

Greene County Wildcats VOLLEYBALL

2019



Photo by Russell Turner - Herald Editor

The popularity of volleyball continues to grow at Greene County High School. In its third year at the school, GCHS Volleyball now boast 30 players that compete at the varsity, junior varsity and freshman levels. The group is well-balanced with seven seniors, six juniors, seven sophomores and a 10-member freshman class. The Lady Cats, shown here in their official team photo, kick off their regular season Thursday at home against East Central.

Settle it at the net!

GCHS hoping to take big steps forward in third season of varsity volleyball

Wyatt takes the reigns for Lady Cats after two years as an assistant

By **RUSSELL TURNER**
Herald Editor

Girls' volleyball is on the rise at Greene County High School. Despite winning just one game in its inaugural season in 2017, the sport was a big hit among players and fans. That excitement led to a stronger season in year two, but while the team posted an overall 11-7 record, they finished at 2-6 in a region that included dominant programs such as Vancleave and East Central.

As GCHS kicks off its third season of competitive varsity volleyball, hopes are the Lady Cats will take that next step and advance to playoff contention. But, for that to happen, GCHS will have to do so with its third head coach in as many years. While that typically would not bode well for a sports

program, the selection of Laurie Wyatt to lead the Lady Wildcats, suggests the opposite.

Wyatt has been a part of GCHS volleyball from its inception. She was an assistant during the inaugural season under head coach Tyler Barham and was back in the same role last year alongside head coach Katelyn Aycock. She has literally helped build the program from the ground up, and according to GCHS Principal Scott Bray, there wasn't a single doubt in his mind as to who should get the nod to take Lady Wildcats Volleyball to the next level of being a perennial contender in the sport.

"There was never any doubt who I wanted to lead our volleyball program going forward and we are so thankful that Coach Wyatt accepted the challenge," Bray said. "She is a great teacher, a great competitor and a great role model for our student athletes."

"It is never strictly about wins-and-losses for us at GCHS. Our coaches have great opportunities to teach and help mold young people on and off the court and Laurie is just the type of person I want in that role for our school. But, having said that, I believe she will help take our program to the next level. She has a tremen-

dous work ethic and leads by example. And she also has a unique ability to communicate and teach, which is exactly what is required when trying to build a championship-caliber program."

Wyatt has her hands full as a mother of three with a full-time gig as a teacher at GCHS and life outside the school as the wife of a Baptist preacher. She will also have her hands full on the court too as she stares down a daunting schedule while looking to replace several key starters from last year's team. None of that has dampened her enthusiasm as the Lady Cats kicked off the 2019 campaign Tuesday at home against Perry Central.

"I am blessed beyond belief to be able to get out there with these girls," Wyatt said. "Most of this year's seniors have been with the program since its inception, so we've been able to build something together."

"I knew this would be a huge responsibility. I do not take the title lightly and I want to represent Jesus, the school, and my family as best as I can."

Wyatt's coaching resume is not limited to just the past two seasons at GCHS, where she also serves as an assistant on the girls' basketball team. She has been a head coach before, leading the

girls' basketball program at St. Andrew's Episcopal School from 2007-2009, and had also coached volleyball at the Ridgeland school before coming to Greene County. However, she thinks the last two seasons helped prepare her for this next step.

"I am grateful to Coach Bray for giving me this opportunity, but I am also grateful to Kaitlyn Aycock for showing me and teaching me so much last year," Wyatt said. "Once she decided to take the Purvis job and she made it public, she contacted me and said 'you can do it'. I truly appreciate her confidence in me. Coach Barham and I were both learning in the first year, so I am thankful he gave me the opportunity to come alongside him and start a new program."

"With me being with the program since the beginning, I do

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