

Welcome to LoneStarVolleyball.com

Contributed by Scott White
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You're about to enter the ultimate destination for high school and club girls volleyball -- Texas style. It is a pay site (see options above), so you'll have to sign up first. But once you do, it's all there for you: comprehensive coverage of the game we love on every page, including rankings, player profiles, action photos, news from around the state and so much more! Need more convincing? Click on the title to take a look at an example of our work. You'll love it! See you inside!

They have won more 5A state titles than any other team in Texas history. And if not for an injury to All-America middle Kori Cooper on the first weekend of the season the Amarillo Sandies could easily have added yet another championship last year. Amarillo still spent much of the 2005 season ranked #1 in the state despite fielding a team loaded with sophomores and juniors. And for that reason, the Sandies open the season as our pick to win it all when the final whistle sounds this November in San Marcos.

Not that it will be easy.

State semifinalist San Antonio Reagan is loaded again, but will have to get past another talented Westlake team. Westlake, of course, knocked off Reagan in last year's state semifinals but has been realigned from Region 2 to Region 4. Westlake's return means that three of the last four state 5A state champions are now in that region.

In Region 2, Plano West has a ton of talent and only a meltdown should keep them from San Marcos now that they have been realigned out of Region 1 where they would have had to fight their way through Amarillo, the Arlington schools and some upstarts in the Dallas area who could be among the year's big surprises.

What about Region 3, you ask? That would be where most of the Houston schools reside and if you thought last year was a mess, just wait... When it comes to Region 3, your guess is as good as ours. And ours borders on a wild one. Stratford would seem to be the logical choice. State semifinalist Deer Park lost a lot and will have to rebuild quickly if they hope to have a shot at returning to San Marcos. We have a couple of choices from that region that may surprise some people, but what the heck. It's Houston and we might as well go out on a limb.

Which brings us to our first Texas Top 20 for the 2006 season. If you are new to LoneStarVolleyball.com, we don't discriminate. We lump everyone together -- 1A through 5A, public and private, to rank what who we think are the 20 best teams in Texas. Regular readers of the site will remember that it was only a few years ago that Class 3A Wimberley ended the season ranked #1 after knocking off many of the top 4A and 5A teams, including the eventual 5A state champion.

Unfortunately, in looking over the smaller and private schools, we don't see anyone capable of finishing near the top this season. But it's still early and there is A LOT of volleyball to be played.

Also, we did not consider results of this past weekend's scrimmages when compiling our first ranking. For the top teams, scrimmages are nothing more than a chance for coaches to take a look at some players who may not get much playing time once the season starts.

So let's get on with it. Here is our look at the 20 best teams in Texas as well as a few others we found of interest. The Texas Top 20 Rank. Team (2005 final ranking)

1. Amarillo (6)

This was not a tough decision. Amarillo returns almost every member of a team that spent much of last season ranked #1 in the state, lost only three games all season while winning the Duncanville and Allen tournaments and finishing third at Pearland. It's a junior-loaded lineup with one of the state's premier setters, Brianne Barker, setting up one of the state's premier outsides, Kelsey Black. It doesn't end there, however. Ashley Pylant, senior Lauren Sterna, defensive star Halie David, lefty Joni Unruh and others give the Sandies a very deep and talented roster. Coach Jan Barker will once again load up the bus and send her young team on a tour of Texas to take on all challengers, starting with a Thursday night opener against Arlington to warm-up for the Duncanville Tournament of Champions. Region 1 has plenty of talented teams, but our guess is that only injury or overconfidence will keep the Sandies from making a November trip to San Marcos.

"We will be very competitive as long as we stay healthy and we keep a 'team' focus," says Barker. "We have a large team, very deep in talent, and very competitive athletes."

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 41-3, eliminated by Plano in Region 1 semifinals

Top returnees: Brianne Barker (S, 5-8, Jr.), Kelsey Black (OH, 5-11, Jr.), Ashley Pylant (MB, 6-0, Jr.), Lauren Sterna (OH, 5-11, Sr.), Halie David (DS, 5-5, Jr.), Alexa Allen (OH, 5-9, Jr.), Joni Unruh (OH, 5-11, Sr.), Brittany Bullard (DS, 5-5, Sr.),

Top newcomers: Aryn Bohannon (OH, Soph.), Torri Campbell (MB, Soph.)

Tournaments: Duncanville, Allen, Pearland

2005 Final
TEXAS TOP 20

1. Arlington Martin
2. Westlake
3. Cedar Park
4. San Antonio Reagan
5. Plano
6. Amarillo
7. San Antonio Churchill
8. Bowie
9. San Antonio Clark
10. Deer Park
11. Clear Creek
12. San Antonio O'Connor
13. New Braunfels
14. Hebron
15. Hays
16. Katy
17. Dulles
18. Plano West
19. Arlington Lamar
20. Memorial

2005
State Champions

UIL
5A ‐ Arlington Martin
4A ‐ New Braunfels
3A ‐ Bellville
2A ‐ Poth
1A ‐ Windthorst

TAPPS
6A ‐ Houston St. Agnes
5A ‐ Plano Prestonwood
4A ‐ Lubbock Trinity
3A ‐ Baytown Christian
2A ‐ Sacred Heart

SPC
Division 1 ‐ Greenhill
Division 2 - Saint Mary's Hall

2. San Antonio Reagan (4)

2005 was a break-through season for the Rattlers. They unseated Churchill and Clark for "best of San Antonio" honors and advanced to San Marcos where they put up a good fight before falling to Westlake in the state semifinals. Coach Mike Carter returns 11 players from that team, led by some of the state's best in Megan York, Sarabeth Peele, Allie Murray and Amber Tatsch, who has rehabbed from her injury at high performance. Also watch out for 5-5 junior Courtney Miller. "An amazing libero," says Carter.

"We're way ahead of where we were at this time last year," added Carter. "We're

more experienced and probably just as deep. They (the players) experienced something for the first time last season (a trip to state) and that has them very focused. Last year we started two freshmen and two sophomores and they gained a lot of confidence. I have very high expectations for this team.”

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 37-4, 5A state semifinalist eliminated by Westlake

Top returnees: Megan York (5-10, Sr.), Sarabeth Peele (6-0, Sr.), Amber Tatsch (6-0, Soph.), Allie Murray (S, 5-6, Soph.), Sarah Alisaleh (S, 5-7, Sr.), Jennifer Torbet (RS, 5-9, Jr.)

Top newcomers: Courtney Miller (L, 5-6, Jr.), Amanda Castenada (MB, 6-0, Sr.), Chelcie George (MB, 5-10, Jr.)

Tournaments: Northeast, Northside, Pearland

3. Stratford (NR)

On paper, this is the team to beat in Region 3. But this is Houston so that really doesn't mean much. Still, when you look at the lineup they have to considered one of the state's best. Coach Becky Palermo has nine seniors back and plenty of size and weapons starting with big middle Lauren Williams, high-flying Sarah Grace, Julia Swanson and setter Lauren Seckinger. Ashley Nunn, who Palermo moved up last season, adds more power on the right side. Palermo said she will tinker with a 6-2, using junior Valerie Noel as the second setter.

“Leadership and setting will be the key,” said Palermo. “We should be even stronger this year because everyone has another year of playing together. Of course good teams are a dime a dozen in Texas so how far we go will depend on our team leadership. We have plenty of talent but we need some players to step up as the leaders.”

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 31-6, season ended by Katy

Top returnees: Sarah Grace (OH, 5-9, Sr.), Lauren Williams (MB, 6-4, Sr.), Julia Swanson (6-1, MB/OH, Sr.), Lauren Seckinger (S, 5-5, Sr.), Ashley Nunn (OH, 5-9, Sr.), Lexie Stehr (L, Sr.), Erin Vanderlinden (Lib/RS, 5-9, Sr.), Jordan Foley (Lib, Jr.), Kendall McCord (MB, 5-10, Jr.), Brooke Benninger (OH, 5-10, SR), Kelley Sauge (OH, 6-2, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Valerie Noel (S, Jr.)

Tournaments: Spring Branch, Pearland, Kingwood

Recent 5A Champions

2005 – Arlington Martin
 2004 – Austin Westlake(
 2003 - SA Clark(
 2002 - Austin Westlake(
 2001 - Amarillo(
 2000 - Cy Falls(
 1999 - Westwood(
 1998 - Amarillo(
 1997 - Cy Creek(
 1996 - Arlington Martin(
 1995 - Duncanville(
 1994 - Amarillo(
 1993 - Cy Creek(
 1992 - Austin(
 1991 - SA Jay(
 1990 - SA Clark(
 1989 - Cy Creek(
 1988 - Amarillo(
 1987 - FW Richland(
 1986 - Cy Fair
 4. Westlake (2)

All-Texas performer Lauren Dickson is gone, but six regulars return from the 2005 state runner-up that knocked off

Reagan in the semis before losing in a classic to Martin in the finals. That means that Westlake could be primed for its fifth trip to San Marcos in six years. Trying to fill Dickson's shoes will be athletic Mary Catherine Aune, who comes from a long line of athletes, has a 30-inch vertical, averaged 3.26 kills per game last season and set a school record with 70 aces off her explosive jump serve. The Chaps have been bounced back to Region 4, which is much deeper than Region 2, and that means they will have to get past Reagan and the other San Antonio schools if they are to have a chance at another state title.

"We return lots of offense and experience, but only four seniors," says coach Al Bennett. "But, back are both setters, both middles and two outsides. We need to replace the loss of three ball control players - Lauren Dickson, Mallory Pickrell (Libero) and Mia Chamblee." The three combined for 1300 Digs, 2000 SR attempts and seven All-Tournament selections.

Scouting Report

2005 season finish: 36-9, 5A state finalist

Top returnees: Amanda Romell (OH, 5-10, Sr.), Kayleigh McNelis (S, 5-8, Sr.), Mary Catherine Aune (OH, 5-9, Sr.), Bailey Drenner (S, 5-7, Jr.), Sarah Knowles (MB, 6-0, Jr.), Michaela Irvin (MB, 6-1, Jr.)

Top newcomers: Elly Barrett (S, 5-11, Soph.), Maddy Baird (OH, 5-11", Jr.), Averi Garcia (OH, 5-9, Sr.), Cammy Kleinert (OH, 5-11, Jr.), Ally Miller (MB, 6-0, Jr.), Christa Scholtz (OH, 5-10, Jr.)

Tournaments: Duncanville, Fraulein Volleyfest, Pearland

5. Plano West (18)

The Wolves return the core of a team that opened last season as our #4 team in the state, struggled early, then finished on a roll before losing to Martin in the regional quarterfinals. This season they are loaded again and could easily be San Marcos bound in November. The key will be middle/outside Kathleen Nash. Nash was a big reason Dallas Skyline was one of the nation's top 17 teams for most of the club season. She unexpectedly left the team before the JOs. Club officials understood she was quitting to concentrate on basketball. Plano West coach Brittany Bridge says it was a knee injury. Whatever the reason, if Nash is on top of her game during the high school season the Wolves will be very difficult for anyone to beat. The 6-2 senior is coming off a season in which she had 456 kills, hit .340 and had 105 blocks. Another reason they will be tough to beat is explosive outside Nikki Fowler, who had 342 kills and hit .341 in 2005. And if that wasn't enough, Bridge has another pair of talented 6-1 juniors in middle Shannon Hawari and RS Jordan Kirk, who really came on strong during the club season.

