



Front row left to right are seniors: Liz Redenski, Carly Reakes, Haileigh Hendricks, Alyssa Lewis, Rayza Ruiz, Jilann Baron, and Meghan Duda. Standing left to right: Mandy Biehl, Assistant Coach Matt Labenski, Caley Felker, Brooklyn Biehl, McKenzie Ball, Assistant Coach Jim Gavin, Kylie Alberts, Abby Cullen, Taylor Bartle, Jenna Baron, Myla Vnuk, Emily Cullen, Ali Keener, Rielly Miller, Volunteer Coach Dave Marcozzi, and Head Coach Debbie Gavin.



Pictured above are GNA champions of the 2018 Wyoming Valley West Volleyball Tournament. Sitting left to right are: Abby Cullen, Meghan Duda, Haileigh Hendricks, Liz Redenski, Mandy Biehl, and Rielly Miller. Standing are: Head Coach Debbie Gavin, Brooklyn Biehl, Carly Reakes, Alyssa Lewis, Jilann Baron, Jenna Baron, Myla Vnuk, Rayza Ruiz, and Assistant Coach Jim Gavin.

### Girls' Volleyball Makes GNA Proud

By Tom Kashatus ~ There is no doubt that Basketball is, deservedly so, "King" and "Queen" of Greater Naticoke Area School District sports teams. And it doesn't matter, it could be Boys or Girls. Then come football and baseball. All the rest of the sports follow, jockeying for position. Newport Bidy League is still a great contributing factor to the local basketball program and deserves credit for the development of young players that is a foundation for the entire program's success.

Enough said in prologue. How about volleyball? Do you know that volleyball is a first cousin to basketball? Volleyball and basketball complement each other by incorporating similar skills - such as running, jumping, pivoting, and blocking, to mention a few. Athletes who excel in basketball will normally excel in volleyball. Cross-training a player in one sport to play another is a great idea. Players must learn to do it all with their bodies. No special equipment is needed - just a ball.

Volleyball competition in Pennsylvania is played at levels 1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A, with some of the best teams ending the season undefeated with records such as 25 wins and 0 losses. There are areas in Pennsylvania where volleyball is a way of life for its athletes - such as North Allegheny, Downingtown, Allentown, Bethlehem, Cumberland Valley, and State College, just to name a few. Those volleyball athletes with high academic achievement are pursued by colleges and universities and are rewarded with well-earned scholarships. In return, these athletes are expected to perform at the highest level possible with the end goal of a national championship. Just take a look at the teams of Stanford, Penn State and other Big Ten teams. After watching national championship competition, one can appreciate the athleticism of the men and women who play the sport.

Did you know that the Greater Naticoke Area Trojanette Volleyball Team captured the 2018-19 District II, Class AAA Title for their third championship in a row? In District playoffs they beat North Pocono, Lake Lehman, and finally Tunkhannock in the finals at Wilkes University Marts Center. The local squad was stopped in the state play-offs by the #1 seeded team in the State and last year's champion, West York who took it to the top once again this year. Holy Redeemer, formerly Bishop Hoban, has often received a state ranking in the top twenty five and had successful runs in the state play-offs.

Highlights for the GNA Trojanettes 2018-19 team are: (1) winning a hard-fought tournament in the Wyoming Valley West Tournament of elite squads early in the season, (2) being the only conference team to take a set off Holy Redeemer during the season, (3) beating Tunkhannock for the District II Class 3A championship to make statewide competition, (4) having seven amazing seniors, Jilann Baron, Meghan Duda, Haileigh

Hendricks, Alyssa Lewis, Carly Reakes, Liz Redenski, and Rayza Ruiz, lead the team to victory, (5) the selection of Alyssa Lewis and Rayza Ruiz to the 2018-19 Wyoming Valley Conference All-Star First Team and Jilann Baron to WVC All-Star Honorable Mention, and (6) the selection of Alyssa Lewis and Rayza Ruiz to the 2018-19 Citizens Voice and Times Leader First Team All-Stars.

Much of the team's success can be credited to long-time head coach, Debbie Gavin, and her husband, assistant coach Jim Gavin. Debbie is formerly from Glen Lyon (nee Krupinski) and taught Health/Physical Education at Greater Naticoke Area High School. Jim Gavin is a twenty year military and Vietnam veteran, retired from the National Security Agency, and later retired from the postal service. Between both Gavins, they have sixty years of experience coaching volleyball. The magazine *Coaching Management* featured them in an article titled, "Married, With Players : Spouses on the Sidelines."

Other assistant coaches for the team are Matt Labenski, Tracy Biehl, Dave Marcozzi, and John Pietrzyk. Bookkeepers are Barbara Lach, Joyce Pietrzyk, and Carmella Brown.

Head Coach Debbie Gavin stated with deep sincerity that "(1) Having seven amazing seniors who welcomed everyone on the team, (2) a strong work ethic, (3) team spirit, and (4) great parents/fans was the recipe for a Three Peat of the District II, Class 3A 2018-19 Volleyball Championship."