middle hitter Darbie Zirkle, and Bellefontaine setter Emily Melling.

Another player to watch in the region is Clinton-Massie 5'11" junior middle blocker Kara Crabill. A PrepVolleyball Sophomore 79 candidate, she recorded 311 kills, 85 blocks and 92 aces last fall, and this spring won a district medal in shot put.

Teams from the southwest had best watch their backs in the regional for Logan Elm. The Braves advanced from the Chillicothe District last year and knocked off Urbana in five before falling to Alter in the regional final. They figure to be even stronger and quicker this time around.

They'll again be led by 5'9" all-Ohio middle/outside hitter Paige Penrod, who pounded a state record 45 kills against Urbana, and set a new season mark of 636. Her 131 services aces last season was good for fifth all-time, and she recorded 13 in a match. A coach who saw her this summer said "she has the hardest serve I have ever seen out of a high school player!"

Much of the rest of the team is back, including senior middle/outside Alyvia Clark, who placed fifth in the state in the 800-meter run last spring, senior outside hitters Rebekha Lucas and Danielle Wipert, and junior libero Shae Manson. The move-in of junior twins Hannah and Haley Gabriel from Westfall will help a lot. Hannah will set and Haley will play outside.

Chillicothe Unioto has looked strong in preseason. The Shermans will be led by 5'10" junior lefty outside hitter/setter Madison Davis.

Now we head to Ontario, through which the Mayfield District champion must go on its way to Fairborn. Significantly, Padua Franciscan is in this district. The Bruins will again be led by 6'0" Ohio State Universitybound all-Ohio middle hitter Kaitlyn Leary. A 2009 Girls' Youth National Training Team selection, she had 13 digs in the state final to go with her 23 kills, and spiked 16 of 37 kills in the semifinal. Also back is 5'8" University of Buffalo right side recruit Christine Fritche. She contributed 13 kills and five block assists in the state final, and this summer played for the national champion CVC 17 Black and was named MVP at Miami.

Serve receive and defense look solid with senior libero Lauren Goebel who tallied a team leading 19 digs in the final. Goebel made varsity as a frosh, and this summer played for the Maverick/Ace 18 team that finished third at nationals. Former backup setter Meredith Bolmeyer will run the offense. Back after sitting out last year is skilled and very athletic junior middle Carly Molls, who started as a frosh. Also back is her 5'11" replacement Becky Jay, whose blocking was a factor in the state final. Sophomore outside/right side Nicole Trapp also returns, and talented sophomores will add more depth.

Beaumont School will have a say in Padua's travel plans at district. With more seniors and JO-experienced players, the Blue Streaks may be stronger than ever despite needing to replace a libero and middle. Last year they beat teams like Walsh Jesuit, Magnificat and Division I semifinalist Brecksville.

Their top player is 5'10" middle Amanda Videmsek, a UNC-Charlotte recruit who also played on the national champion CVC 17 Black. A hard worker who can play every position, Videmsek sets the pace in practice. Returning at setter is junior Abbey Cvelbar. Other leading hitters will be sophomore outside Midori Harrison, back for her second year on varsity, 5'11" senior opposite Courtney O'Connor and 5'11" senior outside Lauren Linker.

The Canton District also sends its winner to Ontario.

Wooster Triway is aiming for its third straight trip to the regional with a smaller squad and four letter winning hitters. Leading the way are senior Krista Leighty and junior Briele Sweeney, 5'8" outsides looking to play Division III in college, along with two sophomore middles, 5'9" Lori Inkrott and 5'8" Katie Skeens. Inkrott is outstanding in volleyball and basketball.

Two big holes must be filled, however. Setter Allison Kearney is now at Bowling Green, and libero Lauren Rock will be cheerleading for the Buckeyes the fall. Junior libero Skye Patterson will take Rock's place.

Other problems loom as well in the form of Archbishop Hoban and Canal Fulton Northwest, and we think the district will come down to one of these two. Northwest beat an athletic and young Hoban team in the district semifinal 25-20, 23-25, 25-22, 19-25, 15-8.

Hoban's top player is 5'8" middle hitter/setter and Walsh University recruit Krissy Sokol. Her brother JoJo led the Knights to the Boys Division II state championship in 2008. Other players of note are 5'9" junior lefty right side Paige Parson, 5'10" junior outside Chelsea Evans and libero Amy Yakubowski.

Northwest, which won the district in 2006 and dropped a four-game final to Triway last year, will also field a more experienced group with most everyone back. Tops is 6'0" middle hitter, blocker and ToledoUniversity recruit Dakota Harkins. She's led the Indians in kills the past two years and was all-Ohio in 2008. Also back are libero Rachael Dudley and 5'10" three-year letter winning middle Shannon Robson. At the outsides will be senior Niki Beckner, and juniors Lauren Steiner and Nicole Ogg. Steiner ran in track for the 4X100 state qualifying relay team.

Fairless looks formidable as well with five talented seniors. The Falcons aren't tall but they play scrappy defense. Four-year letterman setter Ellie Manack will run a 5-1. Outside hitter Tricia Dutton and right side Toni DiMarzio are three-year letter winners, and DiMarzio was libero last year. Other hitters are 5'9" middle Danielle Wilmoth, and left side Katelynn Strong who moved in from Malvern.

Teams to watch in the district are Minerva with senior outside/all-around Tara Lawson, and Marlinton.

In the geographical northwest Mansfield Madison and Celina are the favorites. Madison topped Celina in the regional final 25-22, 16-25, 25-16, 25-18, and a regional rematch is possible.

With a lineup that averages a 3.5 grade point, and more significantly is loaded with talented seniors,

Celina gets our nod to win their district. It also helps that Toledo Central Catholic, which won it all in 2007, is gone to Division I. Leading Celina will be setter/hitter Julie Klosterman and 6'0" middle hitter Cenzie Yoder. The two started as sophomores and, along with 5'8" setter/hitter Maria Dorsten, are getting college looks. Other seniors of note are 5'7" libero Meagan Stoker and 5'10" outside Kelsey Mastin. Adding punch will be two 5'11" juniors, middle hitter Erin Dorsten and outside Morgan Weininger.

Challenging Celina in the Western Buckeye League will again be Ottawa-Glandorf. They'll be led by 5'9" senior setter Mara Jacobs, who attracted some college looks after the Titans took one game from eventual champion Marion Local at Maumee this summer, and 5'11" junior outside Melissa Verhoff.

Pemberville Eastwood expects to come on strong. The Eagles won a Division III crown in 1993 and haven't been back since. But they are looking to turn heads in the Suburban Lakes League and possibly the region with a very young team. Top players are 5'11" junior outside Whitney Hoodlebrink, 6'0" sophomore middle/all-around Courtney Rolf, 5'11" junior middle Vicky Bruning, junior libero Christine Foster and setter Katie Primeau.

Hoodlebrink touches 9'8" and is the top high jumper on the track team. Foster is very quick and reads the opposing offense well. Assisting her and new head coach Jeff Beck (formerly with Perrysburg), will be former Bowling Green High School and State University libero Chelsey Meek.

Other teams from the WBC to watch are Lima Shawnee, led by 6'1" Cleveland State bound middle Erin Turner (she can touch 9'9"), and Defiance.

Defending regional champ Mansfield Madison graduated two seniors who provided leadership that will be hard to duplicate. The Rams, however, have plenty of residual fire power with which to defend their regional and Ohio Cardinal Conference crowns, and they will bring up two very talented sophomores. Leading seniors are 6'0" middle hitter Lauren Townley and honorable mention all-Ohio libero Kellie Orewiler. Townley, who plays basketball and softball and is on track to accumulate twelve varsity letters, led the Rams in blocking last season.

