

April 10, 2018

### Mount Mercy Tennis Team Looks to Net a Successful Season

Despite the weather, a new coach and only four returning team members, the Mount Mercy Academy tennis team is expecting a successful season this year. The spring weather has been a huge challenge for all of the spring teams and tennis is no exception.

Jill Whalen, the team's first year coach feels that the difficulty presented by the cold and windy spring is one of the most significant obstacles her team is facing. Due to the weather, the team has been unable to practice outside and the limited court space when they practice inside makes it extremely difficult to establish continuity with doubles pairings.

Whalen, a former five year varsity doubles team athlete, is excited for her first season as a coach. "I'm elated to be back on the court and sharing my knowledge of the game with the girls. We have had productive practices despite being stuck inside and I see great promise from everyone on the team," Whalen remarked.

Whalen expects her top players to be her four returning athletes. Seniors Sophie Robinson (Buffalo) and Paige Siebold (West Seneca) return to the court for their fourth season. Junior Breanna Sikora (Buffalo) returns for her third year and sophomore Madelyn DiGiore (Lakeview) will compete for the second year. Sophomore newcomers Emily Howard (Buffalo) and Lily Kasperek, as well as freshman Claire Mullen (Orchard Park) are also expected to be key contributors for the team this season.

Although winning is important, Whalen believes that having the players bond as a team while enjoying themselves and enhancing a love for the game of tennis is just as critical in having a successful season. The new coach believes that her team is heading down the right path toward achieving these goals.

"We have a mix of newcomers as well as girls who are experienced. There is camaraderie among the girls where the veterans help the newcomers enhance their skills, learn the game, and provide moral support especially when frustration ensues," Whalen remarked. "As a result of this support, I've observed newcomers relax and ease up on themselves. Our veterans also challenge one another through their play driving each individual to improve their game."

The tennis team begins its ten match season on April 12<sup>th</sup> against Niagara Catholic.



Four year varsity tennis team members Sophie Robinson and Paige Siebold (front) are ready for another year.

### **Mount Mercy Academy**

A Catholic College Preparatory High School for Young Women

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