

## Girls Volleyball Season Overview

Coach Conti has created a winning standard for the Joel Barlow girls' volleyball team. Since becoming head coach in 2013, she has led the team to eight SWC championships and three state championships. Conti doesn't shy away from the pressure, though she admits it definitely affects her.

Conti has played volleyball all her life and describes the joy of playing as a "worry-free zone." The main reason she started coaching was because of the great coaches and mentors she had growing up, who deeply cared about her as a student-athlete and played a foundational role in her life. "I thought I wanted to coach volleyball, but what I realized is that I really love getting the girls to understand what it is to play at their full potential. To keep pushing them and then to get them to go even further than they ever imagined they could go," she said.

Several players stand out this season: seniors Outside Hitter Maddie Furrer, Setter Olivia Sickinger, Libero Zoriana Olexy, and Middle Claire Rodrigue; and juniors Outside Hitter Mia Roberts and Libero Val Amador.

Coach Andre and Mavi Gilmore assist Coach Conti. Andre focuses on the technical aspects, which Conti appreciates, while Coach Gilmore handles "anything and everything." Conti called Coach Gilmore her "sounding board," noting she never misses a practice or game and steps up if Conti is running late. "She's just become one of my best friends," said Coach Conti.

Conti describes herself as very competitive and admits she is tough on her players. "The better they get, the more I expect," she said. Her main goal is to make an impact on the girls' lives.

"I would say they are very similar to the most successful teams that I've had," said Coach Conti. From the start of the season, she saw the potential in this year's team. "The seniors are a very close group, and they have a mission. They're not going to stop," said Conti.

The team won its ninth SWC championship under Coach Conti this season and is aiming for a shot at the state title.