Returning at the outsides are junior Nikki Holmes, a 5'3" defensive whiz with a 21-inch vertical, and 5'7" sophomore Emilee Muzechuk, who helped spearhead last fall's league opening road win over Orrville that was the difference between first and second place. Another sophomore, 5'10" right side Ashley Galbraith, played as a frosh as well. Setting will be junior Morgan Peterson, last year's leader in serving points. And watch out for Dakia Sellers, a 5'5" sophomore with a 29-inch vertical.

Repeating in the OCC will necessitate beating out Orrville (more on them in Division III), Lexington and Wooster.

Getting out of district will also entail getting past Lexington, a well-disciplined team that has been getting raves this summer. Their new assistant coach is Sue Subich. She put Mansfield Madison on the volleyball map, and was at the helm in 1997 when the Rams upended defending champ Seton in the semifinal and knocked off Stow-Munroe Falls for the title.

Moving up from Division III is Milan Edison, which finished runner-up to Huron in the Sandusky Bay Conference with a junior-laden lineup that includes four all-league selections, three of whom are going for their fourth letter.

One is 5'9" outside Emily Stewart, who set school records with 316 kills and 316 digs last fall. She finished fourth in the state this spring in the long jump and was also a member of the CVC 17 Black National Champion JO team. The others are 5'8" outside Cami Shine and 5'10" Amanda Blodgett (67 blocks last year). Also back is setter Brittany Moyer. Those four were all-SBC.

Other returnees of note are senior defensive specialist Rachel Ackerman, 5'10" junior middle Carmen Tinnel, 5'10" junior right side Zoe Gastier, and 5'11" middle Abbey Cox.

Clyde, which also hails from the SBC has a new coach and a lot of talent to work with. Back for the Fliers are 5'9" senior outside Jamie Hoppe, 5'8" senior middle Elaina Barnett, 5'9" junior middle Alesha Dickman and junior libero Tara Humbert.

A team to watch is Sandusky Perkins.

All three frontrunners from the Northern Ohio League, Tiffin Columbian, Norwalk and Shelby, return a lot of talent.

Defending NOL champion Tiffin Columbian returns most everyone. Leading them will be 6'1" senior setter/middle hitters with respective verticals of 20 and 22 inches, Jill Stein and Lexi Rohrbach. A strong server, Rohrbach once served 13 aces in a match. Also back is 5'9" junior lefty right side Maya Brown, a leaper who made state in shot put and long jump. The defense looks solid with junior libero Rachel Reamer. Getting college looks is Kylie Simonds, a 5'8" outside with a 22-inch vertical.

Top seniors for perennial power Norwalk are 6'0" senior middle Kayla Freriks, senior outside hitter Celeste Duncan, senior setter Taylor Smith, 5'10" junior middle hitter Lauren Schluchter, and freshman outside Sam Obringer.

Shelby will be led by sophomore Devon Hummel, a 5'7" outside with a 24-inch vertical who recorded 287 kills with an attack percent of 90%, 136 digs and had 36 aces. Hummel has been to nationals three years as a member of NorthShore VBC. 6'0" senior middle Rachael Roth is greatly improved and was noticed at Tiffin Camp. Roth had 158 blocks last season, and also holds many school records in swimming.

Retracing our steps back to the northeast, we come to Walsh Jesuit, which last year fell to Padua in a regional semifinal, and like Padua returns a wealth of talented players. One is 6'1" Duquesne Universitybound outside hitter Allison Foschia, an all-Ohio selection who had 309 kills, 211 digs and 90 percent serve receive in 2008. Foschia played up on the Maverick/A.C.E. 18 National team that placed third in Miami. She was selected for the All-Tournament Team.

Returning at middle where she made 69 blocks last year will be 6'2" senior Katie Meyer, a right side who also played for the Maverick/A.C.E 18. At one outside will be senior Bridget Gilligan. The back court should be stellar, led by Findlay University recruit Jacqui Andre, and assisted by junior Kara Schiffer. If their new setter comes on the Warriors could go all the way.

Kenston lost a drop-dead barn burner 12-25, 19-25, 25-19, 25-22, 12-15 district final to Walsh Jesuit, and finished last season at 24-2. Those two teams are again in the same district. The Bombers have restocked that senior laden squad with a talented group of juniors, and they raised a few eyebrows with a 24-25, 23-25 loss to Archbishop Alter at the Maumee Bay Spiketacular.

Leading the Bomber sorties will be 5'10" setter Megan Wendel and 5'8" outside Lauren Landsman. Both are returning starters. Landsman can jump out of the gym. Moving up are outside hitter Molly Ziegler and middle Ally Bates.

Moving up to D-II is Chagrin Falls. The Tigers gave Gilmour Academy a scare in a D-III district semifinal last year. They'll be led by 5'10" junior outside Lucy Cikra. Unfortunately, her 6'3" sister Leslie is now at Tennessee. Setting will be lefty senior Kristen Ealy. Senior libero Megan Mignogna broke her foot and will be out at least until tourney time.

Playing spoiler in the district will be Streetsboro. A player to watch is Pepper Pike Orange junior outside/all-around HerMaya Sheperd.

Hubbard returns seven starters from last years 24-2 squad that fell to Lake Catholic 21-25, 15-25, 25-21, 25-20, 11-15 in a district final. A rematch this year would occur at the regional.

Top returnees are 6'0" all-Ohio senior outside Jackie Carlisle, 5'5" honorable mention all-Ohio junior libero Dawn Lingenfelter and 5'10" senior middle Lexi Starheim. Carlisle and Lingenfelter played on the Infinity 18 National Team which won four tournaments. Both were all-Ohio last season and Carlisle has committed to Youngstown State University. Also returning are senior setter Marcy Angelo, senior outside Courtney Angelo, 5'9" junior middle Haley Turner and 5'10" junior opposite Jillian Hinkle. The Eagles won the 30-team Youngstown State University Team Camp this summer.

Salem looks to contend again, led by 6'0" all-Ohio senior outside super hitter and Ohio State University basketball recruit Amy Scullion. She's at the top of the rim in basketball with a touch of 10'2", and more impressively, is at the top of her class academically. Scullion already holds all of the school records for kills. Helping her will be 5'11" Lydia Shivers, 5'9" Olivia Mitchley, both middles, along with setter/libero Taylor Sauerwein and back court specialist Dana Ackerman. At right side will be 5'9" junior Mariah Halleck.

Mogadore Field gave Salem fits in a four-game district final loss last year. Returning for the Falcons are 5'8" setter Lauren Feciuch, and 5'6" outside Rachel Backer who can jump out of the gym.

A team to watch is Ravenna Southeast.

Mentor Lake Catholic knocked out both Hubbard and Salem before falling to state champ Padua in the regional final. The Cougars lost several starters to graduation, but will reload with talented players. They will continue to win by making good decisions when out of system, serving strong and avoiding mistakes. Their lone returning starter is junior outside Bridget Grdina. Coming on are right side Nicole Snyder, senior middle blocker Chelsey Regovich and junior setter Audry Lucha, all 5'9". Grdina and Snyder were teammates on the CVC 16 National qualifier.

Elsewhere, Medina Buckeye is favored in their district which includes Fairview Park Fairview, Rocky River, Sheffield Brookside and LaGrange Keystone. With 6'3" Ohio University recruit Marah Farage and 6'0" Nicole Wurstle, two seniors from the Maverick/A.C.E. 18, Buckeye will be powerful in the middle. Other players of note are senior setter Kara Joyce and junior outside Sam Mueller.