"I expect a lot this year with returning so many girls and losing to the state champs last year," says coach Brittany Bridge. "My girls are fired up and ready to get on the court."

Scouting Report

2005 record: 32-10, lost to Martin in regional quarterfinals

Top returnees: Kathleen Nash (6-2, M/OH, Sr.), Nikki Fowler (6-1, OH, Sr.), Shannon Hawari (6-1, MB, Jr.), Jordan Kirk (6-1, RS, Jr.), Megan Murphy (5-9, S, Soph.), Lindsay Mitchell (5-5, S, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Haley Wessels (6-0, MB, Soph.), Michelle Harris (5-7, DS, Soph.)

Most State Titles

13(
East Bernard(

11
Windthorst(

9(
Plains(Monahans
Bellville
Monahans

8(
Jewett Leon(

7(
Kountze(

5(
Poth
Snyder(
Bronte(
Wallis Brazos(

4(
Amarillo(
Austin Westlake(
Dumas(
Hereford(
Imperial Buena Vista(
Needville(
Wimberley(

3(
Arlington(
Beaumont French(
Borger Phillips(
Crane(
Cy Creek(
Orchard(
Port Neches Groves(
Red Oak(
Seminole(
Round Top Carmine

Most State
Appearances

20(
East Bernard (
Jewett Leon(
17
Windthorst
16(
Plains(
15(
Kountze(
Round Top-Carmine(
13(
Bellville(
Monahans(
12
Bronte
11(
Wallis Brazos(
10(
Amarillo(
Seminole(
Wink(
9(
Nw Braunfels
New Braunfels Canyon(
Van(
8(
Cy Creek(
Needville(
Refugio
Poth
Dumas

6. Clear Creek (11)

A team that burst onto the scene at Duncanville last season, Clear Creek came within one win of a trip to the state tournament. Gone are Candice Davis, Shamira Washington and a couple other key contributors but back for one last run are eight seniors led by high flying, power hitters Sommer Ivory and Elissa Loynes along with setter Jenna Rissky. Jeanne LaQue moves from libero to OH to add more firepower. Watch out for newcomer Katie Traynor, a powerful lefty with a nice jump serve who spent most of last season on the JV. Clear Creek has won two straight district titles and four in the last five years so they will obviously be the team to beat in 24-5A although Pearland and Clear Lake should offer plenty of challenge. More importantly, however, they have advanced to the regional finals three times during that period and coach Scott Simonds says this could be the season his team takes the next step.

"This team seems to me to be very hungry to get to San Marcos and to finally be the Creek team to break through our Regional Final wall that we seem to have trouble getting beyond," says coach Scott Simonds. "Even on the bus ride back after losing to Deer Park, the returning players were fired up about trying to get to San Marcos in 06." Last year's JV team went 34-2, so there are a lot of good players waiting in the wings.

Scouting Report

2005 Season finish: 27-12, regional finalists

Top Returnees: Sommer Ivory (6-2, MB, Sr.), Elissa Loynes (5-10, MB, Sr.), Jenna Rissky (5-6, S, Sr.), Danielle Reed (RS, Sr.), Jeanne LaQue (5-7, OH, Sr.)

Top Newcomers: Katie Traynor (5-8, RS, Sr.), Megan Pendergast (5-6, DS, Soph.)

Tournaments: Duncanville, Pearland, Kingwood

7. Arlington Martin (1)

Gone is Taylor Barnes along with Melissa Bellomy, Vickie Mundell and Kacy Wimpy. In fact, six players from last year's state champion have moved on to play in college. But Tracy Perez-Petersen, who won a state title in her first season as head coach, knows she is not completely unfortunate when it comes to talent. Chelsea Ringel, Stephanie Minnerly and leaper Katy Eudaly provide an athletic foundation for another playoff run. Ringel and Minnerly were named to the 2005 All-State Tournament Team. The key to a return to San Marcos will be how quickly a strong group of sophomores can start contributing.

"I am really excited for this season. We have lots of new faces with talent," says coach Tracy Perez-Peterson. "I told myself not to compare them to last year's team because we had more experienced talent last year. The team last year just wanted to play and compete. This team needs more work because they haven't played together and we are carrying four sophomores. I believe we will get it together. The team wants to go back to the state tournament. Time will tell."

Scouting Report

2005 season finish: 38-7, 5A state champion

Top returnees: Chelsea Ringel (OH, 6-0, Jr.), Stephanie Minnerly (MB, 6-2, Jr.), Katy Eudaly (OH, 5-8, Sr.), Kaitlyn Lowes (OH, 5-9, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Whitney Wall (RS, 6-1, Soph.), Kristen Cowling (S, 5-6, Soph.), Lauren Purdy (MB, 6-0, Sr.)

Tournaments: Duncanville, Allen, Pearland

8. Memorial (20)

Six starters (if you count the libero) return from the Mustangs' regional semifinalist team and they are good ones. The team will not be as big as in the past, especially with the graduation of Lauren Johnson and Sydney Ackerly, but it should be quicker and more athletic. Sidney Stewart is one of the best all-around players in the state. Jordan Currie is a talented setter and she'll have plenty of solid, experienced weapons to choose from including Rachel Heard, Lauren Buchman, Cristen Moerer and newcomer Katie Wendell on the right side. Barbara Thompson and Lauren Porter are also back to lead a solid back row. Coach Beth Gammill is counting on a couple of big sophomores to help out - 6-1 Shawn Hindman and 5-11 Paige Buchman.

"I'm very excited about this team," said Gammill. "I want to quicken up our offense but our defense looks really good and I saw some really good things in our scrimmages."

