

August 16, 2024

By Dennis Garcia  
SportsTone.net

## ASHEBORO - Gritty.

That's the word Asheboro High School varsity volleyball coach Kelly Smith used time and time again when asked to describe her team. That grit was evident in the first two matches of the new season.

After rolling to a straight-set win over Wheatmore to open the season Wednesday, the Blue Comets followed that with a three-game sweep of Southeast Guilford Thursday to go to 2-0. AHS is scheduled to host Eastern Randolph next Wednesday and travel to Wheatmore Thursday.

"Keep grinding, keep being gritty and keep putting in the preparation," said Smith, who led the Blue Comets to a 14-11 overall record and an 8-2 mark in the Mid-Piedmont Conference last season. "That is something we try to teach and instill, especially a defensive mindset of just being gritty and getting to every single ball hit on the ground so it's hard for teams to score."



After losing five seniors from last year's team, including a number of key performers, AHS will be counting on some new faces while the more experienced ones find themselves in different roles.

"We have been working hard in practice," said junior Lia George, one of the top outside hitters for the team. "We lost a lot of people and we're building it up. I have to step up and talk more and be more of a leader on the court. We just have a different kind of a bond that we didn't have last year."

That was evident against the Falcons, who were opening their season. The Blue Comets received contributions from the entire roster. Seniors Aleah Smith, Anna Grace LeRoy and Eliza

Duranceau provide leadership on and off the floor, juniors Emma Kate Forester, Emma Little, Eva Vuncannon and George have specific roles they are getting comfortable with and sophomores Emma Ingold and Ady Scherer have stepped into huge rolls offensively and defensively.



*Photos of Asheboro in action against Wheatmore on Wednesday, August 14th, 2024.*

"The upperclassmen have really been supportive in welcoming us and they brought us in and that has helped," Ingold said. "We've worked a lot on teamwork and how we work together and we've done really good the past two nights."

Last season, the Blue Comets started with losses to Wheatmore and Randleman and that start was on the minds of these players as the new season tipped off.

"We wanted to come out pretty strong this season, especially after losing so many seniors," Forester said. "We emphasized coming out strong, staying consistent and we did a good job of that. We knew we had some offensive spots to fill. We're trying to talk, swing faster and pick up the tempo throughout the game. The juniors knew we had to pick things up this year and we have."

Against SEG, Ingold, Scherer, Forester, Smith, Duranceau and George contributed at the net while Vuncannon and LeRoy kept the Blue Comets in their offense. Little's defense helped spark the team.

"We have some gritty players, we focus heavily on defense, but we also have some big swingers that we just need to be consistent and not allow teams to go on runs," Smith said. "We put a ton of work in over the summer and it's nice that it paid off."

With grit.



*Asheboro Blue Comets varsity and jayvee volleyball teams. Photo provided.*