Farage, who was all-Ohio in 2008, holds school records for digs in a season (282) and career with (684), block kills in a match (13), season (116) and career (335). Currently second in career kills with 857, she needs 19 more for that record.

Rocky River will be paced by Maeve Kessler, a 6'1" junior middle who averaged two kills per game and led the team in blocks last year, and 5'10" senior outside/middle Molly McNally.

Watch out for Sheffield Brookside setter Kyleigh Whitsel. She set, literally, a state record 72 assists against Medina Buckeye last season. Libero Amber Wiley is on track for the school's career dig mark. Both players are getting D-II/III looks. The Cardinals gave Buckeye its only Patriot Athletic Conference loss as the two teams split five-game decisions. Brookside lost a four-game district final to Padua.

This brings us to the southeast region, to which the Central District and the east/southeast each area send two teams.

With nine seniors, one junior and two freshmen who will turn heads, Columbus Bishop Hartley looks good to make its third straight jaunt to state. The Hawks beat Claymont and Big Walnut last year,

Top returnees are 5'10" setter/outside Shelby Sagle, 5'9" junior outside Lauren Hughes and 5'9" senior outside Allie Holehouse, along with track sensation Char Dixon, a 5'7" middle blocker who won state titles in the 100 meter dash and 4x100 meter relay. Sagle and Hughes combined for 21 kills and Hughes added 20 digs in Hartley's four-game state semifinal loss to Alter.

Hartley has not had a freshman starter in at least ten years, but might have two in 5'11" middle blocker Brooke Betts and 5'9" outside Reese Walaszek. An aggressive schedule that includes Dublin Coffman, Pickerington North, Padua Franciscan, River View and Huron in addition to league powers Bishops Watterson and Ready will grow them fast.

Sunbury Big Walnut will again be Hartley's biggest threat. The two teams will face off on opening day, and might not meet again until the regional final.

Big Walnut is young with no seniors, but has three all-District returnees. One is 5'10" all-Ohio junior setter Tabitha Piper, who put up 763 assists while making 171 digs. Also back are 5'11" outside Sammie Ebright, an Ohio Valley High Performance selection who led the Eagles with 238 kills, and junior outside Summer Silvery.

Hebron Lakewood returns three all-district seniors, 5'9" setter Sarah Wogan, 5'11" middle Liz Barnhart, and outside Hannah Dixon.

Buckeye Valley has been getting stronger and the Barons are now aiming to capture their first Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference title in over 25 years. Their leading hitter is Jordan Nolan, a 5'7" outside getting D-II looks. Annie Albrecht is a very strong 5'9" lefty weak side hitter (only in volleyball does that make any sense). Running a 5-1 will be 5'8" senior setter Lauren Hassinger. Buckeye Valley's rise to the top has been accelerated by the arrival of 6'0" sophomore Calley Hawkins, a strong blocker and hitter who transferred from Tennessee and whose sister plays for UT-Martin.

Bexley returns five seniors with at least two letters. Four are members of the Buckeye Volleyball Club: 5'11" middle blocker Lauren Howard, 5'9" right side Sarah Kebe, 5'10" right side Beverly Ocheing, and setter/defensive specialist Eva Golden. Also back is 5'9" outside Tess Roddy.

Canal Winchester will be tough with 5'10" senior middle Emily Hall, senior outside Katie Nelson and junior middle Chelsey Miller. Nelson also plays a mean left back.

Olentangy drops down from Division I. The Braves knocked off Dublin Coffman before bowing to Cincinnati Ursuline, but their four 6-foot plus hitters have gone on to college ball.

A player to watch in Central is Hamilton Township senior setter Tabitha Holley.

Warsaw River View is one team to beat from the east, and in the East Central Ohio League which will be the strongest and most balanced in recent memory. Uhrichville Claymont and

Millersburg West Holmes could be trouble come tourney time. All three teams have talented younger players.

River View won the ECOL last year, but fell to Big Walnut in the semifinal. The Black Bears' top returnees are 6'0" junior outside Olivia Neace, 5'7" senior setter Kayla Landaker, and junior libero Savannah Treasure.

Cambridge has its sights set on River View, armed with five seniors and its most talented team in the past five years. One top player is Rebecca Cline, a 5'7" outside hitter who is on track for the school record in kills, and who also passes, serve receives and digs with the best. She's getting lots of D-III looks. Third-year senior libero Maggie Starr is also a great passer and precise server. Katie Davis, a 5'10" middle

blocker with hops (she won state in high jump), is the school leader in career blocks. With an experienced senior setter in Alysa Rice, and 5'9" lefty right side Paige Young coming on strong, the Bobcats will bring on an attack. A solid junior class gives the Bobcats depth. Look out for sophomore Vontisa Harvey, who with her 31-inch vertical could become a go-to hitter.

The only ECOL team to beat Cambridge this summer has been Uhrichsville Claymont, and with their quick explosive jumpers the Mustangs have a great shot at another regional appearance. Leading the way will be 5'9" honorable mention all-Ohio senior setter/middle Jordan Smith and junior outside/defensive specialist MacKenzie Ripley.

Byesville Meadowbrook finished second in the ECOL last year and has arguably the best hitter in the area in 6'1" junior middle Katherine Jirles. She led the team in kills the past two years. Also back for the Colts is outside/defensive specialist Candace Neff.

Dover, which lost to River View in four last year, may be the tallest team in the ECOL. Returning is sophomore hitter/all-around Sarah Mills who was all-District in volleyball and wielded a big bat for the Tornadoes' league champion softball team.

Wintersville Indian Creek returns several from the 20-5 team that fell to River View in the district final. Leading the small but quick Redskins are honorable mention all-Ohio junior setter Christina Furda, senior outside Morgan Reducha and senior Ty Harris, a 5'2" outside who made Special Mention in basketball. Unfortunately, 5'10" junior middle hitter Megan Beebe, all-District as a sophomore, is out with an injury this season.

Millersburg West Holmes will be short and will have to rely on solid passing, setting and defense. The Knights will be led by 5'7" sophomore setter Emily Ditmars, senior outside and defensive whiz Lindsey Arnold, and sophomore libero Hannah Boals. The Knights are coached by Jim Park, who also guided Ohio Elite 17 National Runner-Up team.

Players to watch in the region are Coshocton 6'0" senior middle Ali Bates, and McConnelsville Morgan senior middle Audra Nelson. Zanesville junior setter Michele Twiggs put up 700 assists last year, breaking the school record she set as a frosh.

### **Division III (Orrville, Versailles, Huron, Tuscarawas Valley)**

Something historic was in the offing when Albany Alexander and Gates Mills Gilmour Academy took center court in the Division III state championship match last November. Academy was seeking to become the third team in a day to win a volleyball state championship from a county, Cuyahoga, that had taken only four titles in the previous 33 years. As it turned out Alexander won its first state title in any individual or team sport, giving Athens County its first ever crown.

Gilmour and Alexander graduated 13 of 14 starters, and we do not see a rematch. Lima Central Catholic lost big too, and this division is wide open.

We've taken our best guess and selected Orrville from a large cast that includes Versailles, Bishop Fenwick, Roger Bacon, Huron, Rockford Parkway, Heath, Newark Catholic, Tuscarawas Valley, Frankfort Adena, Smithville and Gilmour Academy.

Orrville looked impressive in an opening season five-game home loss to Mansfield Madison last season. That may seem an oxymoron, but the Red Riders were young and talented, and they would later hand the Division II semifinalist Rams their only league loss.

