

After a point gained, junior Talia Humfeld celebrates on Sept. 9 against a game against Mill Valley. "We were all so excited and happy even though we lost in three sets," Humfeld said. "No matter if we lose or win, we always come together as a team and congratulate the good together." *photo by macy williams*

At the last home game, senior Jeniah Ratliff serves against Olathe North on Oct. 6. During senior night, the team lost by two sets. "I was overwhelmed with emotions," Ratliff said. "I just wanted to be able to support my team while still having fun and cherishing the whole experience." *photo by stella mages*



In a tough game against SM South, Varsity Coach Mollie Mae Brooks celebrates a point with the team. "I was super excited we got a huge block," Brooks said. "It's always great when the whole team can celebrate the big points." *photo by macy williams*

fresh RESET

Volleyball program welcomes new coaching staff for the fourth time in four years

Freshman Sofia Muro Pineda's face gleamed with joy and excitement as she joined sophomore Briley Perry, junior Amaya Thi and senior Jeniah Ratliff in the center of the court as they clapped their hands and spun in circles celebrating junior Talia Humfeld's ace. Head coach Mollie Mae Brooks helped the team stay positive for the rest of the game.

"Within this generation, a lot of stuff is mental, and it's hard for us to get past that mental block," Brooks said. "Being able to think like a goldfish and having that five second memory, or having a reset word that makes you laugh because when you laugh, you'll smile, and then you won't realize about the mistake, all you will hear is that last funny word."

During the 2024 season, senior Ella Wilson broke her fibula; a sprained ankle during a game in September kept her from playing the 2025 season. Wilson said, despite being unable to play, she still went to every practice and game to cheer on her

team.

"The reason I kept showing up is because I think it's important in a team sport to show up for people," Wilson said. "I would want to be showed up for if one of my teammates got hurt. I think it's important that I signed up for the team, and I'm still a part of the team, even though I'm not playing. I'm a teammate off the court too."

After Wilson's injury, JV player junior Rowan Hammons was moved up to varsity. Hammons said the night she found out she was playing up, she was shocked but also excited.

"That first game with the varsity team was scary," Hammons said. "I had no clue what I was doing. However, it was fun because I got to play with girls I hadn't played with since middle school, and it was enjoyable because I got to play with more of my friends."

With such a difference in skill levels on varsity, freshman Isabella Harris said she felt like sometimes

she wasn't a good player because some of the girls she played against were older, taller and had more experience, but she still pushed herself.

"Some games can be hard, but I always have fun," Harris said. "But during practices I work harder and girls on my team help me too."

The season welcomed new coaches, new players, and a new program where players said they had more fun and freedom. Brooks, a 2019 SM North graduate, was on the North team all four years, while participating in club for nine years and then going on to play at Ottawa University for four years.

"I always knew I wanted to coach someday after I stopped playing," Brooks said. "Being able to come back to a program I played for has meant everything to me. I feel right at home coaching for North, and being able to build the program up. This first season being a head coach was so much fun." *story by eliza powell*

"My first year on varsity has been very different from what I have done in the past because I'm playing with new and mostly older girls. My favorite part of the season was our pink out game because it was full of energy and even though we didn't win, we gave it our all and had a close game."

Sofia Muro Pineda, 9

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Baby Freshman, 9

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coming in
FRESH
three freshmen join varsity



In the huddle, Varsity Coach Mollie Mae Brooks writes down the next lineup for the game against Bonner Springs. "This was our first home game of the year, Brooks said. "It was exciting we won both games that night to start the season strong with a 2-0 record." *photo by sydney peal*

In the air, sophomore Briley Perry serves the ball on Sept. 9 against Mill Valley. Perry got an ace, earning a point. "I was super excited because we were doing good and getting points," Perry said. "Even though we didn't end up winning the game, we still had a lot of fun." *photo by macy williams*

Ball in hand, junior Amaya Thi sets the ball on Sept. 3 against Turner High School, winning their first game of the season. "I love playing because I always have fun trying to hype my teammates up," Thi said. "The best part of the season was playing with my favorite people." *photo by macy williams*

