

FIVE TO WATCH

CLARE DUDA SR., SETON

The Conquistadors won 18 games and the Delaney Athletic Conference championship with Duda starting at one of the setter spots last fall. She had 202 assists out of Seton's 6-2 offense and was among the team's top servers at 93 percent.

FELICIA HUERTA SOPH., FREEDOM

The Eagles' middle hitter will serve as a team captain after winning a gold medal as part of the Chesapeake Region squad at the USA Volleyball High Performance Championships. Huerta starred for the Ichiban 15s during the club season.

STEPHANIE KELLY JR., FOREST PARK

After leading the Chesapeake Region to a gold medal at the USA Volleyball High Performance Championships this summer, Kelly takes over as the Bruins' No. 1 setter. The Ichiban club star made her varsity debut as a libero last fall.

LAUREN OXLEY JR., STONEWALL

After making the All-Cedar Run District second team as a sophomore last fall, Oxley is ready to lead the Raiders' offense. As an outside hitter for the Ichiban 17s club team, she attended the Shamrock Festival College Recruiting Showcase in March.

ARICQUEL PAYNE SR., OSBOURN PARK

Payne had a busy summer. She was part of the Clash 18s squad that won the Old Dominion Region championship and then attended a six-week camp in Richmond. She can play the outside and middle hitter positions.

FIVE NEW FACES

EMILY CRAIG FR., OSBOURN PARK

She'll have to wait one more season to run the Yellow Jackets' offense, but Craig is a star on the horizon at the setter position and represents the future of Osbourn Park volleyball.

ADRIANNA HAZOU SOPH., WOODBRIDGE

After making the JV team as a freshman, Hazou played club ball with the Premier 15s and is now ready to make an impact at the varsity level with strong hitting and exceptional passing.

TAYLOR KIRBY SOPH., BRENTSVILLE

Making a varsity team filled with five senior starters is impressive enough, but Kirby could emerge as one of the Evergreen District's strongest hitters by the end of the season.

HANNA RADHI SOPH., BATTLEFIELD

The 6-foot middle hitter will make an immediate impact after playing club ball for the Virginia Elite 15s squad that qualified for the Junior Olympic National Championships.

CASSIE SCANTLIN JR., HYLTON

An aggressive hitter with an endless supply of energy, Scantlin will provide a huge boost at the outside hitter position after transferring to Hylton from a Maryland private school.

FOCUS ON: EVANGEL CHRISTIAN



The Evangel Christian School volleyball team has gone undefeated the past three seasons with 58 consecutive victories and three ODACS state titles. (Jeff Mankie/News & Messenger)

High flying Eagles

Three-time state champs have won 58 straight

By DAVE UJNIK
dutnik@insidenova.com

Evangel Christian School outside hitter Jasmine Morrow appreciates the streak.

She's been a part of it from the very beginning and is connected to it in ways that many of her teammates aren't.

Morrow had just discovered volleyball when she made the varsity team as an eighth-grader in 2007. She had no way of knowing then that one day hundreds of college coaches would be clamoring for her attention or that she'd play 58 consecutive matches without losing.

"It's gone by so fast," she said. "Next year will be my senior year and I'll be figuring out what college I'm going to."

That is a decision for another day. Morrow's a bit preoccupied with other volleyball issues at the moment, like tonight's season opener against Fairfax Home School and the Eagles' quest for a fourth consecutive Old Dominion Association of Church Schools state championship.

"It's really crazy," the reigning state tournament MVP said. "It's exciting, but there's also a little pressure because we don't want to mess up the streak. But I think us knowing we have that streak will help us focus more and play better."

"It's making us push harder in practice. I think it will be a really fun season."

The Eagles don't really need any extra motivation, but coach Tim Mor-

row has provided it in the fashion of a relentless schedule that includes the program's first matches against public school opponents (Hylton and Stonewall Jackson), a home and away series against defending Delaney Athletic Conference champion Seton School and a weekend invitational at Shenandoah Valley Christian Academy.

"It should be a really fun, hard, challenging season," all-state junior middle hitter Amber Taylor said. "When coach told us we'd be playing some public school teams I was really excited. I think it's really good that we're going to push ourselves and see what we're made of. We've been undefeated three seasons and we want to see what we can do against harder teams."

Taylor, who has received major recruiting interest from West Virginia University, is one of five starters returning, along with Morrow, all-state sophomore setter Krissy Lambert, senior libero Shabris Hawthorne and setter Jannette Lambert.

"It's really cool to see how enthused everybody is about it," Taylor said. "We're just a bunch of goofs running around."

The excitement is understandable. Morrow, who has already received recruiting letters from approximately 200 college coaches, combined for an area-best 315 kills, 373 digs and 114 service aces last fall.

Taylor contributed 285 kills and 243 digs, while Krissy Lambert had 443 assists in her first season as a varsity setter.

"It's definitely exciting. We have a great team." Krissy Lambert said. "I think it's actually really good for us to be playing better competition. We always play our best when we play somebody as good as or better than us."

