

Wolverines trying to make another run at state

Boland one of eight seniors to return

PREP BOYS VOLLEYBALL PREVIEW: Waukesha West

By Pat Neumuth

pneumuth@conley.net 262-513-2667

WAUKESHA — Waukesha West had a banner season last year, qualifying for state for the first time in program history. Wolverines boys volleyball coach Tamari Clementi doesn't know if there's going to be a state tournament this season, but she knows she's got a team full of returners that hope to duplicate last year's magic.

West's roster features eight seniors, with some having been on varsity for four years.

"Cohesiveness will be there," Clementi said. "They've been playing together for a long time. These kids have been together since middle school. Hopes are very high for these athletes."

Senior Alec Boland has been the team's starting setter for four straight years. He was a first team all-conference selection and made high honorable mention allstate last season. Clementi said Boland really puts time and effort on getting better, and has been at every contact or summer workout over all four years he's been in the program.

"Alec is just a special athlete," Clementi said. "Mentally, he's grown so much. His knowledge for the game is great. He knows how to distribute the ball extremely well.

"He knows what to do in the big moments to leading his team and trusting his team to get it to the hitter to put it away. He's a very level-headed kid and he works hard on and off the court."

Clementi said at 6-foot-3, Boland has become a better blocker at the net on the defensive end.

Senior outside hitter Aidan Kostolni and senior outside hitter/ middle blocker Kieran Keller

are two more four-year players.

"He's a three-sport athlete, so he's a very special kid," Clementi said about Keller, who will share the captain duties with Boland. "He doesn't play club volleyball like some of the other kids, but he's an outstanding player. He's going to take on another role for us playing outside this year."

Kostolni was a second team allconference pick last year. Senior Aidan Spence is back out for the team after a hiatus last season. Spence was on varsity his freshman and sophomore years, while senior middle blocker/outside hitter Seth Jordan also has three years experience on varsity.

"Our offense will be very balanced," Clementi said. "We have a very large team. I think we have an average around that 6-2 range."

The tallest on the roster is junior Cal Krohn at 6-7. Krohn played mainly on JV last year, besides for some tournaments and then all of the postseason, so he got some playing time at state.

See **WEST, PAGE 2B**



Waukesha West senior Alec Boland sets the ball during a match last season against Waukesha South.

Freeman file photo

West

From Page 1B

"His size will be a great weapon for us," Clementi said. "He will be blocking the other teams' primary hitters. He will be fun to watch."

Sophomore Nathan Higgins was a starter for West last year and will continue to make a difference at libero. Higgins, who is a true setter, plays a lot of beach volleyball all over the country. Sophomore Connor Klem has played a lot of club volleyball and should see some time as a defensive specialist.

However, the team lost allstate players Matthew Spellman (first team) and JJ Webb (honorable mention). Spellman, the Classic 8 Player of the Year in 2019, was an all-around great player, but these two really excelled on serve receive, something the team has been practicing on to get better.

"I think we have all the pieces in place and I think it's to be about these talented offensive-minded athletes to come together and trust

each to put it away," Clementi said. "This being a different year, we just want to defend our Classic 8 title. We are just going to work so hard on player development. If we get that opportunity to go beyond and have a culmination tournament, our goal is to get back to wherever state will be this year."



Waukesha West's Kieran Keller makes a dive attempt for the ball during a sectional semifinal match against Mukwonago last fall.

Freeman file photo