

9 La Crosse area volleyball players to follow this fall

SHAUN CHORNOBROFF Aug 27, 2026 Updated 12 hrs ago

Gift this article

Prefer us on Google

The 2025 volleyball season saw stars like Holmen's Macy Kline, now at Division I University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Aquinas' Samantha Davis, who is currently playing Division I basketball at Boston College, and Onalaska Luther's Kayla Schiebel, a star middle that led the Knights to state and is starting her college career at Division III Luther College, have stellar sendoff campaigns.

Even with some standouts on to greener pastures, the La Crosse area has many local talents to know for this fall. Here are seven athletes to keep an eye on.

Kendall Carlson, sr., Onalaska

Kendall Carlson enters her senior year as one of the most formidable middles in the Mississippi Valley Conference. Carlson was a second team all-conference selection in a junior campaign where she had 143 kills and 73 blocks for the Hilltoppers, who won a regional title in 2025.

One of the frontrunners to win the MVC

Onalaska is one of the frontrunners to win the MVC this season. Head coach Jessica Rohde also wants to win another regional and contend for a sectional title. A strong middle presence in Carlson, a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse commit, drastically improves Onalaska's plans of making that happen.



Carlson
Jessica Rohde

"She's just getting smarter, more mature as a player. She's making better decisions on the court, which is honestly the biggest thing," Rohde said. "She's always been a good hitter — it's just deciding where to swing. ... And she's figuring it out."

Ellie Gillitzer, sr., La Crosse Central

Ellie Gillitzer was one of three non-seniors on the all-MVC first team last season. Gillitzer made it as a setter and enters her senior season 171 assists from 1,000 for her career.

Gillitzer also was deployed as a hitter at times last fall. She ended the season with 153 kills, the second highest mark on the team. She also had 54 aces and 352 digs during her junior year.

Elsa Blum, sr., Caledonia

Elsa Blum was the top attacker last season for a Caledonia team that was a win away from qualifying for state. Blum had 256 kills in her junior season.

She, along with the majority of last year's top contributors, are back for Caledonia this fall, with an eye towards state. Blum will play an important role in making state a reality for the Warriors. Her composure is one of her biggest assets, Caledonia coach Dan Reinhart said.



Gillitzer



Blum
Chad Augedahl

"There's really no up and down with her as far as her mistakes, and if she makes a mistake, she doesn't get down in the dumps," Reinhart said. "She just stays pretty even keeled. She's not way up at a nine, or way down by a three, which as an outside hitter, you need a short term memory."

Moira Linse, sr., Holmen

Moira Linse was the top middle for a Holmen team that cruised to the MVC title last season. While much of the team around her has changed, Linse, a first team all-conference selection, is back for the Vikings this fall.

Last season, Linse had 158 kills and a .422 hitting percentage. She also had 39 blocks.

Holmen coach Nicky Rose expects opponents to center their gameplan on Linse this fall. But the senior, who is generating college interest, should be up to the task.



Linse

"We're going to try to move her around a little bit more," Rose said. "She typically runs in front of the setter, but I think we can move her around the court and see if we can free her up a little bit. But, she should be our go-to here (at Holmen)."

Megan Brendel, sr., Viroqua

Viroqua's volleyball program has been on an upward swing for the past few years and is coming off a 26-win season and a fourth-place finish in a talented Coulee Conference. The Blackhawks are aiming for another strong season this fall and will need Megan Brendel to make it happen.

Brendel was an all-conference first team selection after a junior season that saw her establish herself as one of the Coulee's top hitters with 292 kills. This season will be Brendel's fourth on the varsity. Head coach Katie Schwarz hopes that experience pays off this fall.

"From the time she was a freshman to now being a senior, she kind of always had somebody ahead of her that was the leader," Schwarz said. "So now she's learning how to take on that leadership role, more like being a mentor to some of those younger players versus being the mentee."

Emersyn Pitsenbarger, jr., Sparta

Sparta coach Mary Sackmann calls Emersyn Pitsenbarger an "ace" because she provides everything the coach could want in a player. "She's got grit, she'll grind and she'll grind, she'll give me 100% effort always," she said.



Pitsenbarger

Pitsenbarger had 180 kills for a Sparta team that finished above .500 last season. The Spartans are hoping to be a pesky opponent for opponents this fall. Pitsenbarger is going to be pivotal to the team competing with the best in the MVC, although she's going to miss a few games to begin the season with an injury.

"She is going to make our offense more dynamic," Sackmann said. "She has the ability to potentially play all the way around and be a scrappy player in the back row. Which, if that's the case, could leave open some opportunities for some back row attacks and stuff like that."

Addie Schaper, sr., Onalaska Luther

Onalaska Luther is returning the majority of its starting lineup from a squad that made a run to state last season. Among the stars of that team back this fall is Addie Schaper, a first team all- Coulee Conference setter.

Schaper, who has generated college interest, had 861 assists last year as she directed a potent attack. The senior is only 105 assists from 1,000 for her career, meaning she should pass that mark this fall.



Schaper
Dan Larson

"Just a super great leader, not just when she's playing," Onalaska Luther coach Dan Larson said. "I think she really embodies what you want to call a leader on and off the court. She just does such a great job for us — has a positive attitude, really watches the girls to make sure that they're getting what they need. She's phenomenal."

Addy Oldenburg, sr., West Salem

West Salem has one of the top middle pairings in the conference with senior Addy Oldenburg and sophomore Kensley Skifton. For Oldenburg, she's hoping to have one more strong season with the reigning Coulee Conference champions before starting her collegiate career at Viterbo.

West Salem coach Becki Murphy said that Oldenburg should be in store for a "strong year."

"She's made some improvements in her blocking and her power," Murphy said. "She also is able to mix things up a little more, whether she's tipping (the ball), finding holes on the court."



Oldenburg

Adelaide Bezemek, sr., Aquinas

Aquinas is hoping for another quality season this fall after finishing third in the MVC and making it to the section semifinal last year. Orchestrating the offense will be Adelaide Bezemek, the team's senior setter who had 734 assists last season and is expected to pass the 1,000 assist mark this fall.

Head coach Danielle Schamberger expects Bezemek's experience to be crucial for the Blugolds this year.

"She is a six rotation player, she's not coming off the court," Schamberger said. "She's our floor captain, and she's going to give ... these juniors who are kind of coming up into varsity for their first year some comfort."



Bezemek
Danielle Schamberger

Get in the game with our Prep Sports Newsletter

Sent weekly directly to your inbox!

Email Address

Sign up!

* I understand and agree that registration or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy.