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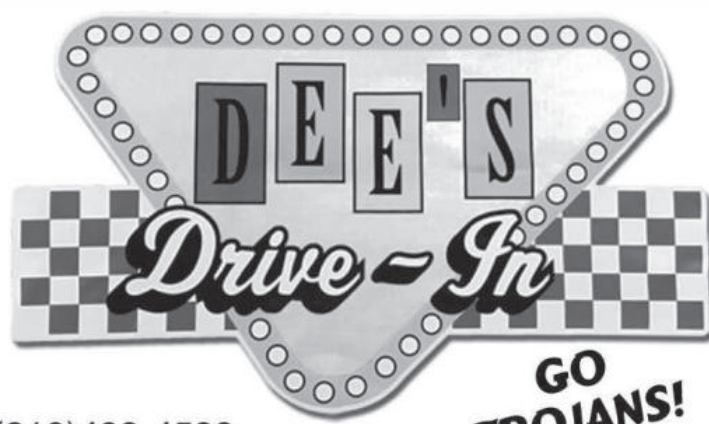


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GO TROJANS!

Barnesville Volleyball Eager To Prove In 2019

Tracy Hinsz
Sports Writer



The Barnesville Lady Trojans volleyball team has returned for another season of action after a successful 2018 campaign that saw the team finish with an overall record of 23 wins and seven losses, losing a nail biter to New York Mills in the Sub-Section 6A championship that ended their season.

Head Coach Megan Askegaard returns for her 12th season as the leader of the Lady Trojans volleyball program. Her overall record stands at 201 wins, 113 losses and five ties. Her team has won 87 games over the last four seasons and has an impressive 158 victories with only 48 losses the last seven seasons, turning Barnesville into a volleyball power in the area.

Assisting Askegaard for the upcoming season will be Junior Varsity Coach McKinzie Tange, B-Team Coach Maggie Stickney, and C-Team Coach Chrissa Wolters.

For the second year in a row, Barnesville has seen one of the best players to ever play for the Lady Trojan Volleyball program leave via graduation.

Elora Passa, who is headed to Mayville State University to continue her volleyball career, had an outstanding senior season, and the team knows it will have a difficult time replacing her statistics and her leadership in 2019. She was named the Heart O'



Members of the Lady Trojans volleyball team are, left to right, front row - Team Managers Macie Blilie and Aubryn Hinsz, Allie Aadland, Payton Lewis, Kimberly Maesse, Team Managers Siri Paulson, Lexi Bontjes and Harper Askegaard; middle row - Emily Smith, Samantha Passa, Lexi Bolgrean, Emily Condon, April Schridde,

Anna Stanford, Olivia Sorenson; back row - Assistant Coach Chrissa Wolters, McKinzie Tange, Jordan Tschumperlin, Lauren Halverson, Emily Bredman, Katie Newell, Assistant Coach Maggie Stickney and Head Coach Megan Askegaard.

Lakes Conference and the team's Most Valuable Player, while also netting the Most Versatile and Heart of the Game Awards.

Passa was named to the Academic All-State Team, while also leading the team in kills with 354. Her leadership brought her team to the brink of a section championship, suffering a five-set loss to New York Mills.

Another important piece to the 2018 team puzzle also graduated

in Claire Meyer. Meyer won the Most Inspirational Player award, while also earning a spot on the Academic All-State Team. She was named the biggest blocker with 51 blocks and made the Heart O' Lakes All-Conference team.

The leadership and talent that these two ladies brought to the team on a daily basis will be missed greatly, as will the leadership skills of Natalie Votava, Nicole Mulcahy, Grace Hagen and Kaitlyn Maesse, who also graduated.

Although the team lost a lot of talent, there are returning players with plenty of experience who are planning to take the next step in their maturation as Lady Trojan volleyball players.

Returning starters for the 2019 season include Emily Condon, Samantha Passa, Kimberly Maesse, Lauren Halverson and Olivia Sorenson.

Condon made the Heart O' Lakes All-Conference team in 2018 finishing the year with 451 digs, while Passa was named honorable mention in the Heart O' Lakes All-Conference.

Maesse led the team in serving last season with a 96.8% clip (358-370) with 29 aces while leading the team in assists as well with 456, netting her an honorable mention HOL All-Conference team selection. Halverson and Sorenson also saw some significant playing time a year ago with Halverson netting Rookie of the Year and Sorenson tallying Most Improved Player.

These five players will be looked upon to lead Coach Askegaard's squad, providing the leadership needed for the team to come together early in the season.

Some other players Askegaard is looking for to earn varsity minutes in 2019 include Lexi Bolgrean, Katie Newell and Emily Bredman, as well as seniors Emerson Biewer and Payton Lewis, with juniors Jordan Tschumperlin, April Schridde, Allie Aadland and Hailey Dunham waiting in the wings.

Sophomores looking to find time include Anna Stanford, Katie Newell, Sydney Rustad, Trinity Gregg, Emma Friesen, Maddy Stuvland and Kiana Amundson.

Freshman players are Emily Smith, McKinzie Skogen, Sydney Strand, Tori Wacker, Rumely Biewer, Kailey Olson, Belle Peterson, Lily Trowbridge, Emily Riddle, Mya Askegaard, Jaida Bontjes and Cora Sorenson. Eighth graders Kenadee Gray and Amelia Newell are hoping to get valuable experience in 2019.

"This year's team is coming in with a great deal of experience playing together, as well as plenty of enthusiasm to perform at the highest level," said Askegaard. "They are a talented group of ladies who love to play volleyball. They are strong leaders on the court that will help their overall team performance throughout the year. They play very well with each other and are extremely competitive. They are coming out of preseason practice hungry to be successful. I expect to see great things on the court from this group

of athletes."

Captains for the 2019 season will be Emily Condon and Samantha Passa.

Askegaard believes that Barnesville and Wadena-Deer Creek are the favorites in the Sub-Section with Henning and Barnesville the favorites to win the Section in 2019. She feels Perham and Hawley are the favorites to win the Heart O' Lakes Conference.

"We have a talented roster of athletes with some looking to step into the varsity rotation this year," said Askegaard. "We also have a great group of coaches that

will push these ladies to perform to their fullest each and every day. I am very excited to see who will step up and how we start the season. Once we find our rotation, I feel very good about how we will perform and look forward to seeing our progress from the start of the season to the very end."



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