

Girls lacrosse: Scouting Lake County



Sophie Sorenson



Joe Aguilar

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EAST SUBURBAN CATHOLIC

CARMEL

Coach: Jim Lasky (eighth year)

Last season: 10-7, 4-1 in ESCC

Players to watch: Oliva Vinci (So., attacker), Emma Chitwood (So., attacker), Meghan Novak (So., attacker), Caroline Byrd (So., midfielder), Brigit Barr (So., center), Patty Quast (Sr., goalie), Bri Chitwood (Sr., defender), Lainie Oechsle (Jr., defender)

Outlook: Coach Jim Lasky started Carmel's varsity program in 2011, and the Corsairs have enjoyed plenty of success. They won back-to-back East Suburban Catholic Conference championships in 2015 and 2016, before finishing second to St. Viator last year. "We are extremely young," Lasky said. "We lost the ESCC last year and our goal is getting back. ... Our program is over 66 athletes and one of the largest at Carmel. We need to start a freshman program to handle the growth. Our strength will be in numbers. I have several athletes to create our family environment." Lasky calls sophomores Oliva Vinci, Emma Chitwood and Meghan Novak his "three-headed monster" on attack. "They have been playing for me for a long time and look for one another," Lasky said. Sophomore midfielders Caroline Byrd and Brigit Barr are his "Killer B's" and control the tempo. The defense features senior goalie Patty Quast, senior Bri Chitwood and junior Lainie Oechsle. "Senior captains Grace Butz and Victoria Giambrone are the keys to keeping these young athletes focused," Lasky said. "I think we will win some games. Being young always puts maturity into the winning formula."

NORTH SUBURBAN

LAKE ZURICH

Coach: Megan Pender

Last season: 7-11, 3-2 in NSC

Players to watch: Melanie Brown (Sr.), Maddie Kosir (So.)

Outlook: The Bears boast one of the best players in the area in senior midfielder Melanie Brown. She's coming off a junior season in which she scored 66 goals and was named IHSWLA honorable mention all-state.

LIBERTYVILLE

Coach: Andra Dalton (fourth year)

Last season: 6-13, 2-3 in NSC

Players to watch: Emma Burns (So., attacker), Ashley Marshall (Jr., midfielder), Megan Feeney (Fr., attacker/midfielder), Tristan Keegan (Fr., defender), Margaret Burnetti (Jr., midfielder/defender), Kelsey Mazzei (So., attacker)

Outlook: Coach Andra Dalton has a mix of newcomers and veterans, and she's optimistic about the season. "I expect to have a successful season," Dalton said. "We are a young team who is eager to learn and improve. It is evident that our veteran players put forth tremendous effort during the off-season and the team will see the benefits of this hard work throughout the season."

MUNDELEIN

Coach: Caroline Gully (third year)

Last season: 1-10, 1-4 in NSC

Players to watch: Zoe Palm (So., midfielder), Skylar Lucich (Jr., attacker), Ellie Maldonado (Sr., defender)

Outlook: Girls lacrosse is still relatively new at MHS, where coach Caroline Gully started the program in 2016. "This team has 20 returning varsity players and is very well conditioned," Gully said. "As a newer program, these girls play like they have nothing to lose."

STEVENSON

Coach: Sarah Gutierrez (sixth year)

Last season: 16-6, 4-1 in NSC

Players to watch: Sophie Sorenson (Jr.), Erica Spieler (Jr.), Kilian Weber (So.), Georgia Maskalunas (Jr.)

Outlook: The Patriots graduated a strong senior class that included IHSWLA honorable mention all-state attacker Courtney Patten, but they are "looking to continue on the same line of success," coach Sarah Gutierrez said. Junior Sophie Sorenson verbally committed to the University of Connecticut in January. An all-area volleyball player, Sorenson scored 73 goals last season and was named honorable mention all-state. Junior Erica Spieler had 42 goals last year, sophomore Kilian Weber had 30, and junior Georgia Maskalunas notched 19. "We're a young team but hoping to leverage our strong team culture with a balanced approach to attack and defense," Gutierrez said. "Our goal for this season is, as usual, to win the conference -- which we first did in 2016 -- and make a run in playoffs. For us, on that same line, if we can go into competitions and come out knowing that we performed to the highest of our ability, then we'll be able to notch that day as a win." The Patriots opened their season last week by beating Huntley 12-3. Sorenson, Maskalunas, Michelle Shen, Taze Thompson and Weber each scored 2 goals.

WARREN

Coach: Kelsey Rupsch

Last season: 4-13, 0-5 in NSC

Players to watch: Ellie Bousson (Sr.), Tiffany Maravilla (Jr.), Cara Sprague (Sr.), Abbey Triebe (Jr.)

Outlook: The Blue Devils finished last in the NSC last year, but they return senior midfielder Cara Sprague, who scored 37 goals last season.

CENTRAL SUBURBAN

VERNON HILLS

Coach: Bob Thompson (17th year)

Last season: 6-12, 1-6 in CSL

Players to watch: Diana Sifuentes (Sr., attacker), Leah Demas (Sr., defender), Carolyn Uhm (So., midfielder), Lisa Boehmer (Fr., midfielder), Taylor Phan (Jr., attacker), Lexie Kolb (Sr., midfielder)

Outlook: The Cougars are in their second season in the CSL and looking to place higher in the conference as well in state rankings, coach Bob Thompson said. They have 13 returning seniors, including their top four defenders. "So our defense will be our strong point," Thompson said. "Our attack players are learning their strong points."

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