The Eagles have a long history of success on the volleyball court dating back more than a decade - another impressive streak that once featured the talents of middle hitter Katie Oakes (Evangel's first Division I scholarship player) and legendary coach Rick Moore.

Moore's teams won four consecutive ODACS state championships from 2001 to 2004 and the tradition that exists today was established by players like Oakes, Chelsea Amick, Janette Freitas and Terri Slade.

But even those great teams never won 58 in a row.

That is the legacy of a new generation, one that is being introduced to defensive specialist Diamond Gardner and sophomores Samantha Scott and Alicia Harris.

"It will be disappointing if we lose, but keeping the streak in mind will actually push us," Krissy Lambert said. "The wins we have is already a great accomplishment. We never thought we'd get there and it's been really fun, which is the main reason I play volleyball."

"We always have to keep that in mind. That's the basis of what we're doing. We want to play our best but, at the end of the day, we want to have fun, too."

"We want to see what we can do against harder teams."
AMBER TAYLOR - Evangel's all-state middle hitter

PRESEASON ALL-AREA

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Clare Duda, Seton, sr. (202 assists)
Stephanie Kelly, Forest Park, jr. (USA High Performance)
Krissy Lambert, Evangel Christian, soph. (ODACS all-state team)
Nikki McMillan, Osbourn Park, sr. (All-NW Region)
Katie Scheulen, Potomac, sr. (367 assists, team captain)

OH

Mara Beane, Forest Park, fr. (High Performance alternate)
Melissa Cousins, Woodbridge, sr. (Evolution 17s kills leader)
Erikka Davis, Osbourn Park, sr.
Megan Dunn, Brentsville, sr.

OH

Beatriz Fernandez, Woodbridge, soph.
Anna Grimberg, Seton, sr.
Jessica Harris, Potomac, sr. (All-Cardinal District)
Adrianna Hazou, Woodbridge, soph.

MH

Felicia Huerta, Freedom, soph. (USA High Performance)
Bailey Liddle, Battlefield, sr.,
Jordan McKnight, Hylton, sr.
Erin Porter, Potomac, sr.

MH

Hanna Radhi, Battlefield, soph. (Virginia Elite 15s)
Skye Square, Stonewall Jackson, sr. (All-Cedar Run District)
Amber Taylor, Evangel Christian, jr. (ODACS all-state)
Caitlin Thomas, Hylton, sr. (All-Cardinal District)

OH

Marissa Hicks, Stonewall Jackson, sr.
Taylor Kirby, Brentsville, soph.
Jasmine Mann, Battlefield, sr.
Jasmine Morrow, Evangel Christian, jr. (ODACS state MVP)

OH

Lauren Oxley, Stonewall, jr. (All-Cedar Run District)
Aricquel Payne, Osbourn Park, sr. (All-Cardinal District)
Cassie Scantlin, Hylton, jr. (transfer from Maryland)
Aly Smith, Stonewall Jackson, sr.

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Samantha Bohn, Stonewall, sr.
Shabris Hawthorne, Evangel Christian, sr.
Kelsey Kaelber, Potomac, sr.
Margaret Rohan, Seton, sr.
Alyssa Sanchez, Osbourn Park, jr. (.288 digs, All-Cardinal District 1st team)

THE TOP TEAMS

BATTLEFIELD

With three talented middle hitters, the Bobcats could be serious contenders for a regional berth in the Cedar Run District.



EVANGEL

Junior outside hitter Jasmine Morrow was in 7th grade the last time the Eagles lost a match. Another 20-win season is possible.



OSBOURN PARK

The reigning Cardinal District champions are still the best team in the area. The goal this fall is to return to the state tournament.



SETON

The defending Delaney Athletic Conference champions are capable of reaching the VIS state tournament again in Division II.



STONEWALL

The Raiders are back. Believe it. New head coach Jim Sample expects to contend for a regional berth out of the Cedar Run District.



KEEP AN EYE ON BRENTSVILLE

Amy Beard moves from Marsteller to take over a Tigers program that should be in the running for an Evergreen District championship.

POTOMAC

After winning 13 matches a year ago and placing third in the Cardinal District, the Panthers return enough talent to make a run at regionals.

WOODBRIDGE

The Vikings return eight players from last season's 10-win team and expect to be competitive behind a new coaching staff led by Jean Morrissey.

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS

GROUP AAA

Loudoun Valley

GROUP AA

Loudoun County

GROUP A

Gate City

VIS DIV. I

Flint Hill

VIS DIV. II

Cape Henry Collegiate

VIS DIV. III

North Cross

ODACS

Evangel Christian

VIRGINIA'S TOP 20

1. Flint Hill
2. Stone Bridge
3. Kellam
4. Broad Run
5. Princess Anne
6. Deep Run
7. Loudoun County
8. Atlee
9. Heritage
10. South County
11. Cape Henry
12. Osbourn Park
13. Robinson
14. Colonial Forge
15. Cave Spring
16. Langley
17. Ocean Lakes
18. Grafton
19. Frank Cox
20. Western Albemarle