With West Salem Northwestern decimated by graduation and Ohio's all-time career kills leader Kara Koch now at Cleveland State, the pathway is cleared, sort of, for Orrville to make its first trek to state since 2004. The Red Riders won it all in 2003.

Two major college recruits will lead the way, 6'0" all-Ohio outside/middle hitting Erin Short (Eastern Michigan), and 5'10" setter Hannah Brenner (Clemson). Also back are two of last year's stellar youngsters, 5'9" middle hitter Hillary Plybon and defensive specialist Lauren Mastroine. Short, whose sister Erica was on the 2003-04 teams and went on to star for Indiana University, played on the Ohio Elite 17 national runner-up squad. Brenner played for CVC 18, and Plybon was named to the Ohio High Performance Team. Other returning lettermen are 5'11" junior right side Meg Sullivan, defensive specialist Brooke Smith and right side Elizabeth Wade. As if that weren't enough, 6'2" junior middle Sara Aultz moved in from Wooster.

Did we mention that Orrville is also favored in the Ohio Cardinal Conference?

But not so fast. Wayne County Athletic League favorite Smithville also has a raft of talented returnees with painful memories of last year's district semifinal loss to Orrville. Topping the Smithies' list is 5'11" all-Ohio senior middle Jenna Pew, another Elite 17 member. She solo blocked Kara Koch eight times to pace a win over Northwestern last year, and she holds the school records for kills and blocks in a season.

Athletic and versatile senior outside Alex Leister won a state medal on the 1600 meter relay team this spring. Other key players are junior setter Jessi Hartzler, junior middle Julie Pollick and senior outside Alyssa Horst. Helping at the net will be 5'11" senior right side Olivia Barnes.

The rest of the WCAL is a tossup. Apple Creek Waynedale should have more punch led by junior setter Joyce Badertscher, a speedster who placed in the 100 meter dash at regionals, senior middle hitter Ellie Shoup and junior outside Emily Rutt.

Creston Norwayne lost several hitters and will rely more on defense. Back is 5'8" junior middle hitter Abby Hanzie and watch for sophomore setter Kaitlin Howard.

Rittman will be young and athletic. Pacing the Indians will be junior setter/outside Gretchen Baisden and 6'1" junior middle hitter/blocker Aleysha Gregory.

Jeromesville Hillsdale returns three letter winning junior outside hitters, Courtney Galligher, Nikki Bowman and Katlyn Simpson.

Elsewhere in the district, Loudonville will be led by outside Courtney Ryan and setter Kaitlin Davis, both seniors, with much depending on some talented youngsters. A team to watch is Akron Manchester.

Gilmour Academy is hoping to surprise folks after losing all but one starter. The one that's back is 5'9" senior middle Mary Kramer, and she's a real leader with great court presence. Kramer had the most kills on her team in both final four matches, and she hit with deadly .497 accuracy for the season. She also contributed 34 service aces and averaged 1.7 blocks a game.

Taking over at libero is senior Sarah Siedlak. She's been tested under pressure. In a 2007 regional semi-final match against Northwestern, with Gilmour trailing 8-2 and down 1-0 in the match, she came in and rattled off several aces and eight service points. Gilmour won that game and eventually made it to State. Newcomers include Brittany Link, a 5'10" junior setter who blossomed at nationals, and junior middle Meghan Kramer who serves a tough floater and otherwise takes after her sister Mary. Also watch for opposite/outside Maddie Kosar who played on the CVC 15 national runner-up, sophomore middle/outside Maria Cup, junior middle Taylor Vala, and setter/defensive specialist Alex Walters.

With all that we won't be too surprised if Gilmour shows up at the Nutter.

Trying again to knock off the Lancers will be Burton Berkshire, led by 5'10" senior outside Jackie Profera, 5'10" junior outside Meghan Wright and senior setter Beth Dunton. Chagrin Falls has moved up to D-II.

LaBrae has two talented junior hitters in Courtney Aldridge and Olivia Wood.

Girard could pose big threat at the regional despite having only one senior. Honorable mention all-Ohio outside/defensive specialist Chelsea Guerrieri is a four-year letter winner with big hops. She led in kills and serve receive last season, and she will be surrounded by talented youngsters. Sophomore setter Morgan Walters led the team in assists last year, and also in aces with her strong jump float serve. Lefty 5'11" hitter Bryanna Jay logged 96 solo blocks, a school record for a freshman. Coming up is 5'10" Callie Jay, who will play all across the front. The Jay sisters have long arms and play a half-foot taller than their height.

Standing in the Indians way will be New Middletown Springfield which returns seniors Ashley Davis and Kallie Rogers from the squad that beat them in the district semifinal. And moving up is D-IV district runner-up Louisville St. Thomas Aquinas. The Knights return three all-District selections, senior hitters Diana Frank and Amanda Novak, and sophomore outside/middle Kristen Hill.

A team to watch is Hanoverton United.

In the Elyria District, Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph, Elyria Catholic and Independence will again duke it out.

Villa Angela, which topped Elyria Catholic in the district final last year, will be led by 5'10" junior middle Shala Lang, senior setter Abbie Fabo, senior libero Breanna Creagan and 5'10" junior outside/middle Abbie Fabo.

Elyria Catholic returns a strong nucleus with 6'0" senior middle Zoe Zwegat, junior defensive specialist Brooke Dungan, senior outside Breanna Roldan and 5'9" junior outside Anna McNeeley.

Independence should have a say with two senior returnees, setter/outside hitter Alexa DeFranco, and 6'1" middle/right side Sarah Budzowski. Also back is 5'11" middle hitter Hallie Scharton. The Blue Devils are picked to win the Chagrin Valley Conference Metro Division for the fifth straight year.

A player to watch is Sullivan Black River 5'10" junior middle hitter Cassandra Zumack, and a team to watch is Wellington.

In the northwest we're picking Huron in a coin toss over Rockford Parkway. Both were ousted in four by St. Henry last year, but the Redskins have departed for D-IV. Ironically, both teams lost to Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph in their most recent final four outings, Huron in a 2006 semifinal, and Parkway in the 2005 title match.

The Tigers will be led by 5'11" honorable mention all-Ohio senior outside Jesse Miedema, along with 5'8" junior Taryn Graham who is converting from outside to libero. Graham played on the CVC 17 national championship team this summer. Two 5'9" junior impact hitters are outside Taylor Slauterbeck, a move-in from Norwalk, and middle Devon Koenig. Sharing the setting duties will be seniors Devon Grendow and Melissa Moberg.

Arch rival Margaretta could threaten Huron at district. The Polar Bears top returnee is senior defensive specialist Haylee Strause. And Mt. Blanchard Riverdale could be a problem at regional - Huron beat the Falcons in four last year. A team to watch is Kansas Lakota.

St. Henry is gone, and that has opened the district up for Rockford Parkway. On any given day the Panthers can hold their own with the best in Division III. One of Parkway's top two returnees is 5'9" honorable mention all-Ohio junior hitter Emily Crowell. She led in aces, was second in kills and digs, and made first team all-MAC as a pitcher. The other is 5'9" senior outside Tara Luth. Helping out will be 6'1" junior middle Kelsey Bates.

Metamora Evergreen will defend its Northwest Ohio Athletic League title led by senior Mackenzie Pinkelman. She's on track to become a four-year starter in volleyball, basketball, and softball, and three-time all-league selection in volleyball. Pinkelman spiked 25 kills against Archbold in the league championship match last year, but will set this time around. Other Vikings of note are outside hitter/all-around Lauren Langenderfer, 5'10" senior outside Cassie Babcock and 6'1" junior middle Ingrid Oswald.

