

[Girls volleyball preview: A new-look Western League is up for grabs this fall](#)

By Thomas Johnston, Staff Writer, The Greenfield Recorder Published: 09-07-2025

The Turners Falls volleyball team had a stranglehold on the Northern League since the return from COVID.

The Thunder won the league title in 2021, 2022 and 2023, and were hardly tested along the way, going unbeaten in the league in 2021, dropping just one league match in 2022 before going unbeaten in Northern League action in 2023.

That run ended last fall at the hands of Mohawk Trail. The Warriors took down the Thunder early in the season and after both teams went unbeaten in the league the rest of the way, met late in the year in a match that would decide whether Mohawk Trail would win the title outright or if they'd share the league.

It came down to the final set and the Warriors pulled it out to win the league title.

That wasn't the last matchup between the two foes. The third meeting of the season took place in the Western Mass. Class D semifinals and once again, Mohawk Trail came out victorious and went on to capture its first western Mass. title in program history.

The MIAA's power rankings decided three contests weren't enough. Turners was given the No. 15 and Mohawk Trail was the No. 18 seed, meaning they met up for a fourth time in the state's Round of 32.

The fourth time was the charm for the Thunder, as Turners pulled out a 3-2 win to reach the Round of 16.

As the leagues have shifted, the Northern League is now the Western League, comprised of Athol, Franklin Tech, Greenfield, Mahar, Mohawk Trail, Pioneer and Turners. Frontier is in the new Northern League along with Longmeadow, Amherst, Baystate, Westfield, Minnechaug and Agawam.

Here's a look at each area team:

ATHOL

Coach: Donna Lajoie

League/Division: Western/4

Last Year's Record: 6-13

Roster: Bella Barton, Morgan Brailey, Emmi Decoteau, Maddie Desrosiers, Dakota Dustin, Lacie Hermes, Mackenzy Leger, Reese Nelson, Ella Reed, Evelyn Robinson, Aby Spooner, Giana Vaillancourt

Outlook: After graduating a large senior class, the Bears will have one of the youngest teams Lajoie has had in her 18 years coaching at Athol.

Vaillancourt is the top returner and the junior will be moved all around the lineup.

“She’s an All Star no matter where you put her on the court,” Lajoie said. “She is the most talented volleyball player I have ever coached. She just has that instinct and raw natural talent. But better than that, she is coachable. I’ve seen many athletes who are very talented but they know it and they have the ‘I’m good enough’ disease. She is a coach’s dream and we will rely on her heavily to guide the team.”

Reed, a sophomore, is a talented setter who is playing with more confidence while Brailey, Spooner and Robinson are fellow returners who Lajoie says are bringing great energy to the team with each playing key roles this fall.

Barton, Decoteau and Hermes are freshmen moving up to varsity and have shown promise while Dustin, Leger and Nelson are sophomores making the jump up to varsity, each gaining confidence by the day.

FRANKLIN TECH

Coach: Jade Cuevas

League/Division: Western/5

Last Year’s Record: 9-11

Roster: Breanna Kempf, Skylei LaPan, Emma Little, Anya Livingstone, Jenna Petrowicz, Payton Tierney, Emma Petersen, Taylor Underwood, Janiylah Wan, Lilyann Baldwin, Sarah Beckwith, Laura Fuess, Madison Pettingill, McKenzie Stafford

Outlook: After making the state tournament in 2021, 2022 and 2023, the Eagles missed out on states by one win a year ago. With six seniors, the goal is for Tech to be back in the dance this fall.

Kempf, LaPan, Little, Livingstone, Petrowicz and Tierney comprise that senior class. Beckwith, a sophomore, is a strong outside hitter, Petersen, a junior, can mix between outside and middle while Pettingill, a sophomore, can also rotate between outside and middle for the Eagles.

FRONTIER

Coach: Courtney Parent

League/Division: Northern/4

Last Year’s Record: 16-7, D4 Quarterfinals

Roster: Caitlin Maio, Morgan Mason, Cadence Martin, Nola Payette, Greta Hale, Kesenia Rivera, Madeline Day, Kaelyn Johnston, Gracie Johnson, Olivia Donovan, Avah Spearance, Esther Ehle, Aimee Talbot, Raine Wonsey

Outlook: The Redhawks are used to collecting hardware at the end of the season which made last year an aberration, as Frontier fell in the Western Mass. Class B semifinals. It was the first loss in a Western Mass. tournament in 18 years for the Redhawks.