Scouting Report

2005 season finish: 28-12, season ended by Deer Park in region semifinals

Top returnees: Jordan Currie (Setter, 5-7, Sr.), Sidney Stewart (OH, 5-9, Jr.), Rachel Heard (MB, 6-0, Sr.), Lauren Buchman (OH, 5-7 Sr.), Cristen Moerer (OH, 5-10, Sr.), Barbara Thompson (DS, 5-7, Sr.), Lauren Porter (Lib, 5-6, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Caitlyn McReynolds (Setter, 5-7, Sr.), Katie Wendell (RS, 5-11, Jr.), Shawn Hindman (MB, 6-1, Soph.), Paige Buchman (MB, 5-11, Soph.)

Tournaments: Katy, Spring Branch, Pearland

9. San Antonio Churchill (7)

No doubt this team lost a lot with players like Jenny Banse, Sam Dabbs and Sarah Harris graduating. But there is some serious talent and athleticism returning led by setter Kori McCarver, middle/OH Alycia Cox, Brittney Brown on the back row and last year's JV and freshmen teams were very good, so don't look for a dramatic drop off.

"This team is young in terms of experience, but is very gifted athletically," says coach Jo Anne Hultgren. "Once we get a few matches under our belt, we have great expectations for this team."

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 34-8, fell to Reagan in regional finals

Top returnees: Kori McCarver (Setter, 5-9, Sr.), Alicia Cox (MB/OH, 5-11, Soph.), Brittney Brown (Lib, 5-6, Sr.), Katelyn Kershner (OH, 5-7, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Izzie Wright (DS, 5-5, Jr.), Polly Korbel (MB, 5-11, Soph.), Chrissy Glenn (MB/RS, 5-11, Soph.), Kaitlin Woods (Setter, 5-8, Soph.)

Tournaments: Northside, Fraulein Volleyfest, Pearland

10. FB Austin (NR)

The Stormi Gale-Heather Myklebust-Caitlyn Trice trio is back for one final show, and we think this will be a good one. Setting will be the key and coach Brooke Plemons is counting on junior Alexis McHale, who was on the JV last season and has looked strong in practice. With the Houston region wide open, this could be Austin's year.

"The team has gained a lot of confidence and we have set very high goals for this year," said coach Brook Plemons. "We have a lot of experience and talent, so the key is going to be team chemistry."

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 22-14, season ended by Katy

Top returnees: Stormi Gale (MB, 6-0, Sr.), Heather Myklebust (OH, 5-11, Sr.), Caitlyn Trice (MB, 6-0, Sr.), Shannon Topper (OH, 5-8, Sr.), Jenna Emery (DS/L, 5-6, Sr.), Dana Gilson (OH, 5-9, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Alexis McHale (Setter, 5-5, Jr.)

Tournaments: Katy, Spring Branch, Pearland

11. Magnolia (NR)

Coach Terri Johnson has a deep and talented squad led by junior middles Michele Williams, one of the nation's best young players, and Hannah Fort along with OH Alicia Shaffer. Kristyn Bergen moves from libero to the outside to pick up some of the slack left by the graduation of Lauren Michael (SFA). If Johnson can shore up the defense, they should have more than enough offense to carry the team very deep into the playoffs.

"Our expectations couldn't be higher," says Johnson. "We are coming off a great season in a tough district. We certainly have the offensive weapons to compete in our region, if we can step up our setting and our defense."

Scouting Report

2005 season finish: 24-12, season ended by Memorial

Top returnees: Michele Williams (6-1, MB, Jr.), Hannah Fort (MB, 6-1, Jr.), Alicia Shaffer (OH, 5-10, Jr.), Kristyn Bergen (OH, 5-9, Sr.), Ashley Meeks (DS, Sr.), Caitlin Holland (Setter, 5-7, Sr.), Kelli Stewart (OH, 6-1, Soph.).

Top newcomers: Ashlynn Newmann (MB/OH, 6-2, Soph.), Breane Matula (MB/OH, 6-1, Soph.), Megan Little (6-1 MB/OH, 6-1, Soph.)

Tournaments: Duncanville, Spring Branch, Pearland

12. Coppell (NR)

With eight starters back from a 30-win team, coach Sherri Hankins already had high hopes. But add 6-1 middle/outside Kayla Kirk, one of the state's best who transferred from Houston Second Baptist, and Hankins has plenty of reason to be excited about her team's potential. Setter Elaine Minden returns and she has plenty of weapons in players like Jordan Raines, Laurie McNamara, Mandy Modic and Jordan Schilling, the district co-blocker of the year. One key will be libero Sarah Smith who has been bothered with injuries. If she stays healthy Coppell will have a very strong back row and could be hard to beat.

"Our ball control will be better this year, we're much bigger than we have been in the past and we will be very aggressive at the net," said Hankins. "We could have a really special team this year."

Scouting Report

2005 season finish: 33-6, season ended by Arlington Lamar

Top returnees: Jordan Raines (OH, 6-0, Jr.), Jordan Schilling (MB, 5-11, Sr.), Elaine Minden (Setter, 5-4, Jr.), Laurie McNamara (OH/MB, 6-1, Jr.), Sarah Smith (Lib., 5-4, Sr.), Mandy Modic (OH, 5-7, Sr.), Stephanie Herubin (RS, 5-10, Sr.), Kelly Chasten (DS, 5-7, Jr.)

Top newcomers: Kayla Kirk (OH/MB, 6-1, Jr.), Sally Downs (MB, 6-0, Soph.), Lexi Ornell (Setter, 5-5, Soph.)

Tournaments: Allen, Grapevine, Coppell

13. Arlington Lamar (19)

The Vikings return only three starters from last year's team but they are good ones led by senior outsides Kathryn Wilkerson and Brynn Berry, who played RS last season but now returns to her natural position on the left. Also back is junior middle Megan Johnson. Lamar will miss powerful Kristin Marcum but Berry could fill the void. The key, coach Shane Sackett says, is how the team responds early.

