



Scouting girls lacrosse

By Mike Miazga
Daily Herald Correspondent

Posted 4/1/2012 10:02 AM

Benet Academy

Coach: Kendall Vail

2011 record: 9-7, second-place conference, lost in sectional semifinals

Top returners: Seniors Nicole Valentine (midfield), Taylor Valentine (midfield), sophomore Katrina Barangan (attack)

Key newcomers: Sophomores Eden Olson (defender), Clare Thiesen (defender)

Outlook: The middle of the field will be a major point of power for Benet. "We have an incredibly strong midfield, versatile scorers and tough defenders," said Vail.

Fremd

Coach: Jake Hughes

2011 record: 2-12, 0-6 conference, lost in first round of state playoffs

Top returners: Juniors Patty Miller (midfield-attack, 31 goals, 5 assists), Maclaine Purdy (center), Katie Mullen (midfield-attack)

Key newcomers: Junior Lisa Van (goalie), sophomores Christine Cano (attack), Maddy Lopez (defense)

Outlook: Miller, an all-conference pick as a sophomore, is back after scoring 31 goals last year. Hughes said quickness will help his squad this season. "The main strength of our team is speed," he said. "We have about five players that can really burn down the field. We will look to use that to our advantage throughout the season. I will rely specifically on the speed and varsity experience of Patty, Maclaine and Katie to lead our team this year." The team has no seniors. "After a couple of seasons lacking in the win column, we are looking to turn it around this year," said Hughes. "We are young again with not a single senior on our team, but I have a lot of juniors that saw varsity time last year and should be ready for the level of competition. We have all the speed and athletic ability to succeed, but we will be looking to clean up our passing and catching in order to compete with the elite teams. I have full confidence that our young and energetic group will turn it around this year and get our program moving in the direction we want to go."

Glenbard West

Coach: Bob Regan

2011 record: 17-3, 4-2 conference, advanced to second round of playoffs

Top returners: Kirsten Ward (midfield), Sara Letmanski (midfield), Hailey Walch (defense)

Key newcomers: Juniors Kathleen Caffery (attack-midfield), Kaitlin Urick (defense), sophomores Cali Lindstrom (midfield), Ella Zurawski (attack-midfield), freshmen Jamie Bishop (midfield), Hailey Gorski (attack), Katy Lundington (defense)

Outlook: Glenbard West sports a young, but talented club this spring. "This team is young, but has more speed and better stick skills than last year's team," said Regan. "The young players have some big shoes to fill in the loss of Christina

Letmanski (72 goals) and Sam Harkless (54 goals). This team will be competitive and win more than they lose. It will be a good development year for all the young players. The development of the younger players will create great expectations for next year's team." Christina Letmanski is now playing at Augustana College, while Harkless is at New Albany.

Hinsdale Central

Coach: Lindsay Finocchiaro Owens

2011 record: 15-7, conference champions, state runner-up

Top returners: Senior Alex Olsen (defense-midfield), juniors Chelsea Boyl (midfield), Cassie Floersch (midfield), Amy O'Grady (midfield), sophomores Jacquie Edward (defense-midfield), Kate Christian (attack)

Key newcomers: Freshmen Honour Mullaney (attack), Anne Richter (attack)

Outlook: Olsen returns after being named to the all-state second team in 2011. "We have a very athletic and fast team," said Finnocchiaro Owens. "The girls have an amazing work ethic and a strong desire to learn more and more each day. They've been working hard every day to get down new concepts and become more cohesive as a unit." The Red Devils have their eyes set on the championship after falling to Loyola in the title game last year at Northwestern. "Our goal every year is to be the best we can possibly be," the coach said. "We have our eyes on the championship trophy and would love to bring it back to Hinsdale. We fell short last year, but know what it feels like to be in the last game of the year. Along with our major goal, we want to become better each day at our individual games and gel as a unit."