Archbold will contend in the NWOAL led by senior setter Stacy Wyse, 5'9" middle Emily Snyder and 6'0" right side Hailey Galvan. Wyse and Snyder are third-year players. Delta from the NWOAL and Coldwater from the MAC will cause problems for anyone they play.

With most everyone graduated and their coach gone too, Lima Central Catholic doesn't seem likely for a return trip to state, but don't count the Thunderbirds out. With five juniors who've been waiting to get their crack at the big time, a new coach who mentored freshmen teams at Toledo St. Ursula, and 5'9" all-Ohio senior middle blocker Danielle Taflinger, Lima Central could surprise.

Tontogany Otsego, which fell to Lima Central in the district final, looks good to repeat as Suburban Lakes League champ with a strong returning class. The Knights will be led by two four-year starting seniors, setter Autumn Berry who led in aces last year, and 5'10" middle/opposite Bailey Bernthisel. Also back are senior outside Ashley Holzwart and 5'7" third-year starting libero Katelyn Downing.

A team to watch is Oregon Cardinal Stritch, led by 6'0" senior outside Alex Blazeovich.

In the southwest, the main contenders remain the same despite graduation losses and coaching changes. We're giving a slight nod to Versailles over Middletown Bishop Fenwick, while mindful of St. Bernard Roger Bacon and Anna.

Versailles should also make a strong bid for the Midwest Athletic League title, after going 3-6 last season. The Tigers fared much better in the state tourney than in the MAC. They beat Bishop Ready and Bishop Fenwick in the regional before finally losing to Alexander in the state semifinal.

Leading the way again will be 6'1" all-Ohio senior middle blocker and University of Dayton recruit Megan Campbell, who with her 27-inch vertical figures to repeat as the Tigers' leader in kills and blocks. Also back are 5'9" junior outside Lauren Rindler, 5'11" senior outside Tara Winner and senior setter Jill Hemmelgarn.

Bishop Fenwick graduated six seniors who helped create a new culture under Coach Yoon Ha, and with them went a lot of leadership. But the Falcons will field an athletic lineup deep in players who can switch out. Main cogs are 5'10" outside Ally Beck and libero Jessica Levy, both juniors. The list of talent includes 5'9" junior right side/setter Kelsea Byrge, 5'11" junior middle Chelsea Farrell, 5'10" senior middle/right side Emily Pierce, 5-11" sophomore middle Kristen Thompson, junior outside Abby Cramer, and senior defensive specialists Maddie Mutlu and Mallory Jeanmougin.

Joining the Fenwick coaching staff is long-time Dayton Juniors coach Howard Garcia. He, and a rugged schedule which includes a trip to Louisville, will help grow the talent.

On paper Anna may not seem a threat, having lost its coach and leading players like Ohio all-time career assists record holder Kelsie Zumberger (she had 3496). But new coach Dave Franklin authored Lima Central Catholic's meteoric rise to the final four, and he inherits a similarly young and athletic group.

Three juniors will lead the Rockets, setter Stephanie Romie, outside hitter Carrie Watkins and 5'11" middle hitter Megan Fogt.

Many teams suffer significant losses of talent to graduation, but St. Bernard Roger Bacon also lost a legend last spring when Caryl Schawe announced she was accepting the position as Athletic Director at Cincinnati McAuley. Schawe departed with an overall record of 579-174, seven regional titles, three state championships, and a third place PrepVolleyball ranking in 2005.

The Spartans will be shorter than normal, but very athletic as usual, and will continue their tradition of ball control. Senior setter Stephanie Gruenwald, who's much improved at getting the ball to the middles in transition, will run a quick offense. Returning at left side is all-Ohio Katie Groh, a great defender who can fire up any team. On right side will be Shelly Adams, a smart hitter who also puts up a big block. The GGCL schedule should prepare the Spartans to reach their goal of "getting their name up on one of those banners".

The more things change the more they stay the same.

If there is a newcomer, it could be Middletown Madison, which has both talent and serious height, including 6'2" middle hitter, digger and basketball star Ally Malott.

West Liberty-Salem intends to have a say. The Tigers will be led by 5'9" outside/all-around Paige Parker. In 2008 she averaged 5.1 kills and 2.6 digs per game and served 83 percent, and in 2007 she made the OVR High Performance Youth Team. Also back are 5'9" junior setter Kayla Peterson and 6'1" sophomore outside Becka Peterson.

In the southeast Tuscarawas Valley is the team to beat, according to everyone who's on their tournament path. The Trojans made five trips to the Nutter Center from 1997 through 2002, but their travel plans have since been dashed with close losses to the likes of Adena, Alexander and Westfall.

Always tough defensively, the Trojans will be strong in the middle with 5'9" honorable mention all-Ohio Xavier University recruit Sarah Brown, and 6'0" junior Shannon Watson. Brown played for Ohio Elite 17 this summer. Junior libero Olivia Higl will lead a strong back row that includes junior defensive specialists Jess Wallace and senior Sara Tucke. At the outsides will be 5'9" senior Katherine Gamber and senior right side Nicole Henry. The Trojans have three junior setters, Gabbie Davis, Kyra Crowe and Jordan Johnson. Added to all that depth is a great freshman class.

District runner-up West Lafayette Ridgewood hopes to be a Trojan horse. The Generals will be paced by senior middles Maggie Nagle and 5'10" Kim Michael. Coming up is sophomore setter/outside Kayla Tedrick.

Lore City Buckeye Trail will try to upset some apple carts with a solid and evenly balanced group led by all-Ohio junior middle Alexa Abrams and senior middle hitter Kaitlyn Wolfe. Last year Tuscarawas Valley dispatched both Buckeye Trail and Ridgewood.

Gnadenhutten Indian Valley also returns a strong team. Outside hitter Chanda Page was honorable mention all-Ohio in 2008.

Elsewhere in the region, defending state champion Albany Alexander lost their setter, libero, top three spikers and coach. The Spartans could still repeat at district and cause trouble at region, but they'll be young and even smaller than they are young. One holdover starter is 5'7" junior middle hitter Julie Els, and they have two seniors, outside Nicole Ogg and Haley Born. Some players to watch are sophomore setter/libero Kayla Bartlett, freshmen setter Jonna Shimko and freshman setter/defensive specialist Hannah Thomas.

A big problem for Tuscarawas Valley may loom in the Scioto Valley Conference. Perennial power Frankfort Adena gets the nod to add to their collection of SVC trophies. However, the league should be more balanced with several move ins and outs along with some new coaches. Last year Adena nipped Tuscarawas Valley 25-11, 18-25, 25-20, 18-25, 15-10 in the regional semifinal.

Since a regular season ending loss to Huntington in 2004, Adena has posted four consecutive 14-0 conference marks. Coach Laura Smith is now 514-99, with 19 district championships and three state appearances under her belt. The last was in 2006 when they fell in the semifinal 25-22, 18-25, 23-25, 27-25, 9-15 to eventual Division IV champ Norwalk St. Paul. Smith has continued a storied tradition that began with the advent of Girls' volleyball in 1975, and the Warriors won the first of two straight state titles.

Adena will be led by senior outside hitter Kirsti Yates, who recorded 11 kills and 13 digs against Tusky Valley. In a softball regional final last spring, she led off the seventh with a home run that broke up a shut out by Hebron Lakewood pitching whiz Alissa Birkhimer. (The Warriors scored again and tied the game at 2-2 but lost in extra innings. Birkhimer, an outside hitter in volleyball who will play softball for the University of Akron this spring, shut out both state opponents as Lakewood defended its state title of 2008).

Getting back to Adena and volleyball, 5'9" sophomore setter Cadie Cory also returns, along with 5'10" junior middle hitter Kelsey Bielanow and senior middle hitter Allison Morgan. Cory averaged eleven assists a game as a frosh.