Now, Frontier is replacing 10 seniors from last year in what will be a new-look Frontier squad this fall.

Hale (middle/outside), Maio (outside/defensive specialist) and Martin (setter) are seniors who Parent will be relying on while Talbot (middle) and Wonsey (middle/outside) are freshmen that have impressed early.

GREENFIELD

Coach: Amy Youmell

League/Division: Western/5

Last Year's Record: 10-10, D5 Round of 32

Roster: Giomaris Collado Bonilla, Auburn Mass, Julia Belville, Savannah Aldrich, Bianca Reynolds, Amy Mihailicenco, Cheryl Turner, Alice Wondolowski, Ashlyn Koscinski, Karinna Kostov, Isabella Disciullo, Yerializ Collado Bonilla

Outlook: It was a successful first season in charge for Youmell last fall, getting the Wave into the state tournament. Now, the goal is to build off that.

Mihailicenco is a strong all-around player, Belville is a veteran to anchor the front row while Reynolds has proven to be a consistent contributor on both offense and defense for Greenfield. Giomaris Collado Bonilla, Mass, Belville and Aldrich provide a strong senior group while Kostov and Yerializ Collado Bonilla are younger talent that will provide a spark in the lineup. "With a balanced mix of experienced leaders and emerging players, we're aiming to improve in league play and make a deeper postseason run," Youmell said.

MAHAR

Coach: Maeve Powell

League/Division: Western/5

Last Year's Record: 10-9, D5 Prelims

Roster: Angelina Alonso, Hayden Comeau, Mia Santana, Scarleth Aranda Lebron, Madelynn Burgess, Isabella Harrington, Kamryn Hart, Mckenzie Scribner, Jeneal Marks, Layla Lamarche, Serenity Packard

Outlook: The Senators have improved vastly under Powell, going from just one win in 2022 to making the state tournament a season ago.

Now, Mahar will be looking to build on that success.

Eight players return from last year's squad, led by Comeau, a senior, on the outside and Burgess, a junior who can set or hit on the right side.

MOHAWK TRAIL

Coach: Joni Sessions

League/Division: Western/5

Last Year's Record: 13-4, D5 Round of 32

Roster: Emma Canaday, Megan Gabaree, Regi Filiault, Madeline Finn, Claire Johnston, Kenzie Sonntag, Grace Stevens, Emmalee Inman, Zoe Mojallali, Anna Whitaker, Riley Dyer, Brooke Koshinsky, Aurora Moynihan

Outlook: Sessions takes over for Sherri Lannon, hoping to get the Warriors back in the mix for more trophies. Canaday and Gabaree are returning seniors who will start while Mojallali, Finn, Inman, Whitaker and Johnston will make up the remainder of the lineup to start the season for Mohawk Trail.

PIONEER

Coach: Shannon Connolly

League/Division: Western/5

Last Year's Record: 0-16

Roster: Jacobia Tyminski, Abbie Ray, Kiara Gruszkowski, Molly Gouin, Greta Lewis, Evangeline Lewis, Serenity Brown, Lana Gagnon, Corrie Glenn, Sophia Wood

Outlook: After not winning a match a season ago, the Panthers opened their 2025 campaign on the right foot with a victory over Mohawk Trail.

Tyminski and Ray are returning seniors who will be relied upon as hitters on the outside, Gruszkowski is a returning middle hitter while Lewis and Wood will be counted on to keep the momentum going for Pioneer.

"I'm so proud of the work these girls have put in so far," Connolly said. "[The match against Mohawk Trail] is the start to a great season."

TURNERS

Coach: Kelly Liimatainen

League/Division: Western/5

Last Year's Record: 15-7, D5 Round of 16

Roster: Shelby Beck, Myaa Reed, Sato Bazemore, Jakhia Williams, Kaiya Adams, Autumn Thornton, Maddie Haight, Madisyn Dietz, Janelle Massey, Ameliya Galbraith, Abigail Moffatt, Gianna Marigliano, Addison Talbot, Autumn DiMare

Outlook: The Thunder will have to replace Madi Liimatainen, who led the Thunder the last four seasons on the outside.

Dietz is a returning senior who has been the starting libero, Haight is a returning setter who is just a sophomore and Massey is a talented senior on the outside.

Source: <https://recorder.com/2025/09/07/girls-volleyball-preview-a-new-look-western-league-is-up-for-grabs-this-fall/>