Metea Valley-Waubonsie Valley

Coach: Mike Wegrzyn

2011 record: 2-15, 1-7 conference, lost in first round of playoffs

Top returners: Seniors Kim Rowell (midfield, 20 goals, 20 draw controls), Emily Haynes (midfield, 11 goals, 41 groundball controls), Olivia Javornik (defense, 30 groundball controls, 17 caused turnovers)

Key newcomers: Sophomore Julie Bade (attack)

Outlook: A year of experience will greatly help the MV-WV co-op team this season. "We come to play with much more experience compared to last year," said Wegrzyn. "Last year was our first year participating at the varsity level. It was a new experience for the girls. The speed, level of play and the overall competitiveness from all the teams was a new experience." The team graduated only 4 players--12 return. "We are already playing at a much higher level all around. Last year we peaked at the end of the year just as we hoped even though our record didn't indicate it." MV-WV lost 9-8 in overtime to Palatine and 11-7 to O'Fallon in the playoffs. Both of those teams won two playoff games and made the state final round of 16. Junior Kylie Burkhardt is another key player. "I see Kylie having a breakout season leading the attack." Rowell is a returning all-conference player. We are already ahead of last year in terms of passing and catching. This team is very unselfish. Instead of looking to score for themselves, they are looking to get their teammates involved and get the best possible shot on net." The team opened the season with a win over Naperville North. "We have the potential of sneaking up on a lot of teams when we play them," the coach said.

Montini

Coaches: Virginia Kosenkova and Michelle Sebastian

2011 record: 20-3, 4-0 conference, lost to Hinsdale Central in state playoffs

Top returners: Juniors Fran Meyer (midfield), Sarah Lugo (midfield), Erin Steiner (midfield)

Key newcomers: Sophomore Molly Marciniak (midfield), freshman Martha Venchus (defense)

Outlook: The Broncos feature three extremely talented players in Meyer (second-team all-state, national team alternate), Lugo (national team member, all-state honorable mention) and Steiner (national team member, first-team all-state). Meyer is committed to Marquette, while Lugo is headed to Michigan. All three are captains this year. "With Fran, Sarah and Erin, we have some of the strongest player sin the state. They have stepped up to become team leaders and captains as well," said Kosenkova. Montini only has 4 seniors on the team. "We have a very young team, but most of our junior class is entering their third year on varsity, which gives them a lot of experience playing at a higher level," said Kosenkova. "We have a much deeper bench than in past years and we have several players who play equally well on attack and defense. Goalie Michelle Marten has shown improvement. "She is the backbone for our defense," said Kosenkova. The coach has high aspirations for this group. "We have the potential to be in the top 3 in state this year (the program's previous best was No. 4)."

Naperville Central

Coach: Adam Washington

2011 record: 2-13, 1-7 conference, lost to Naperville North in first round of playoffs

Top returners: Seniors Megan Shoemaker (center), Veronica Destefano (defense), Bridget Maloney (attack wing), Nicole Pinella (defensive wing), Jana Sztuk (defensive wing)

Key newcomers: Junior Katie Giovannoni (goalie), sophomore Elizabeth Goeden (attack wing), freshman Jaye Dvorak (attack wing)

Outlook: Central returns numerous key contributors from last year's team. Maloney led the team in scoring, Shoemaker led in draw controls, while Destefano was tops in caused turnovers. Pinella was second in groundballs. Shoemaker, Destefano and Pinella are team captains. Sztuk is the best two-way midfielder on the team. Giovannoni takes over in goal for Sarah Osier (Augustana College) and made 16 saves in the team's first game. "This year's team has a lot of leadership and is definitely one of the most cohesive teams I've coached," said Washington. "Most of the girls on the team have been a part of the 'rebuild' from Day One and have bought into the mentality that hard work and proper execution of fundamentals will keep us in more games than not. We're very senior-laden and a majority of the girls kept active throughout the off-season. This team will go as far as their hearts are willing to go. The skill level is there, but at times in our first game (Marian Catholic), we lacked mental toughness. We have the ability to compete in and win most, if not all of our games. What excites me the most is how much farther ahead we are as a group compared to last year. There is definitely a different look and feel to this group. Every one of them is a leader and contributor who is willing to do whatever it takes to make the team better."