"We have a lot of 5-10 and 5-11 players. We just can't seem to crack that 6-foot barrier," says coach Shane Sackett. "We seem to be more athletic in the middle than we were last year. We're about the same in experience on the outside. Last year we jelled as a team right from the start, but I'm not sure if we are there yet."

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 35-6, season ended by Plano

Top returnees: Kathryn Wilkerson (OH, 5-10, Sr.), Brynn Berry (OH, 5-10, Sr.), Megan Johnson (MB, 5-11, Jr.)

Top newcomers: Chelsea Barsamain (S, 5-10, Sr.), Haley Glidewell (MB, 5-11, Jr.)

Tournaments: Duncanville, Fraulein Volleyfest, Arlington Invitational

14. Smithson Valley (NR)

Coach Liana Gombert returns eight from a team that made a lot of noise last season. And with the new nine-team district, they will need all that experience. Once again SV will play frustrating defense and now they have solid offensive weapons in Megan Herring, Desie Baker and Tamika Helene.

"We're very excited about the season starting," said coach Liana Gombert. "The kids have put in a lot of time working together this summer at strength and conditioning camp, open gyms and camps. Now, we're ready to get back on the court."

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 31-10, season ended by San Antonio Reagan in regional quarterfinals

Top returnees: Jessie Hartman (Setter, 5-4, Jr.), Megan Herring (OH, 5-9, Sr.), Desie Baker (MB 6-0, Jr.), Tamika Heline (OH/RS 5-9, Jr.)

Top newcomers: Tara Henry (MB, 5-9, Jr.)

Tournaments: Northside, Fraulein Volleyfest, Pearland

15. Arlington (NR)

The Colts return four starters and will be much more defensive oriented than past Arlington teams. "We'll have a good offense but we won't be overpowering like we have been some years," said coach Sue Cauley. "We're going to be very strong in sideout and we'll be a good passing team." Cauley is excited about 6-0 sophomore middle Toby Farrar, who is nursing a slight injury right now but should be in the lineup after the Duncanville tournament. As usual, Cauley will find out very quickly just how strong her team is. They open Thursday night at home against Amarillo. Club fans will recognize two of Cauley's assistant coaches — Kim Tipton (North Dallas Juniors) and Jason Nicholson (TAV).

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 32-9, season ended by Plano West

Top returnees: Ashley Onley (S, 5-7), Kelsey Manasco (MB/OH, 6-0), Sarah Joeckel (OH, 5-10), Teresa Dunn (S, 5-9)

Top newcomers: Toby Farrar (MB, 6-0, Soph.)

Tournaments: Duncanville, Allen, Pearland

16. Katy (16)

Only three starters are back and there is not a lot of height, but coach Karen Paxton has a very aggressive team that we like. And there is enough offensive talent in players like Laurie Hunsucker and sophomore Matte Haack that setter Katy Durst will be able to spread the offense. Coach Karen Paxton says the team's aggressive style of play will make up for the lack of size. Jen Harrell is gone from the back row, but Virginia Hernandez should be a very capable replacement.

"We'll have to outsmart our opponents," said coach Karen Paxton. "There is a lot of height out there in our region so we're going to have to find other ways to beat teams."

Scouting Report

2005 season finish: 24-14, fell to Clear Creek in playoffs

Top returnees: Katy Durst (Setter, 5-8, Sr.), Laurie Hunsucker (OH, 5-8, Sr.), Matte Haack (MB, 5-10, Soph.), Rachel Gil (RS, 6-9, Sr.), Samantha Rickert (DS, 5-6, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Savanna Buck (MB, 5-10, Soph.), Virginia Hernandez (Lib, 5-4, Sr.), Cady Mercer (OH, Soph.)

Tournaments: Katy, Spring Branch, Pearland

17. Southlake Carroll (NR)

This could be a surprise team. Eight players, including four starters, return from last year's squad that was eliminated in the area round by eventual state champion Martin. This is a much taller group than last year's with five players at 5-11 or better. And it is much deeper. Coach Wyvonne Walling plans to carry 17 players on the roster, including four sophomores. The Dragons have not made it past the Area round the last two seasons, but Walling thinks this could be a breakthrough year.

"We're excited and looking forward to the season," says Walling, who is starting her 15th season at Southlake. "We have ten seniors who are hungry to get past the Area round."

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 24-9, season ended by Martin

Top returnees: Lauren Salisbury (MB, 6-0, Sr.), Morgan Banner (OH, 5-9, Sr.), Stephanie Archer (Setter, 5-10, Sr.), LeAnn Herchman (Lib/DS, 5-6, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Sloan Sunstrum (OH, 5-9, Soph.)

Tournaments: Grapevine, Northwest, San Marcos

18. San Antonio Clark (9)

Another team hit hard by graduation with Mary Batis, Celena Rendon and Stephanie Cadavid gone. Coach Kirby Jameson always has a way of finding a way to put an elite team on the court, especially in this era of rally scoring where a premium is placed on defense and ball control. For that reason, we're not going to count them out.

"Kirby makes everyone good," says Reagan coach Mike Carter.

Juniors Courtney Ritchey and Amber Guin will be counted on to lead an inexperienced, but talented group of seniors.

"We might get beat up a bit at the beginning of the season but we should improve quickly with experience," says coach Kirby Jameson.

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 29-7, lost to Churchill in area finals

Top returnees: Courtney Ritchey (OH, Jr.), Amber Guin (S, Jr.)

Top newcomers: Annie Hambricht (MB, Sr.), Kelli Murphy (S, Sr.), Cali Leopold (L, Sr.), Lindsay Recko (OH, Sr.)