Zane Trace is expected to make a serious run for the SVC crown.

Williamsport Westfall ruled this region for three years starting in 2003, but has been hurt by the transfers of the Gabriel setter twins to Logan Elm. Junior outside Haylie Joyce and 5'9" senior middle Makenzie Wippel return for the Mustangs.

Ross Southeastern could challenge led by setter/outside Kaitlin Duarte, outside/middle Catherine Dresbach, both seniors, and 5'10" outside/middle Merrilee Dresbach. The three play for Southern Ohio Volleyball Club. Also returning is senior libero Brandi Willard. Southeastern has some top notch freshmen and sophomores who set junior high records in track.

Piketon will be led by 6'0" sophomore middle blocker Alex Southworth.

The biggest threat in the southeast could come from Central District, which sends one of two district champions this way. Heath, and Newark Catholic which moves up after a four-year stint in Division IV, are the two front runners. Newark Catholic won the southeast region and the Division III state title in 2004, and has made three more state appearances since.

Heath is looking for a return trip to the regional. The Bulldogs make up for a lack of height with hops and scrappy play, and they return several key players from the team that fell in four to Lima Central Catholic. Leading the way will be senior setter Megan White and 5'9" junior middle Kenisha Body. Also back are 5'9" senior hitter Shaunisha Winter and outsides Jennifer Koski and Kelly Roberts.

Newark Catholic will be very young, and since nobody on the roster passed or set a ball in a varsity match last year, there are some big holes to fill. Leading the Green Wave will be 5'11" senior go-to middle Erica Rath, and 5'10" sophomore outside Katie Harrington. Those two combined for 16 kills in last year's nail biting five game state semifinal loss to Marion Local. Rath led in blocks last year and Harrington played for Columbus Volleyball Academy's national team this spring. Sophomore outside hitter Ali Scullion will be looking tough come mid-year, and senior right side Averil Mason leads in hitting and kill percentage this

summer.

Amanda-Clearcreek could burst into prominence this year. The Aces, who were nipped by Bishop Ready in a district final 25-22, 20-25, 25-23, 18-25, 13-15, return their three big guns, 5'11" junior middle Jenna Ruble, 5'10" senior middle Rachel Sahr and senior outside Sarah Runyan. Kelsie Sharp will convert from defensive specialist to setter.

Bishop Ready also comes back strong with 5'11" senior middle Taylor Riggs and 6'3" honorable mention all-Ohio junior outside Erin Sekinger. Riggs had a great camp at Ohio State earlier this summer. Sekinger played for the 16 Elite National team coached by Randy Cline. Both are being heavily recruited. Junior right side Lindsey Kusan, a member of Ready's state finalist softball team in 2008, is getting D-III looks. Other players of note are sophomore outside Carleigh Green (15 Elite National), sophomore setter Katie Weillbacher (15 Central Ohio National team), junior libero Kelly Veeley and middle hitter Katie Leppert. All four played on regional or national club teams.

The Bulldogs downed Fredericktown in their district final last year and the Freddie's may again be a threat.

Jonathan Alder will field a stronger team led by senior middle Christa Seidenstricker and her sophomore honorable mention all-District right side sister Kara Seidenstricker. A strong hitter to watch is Fairbanks' 5'10" senior outside Gracie Burrell.

In the Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference Marion Elgin looks to be in the thick of things led by senior setter/libero Taylor Price, sophomore setter/libero Jordyn Ute and middle hitter Kelsi Lauer. Sparta Highland will challenge them and D-II Buckeye Valley for the title. Marion Pleasant will rebuild around senior outside Courtney Denton.

#### **Division IV (Marion Local, Norwalk St. Paul, Tiffin Calvert, Tuscarawas Central Catholic)**

Division IV can succinctly be described in two words - Marion Local. Anyone who saw the Flyers defeat senior laden Jackson Center in last year's state championship match knows why.

Having won state in 2007 with nine seniors and overwhelming height, Marion Local successfully defended with a starting lineup of one junior, four sophomores and a frosh, and without any trademark six-footers. The Flyers were also missing their second leading scorer.

Last month they were without the services of their top player, 5'10" junior Alyssa Winner, a two-time all-Ohio and Team Atlantis all-American outside hitter, and still defeated Division II power Archbishop Alter to win the Maumee Bay Spiketacular.

The Flyers return ten letter winners, and except for one of their two setters, everyone has at least a year of starting varsity experience.

Winner paced the Flyers last fall's state championship with 29 kills and 19 digs. She holds school records for most kills in a match (32) and season (461), and has tallied 721 digs, 665 kills and 80 aces over two varsity seasons. Senior setter Shelby Moeller, who is 5'1" proof you don't need to be tall to excel in volleyball, holds the career record with 1106 assists.

Back after missing half of last season is outside hitter Kelly Schlarman. She recorded 118 kills on .230 efficiency and made all-MAC despite an injury that ended her season in mid-September.

Also returning are 6'0" sophomore Margaret Wuebker, an athletic middle blocker who can touch 9'10", and senior outside Leah Rosenbeck. She contributed ten kills in last year's title match. Other players of note

are 6'0" senior middle blocker Ashley Lochtefeld, junior right side Kaylee Schaefer, and junior libero Alyse Bergman.

Despite their overwhelming depth, the Flyers will have a tough time recapturing the Midwestern Athletic Conference crown they lost to New Bremen, let alone three-peating at state.

With four other MAC schools finishing in the top fifteen of the 80-team Spiketacular, the New Bremen Sectional will be a must-see for diehard volleyball fans. It will also be the end of the line for all but one of the powerful teams that must go there. The survivor will head southwest.

Newark Catholic's return to D-III helps if Marion Local reaches state (the Flyers struggled to beat the Green Wave in a five-game semifinal), but alas, neighboring arch rival St. Henry has come back to D-IV. In 2006 the Redskins kayoed the then top-ranked Flyers at the New Bremen Sectional.

St. Henry almost bagged another number one, Lima Central Catholic, in a D-III regional semifinal last year, and they've played exceptionally well this summer. They were undefeated in pool play at Maumee. Leading the Redskins will be 5'10" middle Emily Post and setter Brandi Elking, both seniors. And watch out for 5'10" sophomore outside Katie Hoyng.

Elsewhere in the MAC, Minster lost its libero and two other starting defensive specialists. They will look to new libero Sarah Huelsman, who served with 97 percent accuracy in 2008, to set the back row pace. The Wildcats return most of their offensive depth, including both setters, from their talented junior class. Back are 5'10" hitter Emily Barhorst, 5'10" all-Ohio setter/middle Erica Fullenkamp, 5'9" setter Ellen Gruber, 5'10" middle Delanie Wolf and outside Meghan Baumer. Most saw extensive playing time last season, with the versatile Fullenkamp (22-inch vertical) recording 299 kills, 322 assists and 135 blocks, and Baumer serving 26 aces.

New Knoxville will be led by 5'9" junior Jena Braden. A setter/outside hitter with hops who can also block, she was second in kills last year. Braden was named 2008 team MVP over Gannon recruit Morgan Reineke. She was the highest skill tested setter at the OHSVCA Elite Camp held at Ohio Northern University, and she also set for the Dayton Juniors. Teaming with Braden will be junior setter/outside Taylor Elshoff. Other Rangers of note are senior right side/defender Mercydes Allen, senior libero Becca Shelton, freshman right side Taylor Niemeyer, and junior middle Nikki Shreve.

