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Lady 'Cats Hope To Return To Spotlight

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

The DHS volleyball team has been hard at work during the summer in preparation for their upcoming season.

“We’ve played in numerous camps this summer,” head coach Lauren Hutchcraft said. “We played in a camp in Poplar Bluff in June, and we scrimmaged almost every other week at Poplar Bluff - Mike Berry opened up his gym and we played two games a night there.”

“We also played some good competition at both the Perryville and Jackson shootouts. We lost to Advance in the finals of the Perryville shootout, but that was a game I feel we really should have won. We won lots of games this summer, so I have high hopes for the season.”

Hutchcraft, a 2003 graduate of DHS, is entering her second year as head volleyball coach, and is returning several key contributors from last year’s squad. The Lady ‘Cats only lost one starter last year - Elisha Flannigan - and seniors McKenzie Mitchell, Lauren Ward, and Lindsey Hindman all saw extensive time on the courts last season. Teammate Erika Mouser, who was injured during her junior season, is itching to get back on the court.

“Erika Mouser was injured all last year, but she’s played some strong games this summer

- she should be a key member of the team this year,” Hutchcraft noted.

“We have a strong group of seniors coming back,” Hutchcraft added. “Brittany Harris, a junior, and Hannah Noe, a sophomore, both played varsity all last year.”

Another sophomore, Erika Cobb, should also see extensive playing time this season.

Along with the returning veteran leadership, the squad will welcome a group of freshman that didn’t lose a single match during middle school ball. One of the freshman will even see some playing time at the varsity level.

“Jessica Lindsey, a freshman, should also see some time at the varsity level,” Hutchcraft said of the freshman. “She’s played phenomenal ball this summer as a middle hitter; I expect great things out of her.”

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“[Jessica] never really had the chance to shine because of the level of competition she faced in middle school,” Hutchcraft added, but believe me, by the time she graduates, people will know her name.

Despite a less-than-desirable outcome at the end of last season, the Lady ‘Cats look poised to excel this season. A solid mix of returning veteran leadership, as well as outstandingly talented ‘new blood’ to the program could be just what the team needs to return to the top of the local volleyball scene.

“Perryville was state-ranked last season - we lost to them during districts in three sets,” Hutchcraft recalled. “We came up against them and the Jackson shootout and were able to beat them, and that was a great moment for the girls this summer.”

“I think they’re going to be a team to watch this year,” Hutchcraft added.

Photos Above:

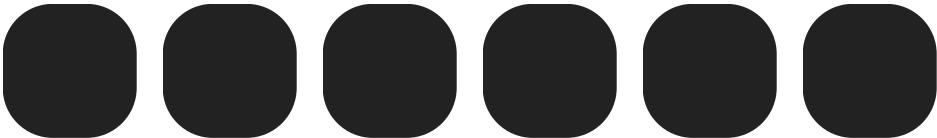
Top Photo: Junior Brittany Harris goes in for a hard spike during Friday (August 12) morning’s practice session.

Bottom photo: Jessica Lindsey, an incoming freshman, brushes up on her serving technique during practice. Lindsey looks to be the lone freshman on an upperclassmen-heavy squad in the upcoming season.

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