Tournaments: Northside, Northeast, Pearland

19. Hays (15)

Michael Kane, who built a private school powerhouse at St. Michael's Academy, takes over the program for popular coach Jo McCabe. Kane compiled a 239-90 record at St. Michael's that included four straight TAAPS state titles from 2002 to 2005. Hays drops to 4A after advancing the Region 2 5A regional finals last season before finally being eliminated by Westlake. They now become a part of 26-4A, which is one of the deepest districts in the state of any classification with defending 4A champion New Braunfels and NB Canyon. Anna Breyfogle is gone but Kane has plenty of talent back, led by outside Taylor Deering and setter Maddie Bates.

"I really have high expectations for this team," says Kane. "I have coached some tremendous teams and I think that this might be the most "complete" team I have had. Top to bottom of the roster I will not have had a better team."

Scouting report

2005 season finish: 31-13, fell to Westlake in regional playoffs

Top returnees: Maddie Bates (Setter, Sr.), Taylor Deering (OH, Sr.), Eileen Crumley (OH, Sr.), Phoebe Corder (OH, Jr.), Tanya Butler (Setter, Sr.)

Top newcomers: Becky Swann (MB, Soph.), Brooke Basse (OH/MB, Jr.), Kayla Shay (OH, Jr.)

Tournaments: Georgetown, Hays, Fraulein Volleyfest

20. New Braunfels (13)

Schedule is loaded, so it could be a slow start for the defending 4A champs. Coach Phyliss Fowler will have to replace LSVB Setter of the Year Rachel Brown, Deanna Dahse and Chelsie Fowler, but has plenty of firepower back from last year's 4A state champions. Taylor Jonas (Sr.), Lacy Redwine (Sr.), Amy Huddleston-(Sr.) and Kirstin Brotze (Sr.) headline a solid group of returnees. Newcomer Andrea Hannasch (Soph.) is expected to contribute right away.

Scouting Reports

2005 season finish: 30-9, 4A state champion

Top returners: Taylor Jonas (Sr.), Lacy Redwine (Sr.), Amy Huddleston-(Sr.), Kirstin Brotze (Sr.).

Top newcomers: Andrea Hannasch (Soph.)

Tournaments: SA Northside, Fraulein VolleyFest, Pearland

Teams To Watch(In alphabetical order)

Allen ‐ The Eagles return a ton of offensive firepower from a team that was eliminated by Arlington Lamar in the first round of the playoffs. Brittany Woodard (MB, 6-0, Sr.), Amanda Carson (OH, 5-10, Sr.), Audra Woods (OH, 5-11, Sr.) and Stephanie Puckett (MB, 6-1, Sr.) lead the attack. And Amanda Bayer (5-8, Sr.) is back to run the offense. In Region 2, the Eagles could make a solid run in the playoffs.

Austin High (17-13) - This selection may surprise some people but several coaches and observers said to watch out for Austin, so we will. Head coach Emily Burdett is in her fifth year and retruns some solid talent in senior middle Hanna Welborn (6-2), senior setter Elizabeth Moore (5-10), senior outside Mattie Gullatt (5-9) and junior outside Laura Martin (5-10).

Bellville (35-6, 3A state champion) ‐ Katlin Inghish is gone along with a half dozen others from last year’s title team, but entertaining and explosive junior Precious Sanders returns as does senior setter Kalya Schmidt along with a host of other talented juniors and seniors.

Boerne (16-16) ‐ Thankfully, 2005 is history for the perennial powerhouse Greyhounds. Senior 6-foot middles Monica Deschane and Anna Herr will be the key to whether Boerne returns to the glory of a couple years ago.

Bowie (33-4, eliminated by The Woodlands) - This team lost a lot of firepower from last year’s squad that appeared headed for San Marcos until The Woodlands shocked them out of the playoffs. Only two regulars are back ‐ senior OH Alex Lewis and junior all-around player Melissa Mix. Coach Jason Landers says, however, that this team will have some firepower of its own and it may be the best he’s ever had when it comes to ball control. “We will be scrappy,” says Landers. “We’ll frustrate a lot of teams.” Courtney Trevino, a 5-10 junior lefty OH joins the team after transferring from Anderson, and Landers says Margaret Luedecker (OH, 5-9, Sr.), who saw limited time last year, had a strong club season and he expects her to have an impact.

Bryan (33-3, season ended by Westlake in quarterfinals) - Four starters are back from last year’s 30-win team led by Rebecca Baldwin (MB, 6-1, Sr.), Kallie Pence (S, 5-9, Jr.), Megan DeStefano (OH, 5-9, Jr.) and Amanda Cune (RS/L, 5-9, Jr.). Freshman Jennifer Kasper (OH, 5-8) could also have an immediate impact. District race should again come down to Bryan and A&M Consolidated. With a talented group of juniors, coach Caroline Simpson may be one year way from a team that could go deep in the playoffs.

Clear Lake (eliminated by Deer Park in quarterfinals) - Four starters are back from last year’s regional quarterfinalist but Anna Schepcoff and Ellen Fandry are two good ones. The team is loaded on the back row with Roshni Shah, Jozette Bionat and Lynn Kazda. Madelyn Bagby is gone so setting with be a question but coach Chanda Eager has two juniors to work with. A good group of newcomers include Brittany Crislip (Setter, 5-8, Jr.), Caroline Alexander (Setter, 5-8, Jr.) and Breannah Bourque (MB, Soph. 5-11). “We’re excited about the season,” said coach Chanda Eager. “It’s all going to come down to how the players see themselves. We have the talent and ability but the players need to think they can do it.”

Cy-Fair (31-5) - This team was hit hard by graduation but 6-2 Nneka Ogwumike is back so it will be up to new setter Leah Olson to get her the ball. Coach Donna Benotti will depend on a strong defense to carry the team early while many of the key members of last year’s JV team that went 36-2 are getting used to varsity competition. Leah Olson, Sarah Hayes, Lauren Pahmyer and Rebecca Rodriguez lead the returnees. Benotti is looking for help from newcomers Cambrey Oehler, Ashley Vanderhey and Katie Cox.