Neuqua Valley

Coach: Veronica Appenbrink

2011 record: 14-2, 8-0 conference, lost to Montini in sectional final

Top returners: Seniors Kendall Maduro (midfield), Caren Lee (midfield), Caroline O'Reilly (defense), juniors Ali Gosselin (midfield, attack), Kelly Leibovitz (midfield-attack), Lauren McDonald (defense)

Key newcomers: Junior Annie Miller (goalie), sophomores Leah Neumann (attack), Becca Wolfe (attack), Jackie Kowalski (attack), Sofia Barcos (defense)

Outlook: Appenbrink takes over a team with no shortage of talent. Gosselin was a member of the national tournament team. "The team has a solid group of returners and some incredible new talent," said Appenbrink. "Playing under a new head coach, the team is working off each other in new ways and learning to take different approaches to the game. With plenty of hard work and a no excuses attitude, we have the ability to play well into the end of May."

Palatine

Coach: Leslie Schock

2011 record: 15-6, 4-2 conference, lost to Libertyville in supersectional

Top returners: Seniors Rose Silveira (midfield, 72 goals), Ashley Geraghty (attack), Marcy Karabin (midfield), juniors Lacey Serafino (midfield), Reggie Matarano (defense), Jamie Lloyd (attack), Amy Schneider (attack), Veronika Metanova (goalie)

Key newcomers: Senior Alyssa Blair (attack), sophomores Megan Wang (defense), Emily Blair (defense), Shannon Norris (defense)

Outlook: It certainly never hurts to have a player who scored 72 goals returning. That's exactly what Palatine has in two-time all-conference selection Silveira. Metanova made 25 saves in the sectional title win over Barrington last year. Lloyd has made the transition to offense after playing defense on the varsity the previous 2 years. "Our offense is full of veterans and Rose, our leading scorer, is back," said Schock. "Veronika is coming off a stellar sophomore year and has improved. Our defense is young, but very athletic and has great leadership in Reggie Matarano, Lacey Serafino, Jamie Lloyd and Amy Schneider. Coming off last year, we have a lot of momentum and a lot of returning players from that

team, not to mention some great young talent that will also contribute this season."

Stevenson

Coach: Janette Eichfeld

2011 record: 10-8, 3-3 conference, lost in first round of playoffs

Top returners: Seniors Rachel Banas (midfield, 67 goals, 25 assists), Kelsey Patten (center, 35 goals, 17 assists), Erin Rice (midfield, 20 goals, 10 assists), Alyssa Gorenberg (goalie, 57% stop-to-goal percentage), Emily Loretto (defense), juniors Makala Udoni (midfield, 21 goals), Lilly Walker (defense), Emily Okmin (defense)

Key newcomers: Juniors Jennifer Schultz (attack), Laura Elsesser (attack), Rachael Roselli (midfield), sophomore Stephanie Sintetas (midfield)

Outlook: Banas was an honorable mention all-state pick and was selected to the Western Great Lakes regional team. Five of Stevenson's 12 returning players are three-year varsity players. "The experience they have brought to the team has resulted in a cohesive team unit, above-average play that has already been noted early in the season and an excitement that's pervasive throughout the team," said Eichfeld. "We have a very balanced team. We are not relying on one or two people to drive to goal, but rather an entire team complement capable of scoring each time. Defensively, we have an experienced set of players, including our goalkeeper, who have already demonstrated their ability to close down a well-executed offense." Banas, Rice and Udoni are the team captains. "Our objective this year is to be identified as a top 16 Illinois team. We are also targeting the conference lead," said Eichfeld.

