

Reigning Big 5 MVP expecting big things from the Warriors

September 5, 2023



The Reigning Big MVP in volleyball seems determined to close out her high school career with a bang.

In fact, she's been busy preparing for her final high school season for much of the year.

With eyes on taking her talents to the college courts after graduating from Del Norte in 2024, senior McKenna Curtis embraced a whole new challenge this year to help prepare herself for the upcoming season.

"I realized I wanted to play volleyball in college and I knew if I really wanted to do that I had to play travel volleyball this year," Curtis said.

With that in mind, the talented multi-sport standout, who was the starting pitcher for the Warriors softball team as a sophomore, opted to not play softball in 2023 in order to play travel volleyball.

And she challenged herself even further by trying out for the Rise National 18U team out of Medford, one of the most respected travel team programs on the West Coast.

She could have played for the Rise 17U team, but instead opted to try out for the club's 18U squad, and it was a move that paid off.

"I decided to go with the 18U team even though I knew I wouldn't get as much playing time," Curtis said. "Despite not playing as much, I knew I would get a lot better playing with the 18U."

That experience, she feels, has helped her prepare for the high school season, with the Warriors looking to successfully defend the Big 5 championship they won last year.

"I would say I gained a lot of experience with the mental side of volleyball, and getting to read the court more," she said. "And getting to defend against hitters that are going to really good (colleges)."

"It was fun. I think just getting to play with girls I knew were way better is probably the best thing I could have had. And getting to talk to the girls about the college recruiting process."

The Rise competed from January to May and traveled to tournaments up and down the West Coast as well as in Utah and Ohio.

As the Warriors get set for league play, a determined Curtis believes they have the talent and depth to defend their league crown and more this fall.

An experienced roster returns nine players from last year's league championship team and will be the favorites to win the Big 5 again.

But that's not all Curtis wants to see from this team.

"I'm hoping to repeat last year (in league) and we want to go further in the NCS than we did last year," she said. "I think we can do better, especially now that we got a look at teams down south."

After graduation Curtis is hoping to take her talents to the next level and has been considering her options.

Playing for the Rise will no doubt put her on the radar of many West Coast programs and she is considering some Division-III and NAIA programs in Oregon, as well as some of the top community college programs in California.

"I have been touring some colleges for the past few months, and with the travel team I got a lot of exposure," she said. "I'll probably go to a junior college for two years and hopefully go to a four-year after that if I still want to play, and I'm pretty sure I will."

"My goal is to go somewhere where I know I can be pushed and challenged."

McKenna is coached at Del Norte by her mother, Meagan Curtis, whom she says helped instill in her a love for volleyball.

“I’ve kind of grown up with it,” she said of the sport. “Ever since I was little my mom has coached and I just remember always watching games from the stands, and just being around it a lot has given me a lot of exposure to it.”