Dumas (31-12, 4A semifinalist) - Demonettes have a string of 36 consecutive District 3-4A wins dating back to 2003 and 18 consecutive playoff appearances. With senior MB Mallori Proffitt coming off a 190-kill, 160-block season, this team should be better than last year’s state semifinalist (barring injury). If that’s the case, they could also be looking at a third straight trip to San Marcos. Top returnees joining Proffitt are Grace Brandt (5-8, S, Sr.), Lindsey Miller (5-8, OH, Jr.), Alison Bonner (5-9, RS, Soph.) and Bailee Martin (5-5, DS, Sr.). Newcomers who will be counted on include Julie Causseaux (5-11, MB, Jr.), Candace Kent (5-8, OH, Soph.) and Brogan Cheevers (5-2, DS/S, Soph.).

Frisco Centennial ‐ Private school star Angela Bensed has transferred from Bishop Lynch to team up with Erika Clark giving this team a lot of potential. Red Oak coach Arthur Stanfield is impressed. “They might be the best (4A) in the region,” he says.

Klein - This is a team with no real stars, but loaded with solid, athletic talent in Sarah Skains, Brittany Simmons, Kelsie Schaack, Callie Bracewell, Rachel Yezak, Katie Koop, Taylor Fritz and Lauren Struck. Followers of the club scene are very familiar with these players, and they won't be surprised if Klein makes some real noise in the wide open Houston area this season.

Lake Travis (22-14, area finalist) - Back are 10 letterman, including nine seniors led by Genevieve Gladle (OH, 5-10, Sr.), Taylor Purswell (MB, 5-10, Sr.) and Sarah Massey (MB, 5-9, Sr.). Other key contributors include Tara Gilbreath (OH, 5-7, Sr.), Kylie Smith (Setter, 5-8, Sr.) and Sara Sietsma (RS, 5-10, Sr.). "Our seniors should provide a ton of leadership and experience," says coach Thomas Kane.

Pearland (20-14) - Led by a couple of the state's best juniors in MB Holly Moreno, a two-time All-district selection who had 312 kills and 161 blocks last season, and junior OH Amanda Aguilera, Pearland should battle Clear Creek for the district title and could make a pretty deep run into the playoffs. Moreno will miss most non-district action as she recovers from back surgery, but she should be ready by the start of league action. Top newcomers include Heather Leaverton (5-10, OH, Soph.) and Jasmine Terry (6-1, MB, Jr.). "I expect to battle with Clear Creek for first and to make it to the regional tournament," said coach John Turner. "We have a lot of young experienced players that are very athletic and talented."

Poth (37-5, 2A state champions) - Coming off two straight state titles and three straight trips to the state tournament, coach Patti Zenner once again has high hopes for her Pirates. "We have a solid core coming back along with several others who I expect to step up this season and play some important roles," she said. "That keeps my expectations for this season high once again." All-everything Aimee Huffman (MH/S, 6-1, Sr.) and Whitney Wehmeyer (MH/OH, 6-0, Sr.) are back along with Lauren Waclawczyk (OH/MH, 5-10, Jr.) and Desi Dziuk (OH, 5-10, Sr.) Newcomers Courtney Laskowski (S/OH, 5-9, Jr.), Amanda Waclawczyk (MH/OH, 6-2, Jr.) and Kasey Harlos (OH, 5-8, Jr.) could contribute right away. Poth always loads its non-district schedule with larger schools so they will get a chance to see where they fit in the overall state scene.

Round Rock (9-16) - After a major rebuilding effort in 2005, the Dragons are a year older and wiser and they have enough talent to cause trouble in Central Texas. Sophomores Emily Danks, Beth Lehmann, Michelle Miller and Brittani Slimp all had a lot of playing time as freshmen. Che'z Colter is also back. Probably not a team that is a threat to end up in San Marcos, but give them a couple of years and...

San Antonio O'Connor (25-9, fell to Reagan in playoffs) - Only four players are back, so this will be a young and inexperienced team, with three freshmen. Top returnees include Alyssa Meuth (MB, 6-0, Sr.), Anissa Casteneda (Setter, 5-2, Sr.), Lacey Klause (6-1, MB, Jr.) and Bethany Tietze (OH/DS, Sr.). Kaelen Valdez (OH, 5-7, Fr.), Beth Soukup (RS, 5-6, Fr.) and Sarah Cardenas (Setter, 5-4, Fr.) highlight a new crop of players. And coach Yamilet Garcia says that might not be all bad. "They are not afraid, because they don't know any better," she said. "They will have to get used to the pace of the game early but they are talented and quick learners, so I'm looking forward to the season."

Vista Ridge (31-3) - Coach Kim Fuller has plenty of experience returning from a team that exploded onto the state scene last season. Back are Elizabeth Graham (MB, 6-3, Sr.), Brittanie Wallace (OH, 5-11, Sr.), Morgan Crawford (RS, 5-10, Jr.), Rebecah Fogle (MB/OH, 5-11, Jr.) and Megan Pendleton (Setter, 5-5, Sr.). Now that they've tasted success, they have the potential to go even deeper into the playoffs. Newcomers expected to contribute are Allison Gideon (Setter, 5-11, Soph.), Nicole Hajka (OH, 5-10, Soph.) and Carrie Hahn (OH/MB, 5'11, Fr.).

Westwood (27-8) - With a full year behind her, coach Kate Zora also has a team with good talent and senior leaders. Senior OH Lindsey Schmid (5-11) headlines a big but young front line that includes Bridget Eichner (6-0, Soph.), Amari Deardorf (6-1, Fr.) along with senior Jessica Bowden (5-9). Kaleigh Colson, a freshman, and sophomore Kelly Pound will battle for setting duties.