Fort Recovery has an experienced cast of eight seniors, led by 5'10" senior setter Nicole Pottkotter, and two-year libero Emily May. Junior middle/outside Holly Brunswick is a tough hitter who can definitely get up there - she made the regional in the high jump and long jump. The Indians will have a say in who wins the MAC and district.

Sectional host and defending MAC champion New Bremen lost almost everyone to graduation.

The sectional survivor is likely to face Delphos St. John's, Convoy Crestview, or Kalida in the Coldwater district final. Last year St. John's knocked out Kalida before losing in four to Crestview. The Blue Jays were 1-8 in the MAC last year, which was misleading since they beat St. Henry and lost to Marion Local in five. With six seniors, strong young hitters and height they hope to finish in the middle this time.

St. John's will be led by 6'1" senior middle hitter/blocker Lindsay Reindel, a three-year letter winner. Other top players are 5'10" junior outside Tiffany Geise and senior setter Kristina Franks.

Having lost six seniors, two to the collegiate level, Kalida will still go for its third straight Putnam County League title and 14th overall with a mix of returning starters and eager underclassmen. Three senior all-league selections will lead the Lady Kats, 6'1" middle Julia Fuerst, libero Stacie Heitmeyer and 5'9" outside Trisha Horstman. Other returning starters are 5'9" senior outside Amy Hamburg and junior setter/right side Emily Turnwald.

Convoy Crestview will be young but competitive. (Their Lady Knight Invitational will be a must-see this year.)

Thus far we've just covered one district!

Elsewhere in the southwest, Sidney Lehman Catholic is getting stronger and would have been our choice had the Coldwater District not boomeranged. Pacing the Cavaliers will be 5'8" first team all-Ohio junior outside Jessica Thobe. This summer she played for Team Atlantis 16 Elite which made it to nationals. Setting again will be 5'8" senior and assist leader Marlee Wion. Other Cavaliers of note are 5'9" sophomore outside Morgan Schmitmeyer who played for Team Atlantis 15 Elite, and 5'9" junior opposite Ann Watercutter.

Fort Loramie and Jackson Center will duke it out for the Shelby County League title, and menace Marion Local and Lehman at regional.

We'll go with Fort Loramie which lost two studs but has five letter winners back from the regional qualifier that beat Lehman Catholic and then fell to Jackson Center. One is 5'10" junior setter/outside hitter Clair Ruhenkamp, a setter for Ohio's 2009 High Performance team who's being heavily recruited. Also back are 5'8" outside Kristin Zumberger and season dig record holding junior libero Tessa Benanzer.

Jackson Center was hit harder, but returns 5'9" all-Ohio outside/all-around Casey Gates who had 22 kills and a team leading 26 digs in the final against Marion Local.

Turning to the northwest Tiffin Calvert is the front runner by a hair over Hopewell-Loudon. The Senecas came in fourth behind Hopewell, New Riegel and Mohawk, all of them ranked, in the Midland Athletic League. Unranked Calvert then beat all three, along with Ada, to advance to the regional.

The Senecas will definitely be experienced with eight seniors. Leading the way will be 5'9" outside/all-around Ali Maas, who tied a school record 20 kills in a match, and setter Alexa Frank, who served a record 15 aces in one match. Other players of note are outside Katie Klepper, defensive specialist Rachel Wickham, right side Elizabeth Conn and 5'10" middle hitter Katie Gruss.

MAL league champ Hopewell-Loudon returns everyone from a very balanced lineup. The Chieftains, going for their first trip to state since 2001 when they won the last of five straight state titles, will be led by 6'0" senior middle Brittany Egbert and outside hitter/defensive specialist Brianna Richey. The two seniors led in kills and digs, respectively, last year.

New Riegel looks good to go as well with several returnees. Senior outside/all-around Paula Kelbley also plays basketball and softball and is on track to win twelve letters. Also going for her fourth volleyball letter is 5'9" right side Ashley Reinhart. Helping at the net will be junior middle Emma Ladd, and Shana Scherger, a junior libero with great anticipation, will run back row.

Mohawk will be young but talented and should have a say in who wins the MAL.

Still in the MAL, Fostoria St. Wendelin will be very strong with six talented seniors. Their top two are outside/all-around Taylor Burns and middle hitter Brooke Baker. Both have been on varsity since they were frosh.

Toledo Christian will be stronger with two all-District juniors, 5'11" middle blocker Bethany Critchley and 5'9" setter Kayla Nagle who played for Premier 16-1. Critchley is the Toledo Area Athletic Conference discus champion.

Other teams to watch in the region include Leipsic, Edon, Van Buren with honorable mention all-Ohio junior middle Rachel Adolph, Pettisville and Antwerp.

In the northeast Norwalk St. Paul, with its entire team back, is favored to make its sixth trip to state in eight years. The Flyers were ranked fourth last season with wins over the likes of Minster, Findlay and Celina, but were bush whacked by Buckeye Central in the district final.

Great hitting begins with great passing, and sophomore libero Corynne Smith is the heart and soul of St. Paul's passing. Smith made all-district as a frosh, and this spring played on the North Shore 15 team that qualified for nationals. Also back for the Flyers are 5'9" all-Ohio senior middle Amber Welfle, outside/all-around Hannah Livengood, 5'8" honorable mention all-Ohio setter Kaylee Bundschuh, outside/utility Emily Nickoli and defensive specialist Katie Carabin.

Buckeye Central made eight trips to state from 1986 through 2001, winning twice. They finally returned last year only to run into a Jackson Center buzz saw. With six seniors graduating, they'll be hard pressed to encore, but Makayla Agin, a 5'11" sophomore middle whose blocking was instrumental in the win over St. Paul, and lefty junior right side Ashley Langjahr are both back. Against Jackson Center, those two represented half the offense and Agin was involved in six blocks. Also back is junior setter Tara Karl, and coming up is freshman setter/outside hitter Sammi Markum.

Bucyrus Wynford graduated seven of their top nine, but may have a say with four youngsters who play off season for Tap Out Volleyball Club and North Central Select. The Royals will be led by their second leading spiker from last year, 5'9" junior outside Leah Oliver, along with sophomore outside Cierra Brady, freshman middle hitter Paige Brady, senior opposite Kailee Schiefer and freshman libero/setter Shannon Miller.

Crestline has won several state titles in softball, but nary a thing in volleyball, not even their league. That may be about to change, thanks to TapOut and North Central. The Bulldogs have nine players with extensive club experience, and will be scrappy with a "go-into-the-bleachers" attitude. Their top players are 5'11" right side/middle blocker Rachel Sayer, junior outside/all-around Taylor Hatfield and junior middle blocker/outside Brittany Kempf.

Monroeville has been building and should bring some heat in the Firelands Conference. The Eagles took Norwalk St. Paul to four games in last year's district semifinal. Their top player is 5'10" Allison Seifker, a hitter who can spike from anywhere. Setter Emily Brown holds school records for assists and service aces. Another hitter of note is outside Ida Kluding.

Complicating matters in this district is Colonel Crawford, which moves down from D-III. The Eagles will again be led by setter Chelsea Keegan, a Holy Family University recruit who played for the Columbus Volleyball Academy 17 National Team and also was a member of the 4X800 state qualifying relay team. Also back is 5'11" junior middle blocker Kelsey Volkmer.

The Medina District will be hotly contested. We're going with Cuyahoga Heights over Dalton, Kingsway Christian, Kidron Central Christian, and a sleeper we'll talk about in a moment.

The Redskins return a wealth of experience, along with painful memories of last year's district semifinal 22-25, 25-23, 13-25, 25-23, 13-15 loss to Dalton. Their top player is outside/all-around Lexi Matt, a four-year letter winner and Chagrin Valley Conference MVP who plays club.

