

## VB team brings strength, experience to the court

Written by Darci Tomky

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With six returning starters and looking stronger than ever, the 2009 HHS volleyball team gears up for another action-packed season.

Coach Sandra Rahe said experience is what will give them the advantage over other teams as most of the players participated in volleyball camp and summer league during the last few months. She said it's like they are starting out a whole season better than past years because of that time together during the summer.

Last year's league was tough, said Rahe, but many of the teams lost a lot of seniors. Holyoke only had one starter graduate, giving the girls much more varsity experience together.

Not only are the players experienced, but so are the coaches which gives Holyoke a very stable volleyball program. For the seniors on the team, this is the seventh year Rahe and assistant coach Tammie Timm will have worked with them, having coached them for their entire volleyball career in both junior high and high school. The players know the coaches' expectations, and the coaches know how the players work best.

Helping out Rahe and Timm this year are managers Natasha Peregoy and Rachel Schneider.

Strength is one thing the team is concentrating on, spending time in the weight room during each practice. Because they are stronger, they are blocking and hitting better and have more control over the ball, noted Rahe.

She said the team did not have to spend much time with fundamentals this year, so they can focus more on placing hits and serves, team play and rotations as well as some fun aspects of the game like trick plays and learning how to play with "finesse."

The volleyball season begins on Thursday, Sept. 3 when the Dragons host Burlington at home at 4:30 p.m. The remainder of the schedule is as follows:

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Thursday, Sept. 10, at Grant, 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 12, NJC tournament at Sterling, 9 a.m.; Tuesday, Sept. 15, hosting Imperial, 4 p.m.; Thursday, Sept. 17, hosting Merino, 4 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 22, hosting Fleming, 4 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 26, Akron Invitational at Akron, 9 a.m.; Tuesday, Sept. 29, at Sedgwick County, 4 p.m.; Friday, Oct. 2, hosting Akron, 3:30 p.m.; Tuesday, Oct. 6, at Wiggins, 4 p.m.; Thursday, Oct. 8, at Caliche, 4 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 12, hosting Sedgwick County, 4 p.m.; Thursday, Oct. 22, hosting Haxtun, 4 p.m.; Friday, Oct. 23, hosting Wray, 3:30 p.m.; Friday, Oct. 30, Districts, at NJC in Sterling, TBD; Saturday, Nov. 7, Regionals, TBD; Friday-Saturday, Nov. 13-14, State, TBD.