Vernon Hills

Coach: Bob Thompson

2011 record: 4-12, 2-3 conference, lost to Libertyville in playoff opener

Top returners: Seniors Christi Curry (attack, 38 goals, 9 assists), Sarah Lehman (center, 8 goals, 4 assists), Nikki Nathanson (D, 24 groundballs), Lauren Hernandez (attack, 21 goals, 12 assists, 34 groundballs), Jihee Choi (attack, 48 goals, 10 assists, 46 ground balls), Erin Kellar (D, 27 ground balls)

Key newcomers: Juniors Erika Peepo (attack), Claire Repsholdt (attack), Sarah Park (defense), sophomores Caitlin Amidie (defense), Jorydan Cotton (defense)

Outlook: Vernon Hills returns many of its key components, including two-time team MVP Curry and Choi, who combined to score 86 goals last year. Nathanson was an all-conference performer on defense last year and Kellar provides key help in the back as well. Choi scored 8 goals in the team's first game against Conant. "This year we have four players who can all take the ball to goal or find a player to pass to for us to score," said Thompson. "I believe this will be a year for us to make it back into the top 10 in state. In the past 11 seasons we have only finished out of the top 10 four years."

Warren

Coach: Catherine Catanzaro

2011 record: 5-14, 0-4 conference, lost to Vernon Hills in first round of playoffs

Top returners: Seniors Aubri Hazen (attack wing), Nicole Suchsland (attack wing), Arika Stovall (attack), Caitlin Kilroy (defense), junior Anisa Nandy (attack)

Key newcomers: Juniors Kathleen Clifford (center), Maire Klonowski (goalie)

Outlook: Hazen was the team MVP in 2011 and earned all-conference honors, while Suchsland was named an academic All-American. Warren has set the bar much higher in 2012. "Last year was frustrating for a lot of the players. We thought we underachieved," said Catanzaro. "That really fueled a great off-season with a lot of participation in open gyms, camps and other playing opportunities. That made this season's tryouts highly competitive, and because of that the varsity team is more driven and focused than in previous years. This will be the most talented team Warren has ever had. We are entering our fourth year as a program and that means most of the girls have three or more years playing experience. That will help us become more competitive in our conference. I believe if we can compete in our conference we will also be able to compete with others teams in the state."

Wheaton United

Coach: Charles Solomon

2011 record: 15-6, 5-1 conference, lost in first round of playoffs

Top returners: Senior Bridget Philpott (defense), juniors Jeanine Fischer (attack), Jamie Lawinger (midfield-defense)

Key newcomers: Junior Jackie Ciupo (midfield-defense), sophomore Nikki Togami (midfield), freshman Mary Budz (attack)

Outlook: Wheaton United has only four returning varsity players. "The biggest plus is that we have upgrade the athleticism and smart game play at almost every position," said Solomon. "I especially look forward to our attack, which is the best we have ever had." Defense will continue to be a key calling card. "Our defense will continue to be among the best in the state and our attack will be greatly improved from last year, which should make us a continued threat this season," the coach said.

York

Coach: Vicki Richmond

2011 record: NA

Top players: Seniors Kelly Nikitas, Cori Duncan (Augustana College recruit), sophomores Annalia Fowler (goalie), Emily Flynn (defense), Caroline Gnandt (defense)

Outlook: First-year York coach Richmond takes over a team that features 10 returning varsity players and 9 newcomers. The Dukes opened the season in the Montini invitational and scored wins over Fenwick and Northside Prep and tied Benet Academy and the Waubonsie Valley-Metea Valley co-op team. York then lost to Neuqua Valley and finished fifth in the tournament. New goalie Fowler shut out Northside Prep and held Fenwick to 2 goals. "The season is going to be very successful due to the strength of our girls," said Richmond. "As a new coach coming into the program, I was extremely impressed by the overall defensive skill of our players. Our defense works very hard and works well as a group. This causes our offense to step up to their level in practice and take advantage of stronger defenses and succeed. Another strength is the cohesion and attitude of the team. The girls get along, goof around and have a great time playing lacrosse."

- The Daily Herald has two lacrosse applications -- one for boys and one for girls -- that will help you follow the high school lacrosse season. The apps, available in Android and iPhone formats for 99 cents each, will contain all the lacrosse coverage from our printed sports editions, plus timely results and more photos.

Copyright © 2022 Paddock Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 280, Arlington Heights, IL 60006

Paddock Publications, Inc. is an Employee-Owned Company