Senior right side Nichole Thompson has a 27-inch vertical, which means she a dominant hitter and strong side blocker. Top blocker on the team is long-armed 5'10" outside Heidi Mervar, another four-year letterman who can set if the need arises. She was team MVP in basketball last winter. Senior libero Nicolette Kaliszewski led in digs and is a dominant server. Setting a quick offense will be Carolyn Schafer,

who won a battle for the position. Also watch for junior Dena Solly, an outside/all-around with a dominating jump serve.

Dalton looks to avenge a district final loss to Kidron Central Christian. A rematch, if it occurs, would pit Kidron coach John Finn against his daughter Shana who took the reigns the Bulldogs. Dalton will be young with one seniors. The Bulldogs top returnees are setter Ellen Hartmann, middle Samantha Clark, outside hitter Annie Roshong, all juniors, and sophomore middle Audrey Metzger.

Kingsway Christian will also contend in the district. Junior Holly Miller will convert from outside and join 5'9" senior middle Danae Stoltzfus at middle. Setting will be junior Hailey Hewitt. Senior right side Ashley Troyer has really come on at club. Alternating at libero/defensive specialist will be senior Megan Moretti and junior Ashley Lowe.

Kidron Central Christian will be led by school record holder in season and career assists Sandy Mullet. Plugging graduation holes will be junior libero Malesa Whitmer and 5'8" sophomore outside hitter Danae Stauffer.

Everyone needs to watch out for Mogadore.

Now for the sleeper. It's been a while since Garfield Heights Trinity got out of district in volleyball, but it may only take two more months. Division IV is limited to schools with 124 or less girls. And Trinity, heretofore Division III, had exactly 124 girls in the latest count. The Trojans also have height, experience and a stud setter/outside hitter/libero named Kelly Svoboda who played for the CVC 17 national champions and has committed to the University of Buffalo for next season.

With two 5'10" senior middle blockers in four-year starter Bridget Boyle and Kristen Wotowiec, on track to win twelve letters, and a very athletic outside with hops named Lauren Williams, Trinity will be a force.

Lisbon district finalists Mineral Ridge and Louisville St. Thomas Aquinas have moved up to D-III, and a door has been opened to Lordstown, Columbiana and Columbiana Crestview.

Lordstown fell in the district semifinal to St. Thomas Aquinas to finish 21-3. Columbiana returns senior all-District hitters in Katie Witmer and Kristi Couchenour. Columbiana Crestview, which moved down from D-III will field a young team led by senior outside Brittany Gisler and 6'1" junior middle hitter and basketball star Shanelle Davner.

Likely favorites in the Badger district are Windham, Newbury and Ashtabula Sts. John and Paul.

The southeast region could see a battle between Tuscarawas Central Catholic and Central District favorite Gilead Christian.

Tuscarawas Central Catholic, which fell in a four-game regional semifinal to Newark Catholic, gets the nod, but the Saints can expect a stiff challenge from Berlin Hiland at district. One top veteran for the Saints is all-Ohio senior Molly Lawless, a 5'8" setter/middle hitter with a 22-inch vertical. An all-District Player of the Year, Lawless was a member of the Ohio Elite 17 team that finished national runner-up in Miami. She should surpass 1000 kills and assists this year. Running a close second is 5'9" honorable mention all-Ohio junior setter/middle hitter Millie Patchan. Other Saints of note are senior defensive specialist Danielle Cugliari, junior outside Ali Seymore and 5'8" outside/right side Briana Neidig, who lettered as a frosh.

Hiland will try to unseat the Saints in the district and the Inter-Valley Conference in what has become a spirited rivalry. In 2007 Central Catholic went undefeated in league play, but was surprised by Hiland at district. The Hawks made it all the way to the regional final before bowing to Newark Catholic. Last year Hiland spoiled Central's attempt at a second straight undefeated IVC season, but the Saints avenged that

in the district final.

Three top returnees for Hiland from last year are middle hitter Kendra Mast, and outsides Jill Martin and Janelle Miller, all seniors. Also back are 5'9" junior middle Arrianna Schrock, senior setter Andrea Mast and senior libero Krista Miller.

Other teams to watch from the southeast are Reedsville Eastern, defending district champion Beaver Eastern (they beat Reedsville in the final), and South Webster.

Central District will send one team this way and Gilead Christian, which won a school record 21 matches last year and ended with a final ranking of 14th, looks like it. But there will be more teams to overcome - Central was split in two in 2007 but has re-merged.

The Eagles return all but one starter from the team that was edged by Shekinah Christian in a district semifinal. Four seniors will lead the way: 5'10" all-Ohio outside Kendra Votaw, 5'11" outside/middle Kelly Mast, 5'7" setter Kyla Morgan and 5'7" libero Olivia Bailey. Another Eagle of note is junior Anna Henry, a middle blocker/right side with a 26-inch vertical.

Votaw recorded 430 kills and 281 digs and already holds every kill Gilead Christian record. With 987 kills she is on track to become one of only 20 or so girls in the state to score 1000 points in basketball and spike 1000 kills in volleyball. Morgan had 716 assists last year, and is 450 assists away from 2000 for her career. Mast has over 500 career kills and is the season record holder in service aces. Bailey had several double digit games of digs.

Fisher Catholic, which beat Shekinah Christian in the district final, could still be a threat. Cherie Leach has assumed the coaching duties at Morral Ridgedale. She's coached the Rockets before, and was there in 1998 when they were state runner-up.

#### Jicha's Top 60 State Rankings

- 1 Cincinnati Ursuline Academy
- 2 Dublin Coffman
- 3 Lakota West
- 4 Cincinnati Mt. Notre Dame
- 5 Maria Stein Marion Local
- 6 Toledo St. Ursula
- 7 Rocky River Magnificat
- 8 Cincinnati McAuley
- 9 Kettering Archbishop Alter
- 10 Parma Padua Franciscan
- 11 Cincinnati St. Ursula
- 12 Cincinnati Seton
- 13 Cincinnati Mother of Mercy
- 14 Walsh Jesuit
- 15 Cincinnati Oak Hills
- 16 Tipp City Tippecanoe

17 Columbus Bishop Hartley  
18 Norwalk St. Paul  
19 Orrville  
20 St. Henry  
21 Versailles  
22 Huron  
23 Amherst Steele  
24 Heath  
25 Rockford Parkway  
26 Tuscarawas Valley  
27 Beaver Creek  
28 Centerville  
29 Harrison  
30 Kettering Fairmont  
31 Logan Elm  
32 Sidney Lehman Catholic  
33 Hubbard  
34 Celina  
35 Kenston  
36 Middletown Bishop Fenwick  
37 Brecksville-Broadview-Hts.  
38 Findlay  
39 Toledo Notre Dame Academy  
40 Mansfield Madison  
41 St. Bernard Roger Bacon  
42 Toledo Central Catholic  
43 Beaumont  
44 Elyria  
45 Bowling Green  
46 Salem  
47 Tiffin Columbian  
48 Canal Fulton Northwest  
49 Archbishop Hoban  
50 Bishop Watterson  
51 Smithville  
52 Olmsted Falls  
53 Milan Edison  
54 Bishop Ready  
55 Urbana  
56 Frankfort Adena

57 Mentor Lake Catholic  
58 Warsaw River View  
59 Sunbury Big Walnut  
60 Minster  
60 Newark Catholic  
60 Uhrichsville Claymont  
60 Cambridge  
60 Tiffin Calvert  
60 Hopewell-Loudon  
60 Tuscarawas Central Catholic

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