The Woodlands (20-16, lost to Hays in regional quarterfinals) - Seven players return from the team that shocked the state by knocking off top-ranked Bowie last year in the area round of the playoffs. Kristin Martell, a 6-2 middle, leads a solid group of athletes that includes setter Kelsy Schaefer (Sr.), MB Lauren Parker (Sr.), libero Jayde Cornell (Sr.), DS Haley Pettigrew (Sr.), OH Kayleigh Comeaux (Jr.) and Bryn Baker (Soph.).

Other Teams of Interest

Amarillo Tascosa - A rebuilding year for Tascosa but when you are rebuilding around powerful Caitlin Higgins, things aren't all bad. Fellow juniors Kylie Hartman and Cristin should also help.

Cedar Park (35-6, fell to Westlake in five in playoffs) - Graduation hit the Timberwolves hard, and with middle Caitlin Adair out for at least part of the season this will no doubt be a rebuilding year.

Cinco Ranch - Gone are Katie Sanders and Carrie Gurnell but the Ranch still has some nice talent in Ali Becker and Kate Choyce. Finding new players capable of stepping in immediately and improving their ball control over 2005 will be the key.

Clements – Only three players return from last year’s squad but Becky Belt, who has been moved to outside from middle, and OH/setter Lacy Hayes are big and good. Jackie Belt is also back to play DS/libero and some outside. And a transfer will add more size may help add a little experience.

Deer Park - Another team hit hard by graduation. Not a single starter returns for the state semifinalists and to add insult to injury, one junior who was a major contributor to last year's team, Cara Stubbs, has transferred to the Dallas area. Top returnees include Paige Jenkins (MB, 6-0, Sr.) and Lauren Rice (OH, 5-7, Jr.). Deer Park will not be big, but coach Gay Sabatell hopes to make up for the lack of height with quickness. "It will be a challenge," she said " I have players who were on varsity but didn't get a lot of playing time so we'll do what we can and see what happens."

Dulles - Lost seven seniors and MB Emily Cheek, who moved to the San Antonio area, so coach Alice Fortes has a rebuilding job ahead of her. Top returnees include Brooke Smith (OH, 5-11, Sr.), Meredith Davis (OH, 5-11, Sr.) and Kim Baumann (Setter, 5-8, Sr.). Top newcomers are Emily Beardmoer (OH, 5-8, Jr.) and Kelly Moyer (Lib, 5-9, Sr.). "If the young girls can come along quickly, we should be OK," said Fortes.

Hebron (42-6, 4A state runner-up) - After two straight trips to San Marcos it looks to be rebuilding time at Hebron, which had eight seniors on its state tournament roster. Junior Allison King will likely be called on to lead the rebuilding effort.

Lubbock Coronado - Chad Jones moves to Coronado from Amarillo Tascosa where he will face a rebuilding job for a program that was a state finalist only two seasons ago. Gone are eight seniors and back is only one starter. Most of the players counted on to contribute this season were on JV last year. "We have a way to go," said Jones. The team has several talented juniors so the rebuilding job may not take long. Brooke Smith (OH, 5-8, Jr.), Katy Dillard (MB, 6-1, Jr.), Sam bridges (OH, 5-8, Jr.) and newcomer Kelsey Campbell (Setter, 5-8, Soph.) will be counted on to lead the effort.

New Braunfels Canyon (31-11, season ended by New Braunfels) - Coach Heather Sanders lost nine seniors from last year's team that tied for the district title then fell to district rival New Braunfels in the regional finals. Top returnees include senior Lexie Bennett (MB, 5-7), junior setter Tara Smith, junior OH Brandie DeBacker (5-8), libero Courtney Bird and senior defensive specialist Sara Amescua. District 26-4A is even tougher this year with Hays joining the fun so Canyon has its work cut out if it wants to repeat.

Plano (finished 2005 ranked #5) - Graduation cleaned out the Wildcats, who fell to eventual state champion Martin in last year's regional finals. "We have a ton of new athletes, but we will be just fine," says coach Rhonda Rust.

Red Oak (32-12, 4A regional finalist) - This is coach Arthur Stanfield's youngest and shortest team in years. Top returnees are Taylor VanHove (Setter, 5-6, Jr.) and Dana Hilzendager (OH, 5-7, Soph.). Defense and ball control will be the key to another run at San Marcos. Red Oak has won 30 or more matches every season since 1993 and haven't lost a district match (on the court) since 1990.

Wimberley (28-11, 3A regional finalist) - Wimberley loses only a defensive specialist from a regional finalist team while adding a stronger rightside attack and a bigger block. This could be the year that the Texans return to San Marcos. Top returnees include Lauren Bass (Setter, 5-6, Sr.), Raelynn Beaty (Lib, 5-1, Sr.), Katie Milam (OH, 5-7, Soph.), Allison Bennett (MB, 5-8, Sr.) and Taylor Campbell (MB, 5-8, Sr.). Coach Lee Grisham also has high hopes for newcomer Maddy Clark (RS, 5-7, Soph.)

Windthorst (41-4, 1A state champion) - Windthorst hasn't missed a trip to the state tournament since 1989 and has won eight of the last nine 1A championships. Coach Stacy Wolf lost six seniors but as long as there are Veitenheimers and Schreibers in town she won't have trouble reloading. "We will be very young this year but hopefully the few senior starters they can carry and lead their team," said Wolf. "We will take it day by day and hopefully avoid any major injuries. We also want to get better every match and not peak too early." Fiery Rachel Wolf (MB, 5-10, Sr.) leads a talented group of returnees that include Sydney Veitenheimer (S, 5-9, Sr.), Morgan Glawe (OH, 5-10, Sr.), Marissa Schreiber (Setter, 5'5, Soph.) and Emily Hoff (Setter, 5'6, Jr.). Joining the tradition are newcomers Whitney McCorkle (MH, 5-8, Soph.) and Tanna Sales (Libero, 5-4, Soph.).