

Don't Give Up!



As we prepare for the holiday break, the nation finds itself in an interesting position at the end of a most eventful year. COVID-19 continues to factor into most decisions. It has certainly upended education in ways we've never experienced.

But now, on the cusp of receiving a vaccine, COVID fatigue has set in. We yearn to be back in close contact with friends and loved ones, to go out and enjoy the things we used to do without having to wear a mask, or maintain safe distance. We crave old times so much that many of us are going about life as if the virus has vanished, even as cases increase dramatically throughout the state and country.

It's dangerous to give up now. And a real shame after we've come so far. We've reexamined our lives and priorities, even demonstrated our resilience. So now, in the fourth quarter, why throw in the towel? The virus hasn't beaten us yet!

So many other districts in the state have had to institute quarantines and send students home for various durations. With the exception of a few two-week quarantines for certain extra-curricular programs, Grenada has not seen a great disruption in our mission: to keep children safe so that we can provide the best education possible.

Thanks to our teachers' and administrators' tireless efforts to practice social distancing, wash hands, and ensure that everyone is wearing facial coverings, we're keeping up that mission!

Aside from our diligent efforts in the classroom and working with students virtually over the internet, one thing that has kept us going is our ability to adapt to new challenges. We recently faced one such obstacle when it became apparent that our hybrid-learning model was not working for many students.

It was the least successful of three options we presented to parents and students, who were equally split in their desire to attend school or work from home. We've kept up consistent monitoring of these three areas and recognized that hybrid was the least successful. This fall, we made the decision to remove that option.

We've found that when all students are in class, teachers are there to push students to do their best. At home, it takes a great deal of self-discipline for kids to reach the high bar we set for excellence. While many students are flourishing under the virtual model, some are falling behind. They're simply not completing the work, which puts them at a perpetual disadvantage.

See "Don't Quit"

Continued on page 2

Chargers Persevere to Become District Champs



Photo by Ezzard Beame

**By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter**

Back in August, it was uncertain if the GHS Chargers would have a football season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three months and nine games later, the Chargers were crowned 5A district champs.

It was only the second time in Ashley Kuhn's ten years as head coach at Grenada that the team has won such a distinction.

With only one division loss and an overall record of 7-2 during regular season play, the Chargers were the number-one seed. They played host twice to playoff challengers at Charger Stadium, beating Vicksburg and then dropping their final game to West Point on November 20.

It was the Chargers' dramatic overtime victory against West Point earlier in the season that boosted the team's confidence and put them in contention to win the division. After beating Saltillo and Columbus, they went on to best another top division opponent, Lake Cormorant, before picking up two easy wins on forfeitures to end the season.

Despite all the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic safety protocols and contact quarantines, the team always played to its strengths, Kuhn said.

"Having our quarterback (Joshua Phillips) return this year was obviously big for us," he said. "The recipe has been, play good defense, control the clock, run the ball, and don't turn it over. It wasn't always pretty, but we found a way to win."

In addition to Phillips, many of the key

players on the team were seniors. Derrick Harbin was the leading receiver, and Nick Stewart was the leading tackler.

Kuhn said this was the largest senior class of players since he has coached at Grenada. "I've had most of these seniors since they were seventh graders," he said. "I've seen them mature and grow over time. A lot of them have put a lot of time into this program."

Another milestone reached this season was Kuhn's 100th career win, which came against Lake Cormorant. More than 70 of those wins have come during his time at Grenada.

**See "District Champs"
page 7**

Information Presented to GCTC Students



Photo by MegNewcomb

Community Outreach Coordinator from the Mississippi Organ Recovery Association Susan Bonds (left), spoke to students at the Grenada Career and Technical center about the process of organ donation. Students pictured (l to r) Nic Lowrimore, Shelby Boyette, Stephanie Keel, and Presley Hale.

Featured AmeriCorps Member



By Gwen Woodson
AmeriCorps Director

Bethany Donohoe has an unwavering need to serve others. This is one of the many reasons Donohoe wanted to serve a third year with the Grenada School

District AmeriCorps Program.

“I wanted to join AmeriCorps to gain a better understanding of what happens in my community, and to tutor and mentor children,” Donohoe said. “AmeriCorps provided me a chance to do just that. The students have taught me patience, strength, and the true meaning of compassion and love. The smallest rewards and victories mean so much to them, and they have taught me to not take things for granted.”

Her motto in life is, *Nothing hard lasts forever... if it's still hard, keep praying. It will get better!*

Donohoe graduated from Grenada High School in 2006. She is married to Billy Wayne Donohoe. They have two boys, Eli Donohoe, 12, a sixth grader at Gateway Christian Academy, and Cooper Donohoe, 11, a fifth grader at Grenada Elementary 4-5. Presently, she is an active member of First Baptist Church. She has also served as a Girl Scout troop leader; member of Havis' Kids, a group that raises money to send special needs

children and their families to Disney; and she supports her husband as a member of Tie Plant Volunteer Fire Department.

While serving in AmeriCorps, Donahoe has tutored and mentored children, served her community by serving at the Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Prayer events, served at Breast Cancer Awareness events, served at the local food pantry, camps for our local children, and many other service activities.

Many people will be surprised to know that one of Donahoe's lifelong dreams is to open a ranch for special needs kids and adults. She enjoys spending time with kids, watching college football/baseball, riding backroads, listening to music, and sleeping.

According to program director Gwen Woodson, Donahoe will always be the first person to volunteer to help. “I have seen her grow to become a confident and effective leader. I love that she overcomes her personal challenges by just pushing forward.”

“AmeriCorps has brought me many

lifelong friendships and taught me more than I ever could have imagined about the children I serve and the community in which we live,” Donahoe said.

In exchange for a year of service, AmeriCorps members earn an education award of \$6,195 that can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans. Donahoe plans to pay off student loans from when she attended Ole Miss as a speech language pathology major, and the balance is currently helping her to attend Holmes Community College as a social work major.

Her advice to future members is to make sure you are dedicated to the kids you serve. Be compassionate, and SLEEP before September 1st!

For more information about the Grenada School District AmeriCorps Program, contact program director Gwen Woodson at gwoodson@grenadak12.com or visit my.americorps.gov.

“Don’t Quit”

Continued from Page 1

Just as they’ve done for years in the classroom, instructors who teach virtual classes have identified students who are falling behind and reached out to parents to find a solution. Many parents were surprised to find that their student isn’t turning in assignments. Teachers are working with these parents to formulate a plan to bring their kids up to speed.

It can become quite challenging for parents who work during the day and can’t be home to monitor their children. I daresay many of these parents have found a newfound respect for our teachers, who juggle so many students in the course of a day, and often work overtime to drive their students to excellence.

Just like we should keep fighting and push through to keep ourselves safe and virus-free, we need to make sure our kids are staying the course as well. We’re calling on parents to dig deep and help us meet the extraordinary challenges of 2020. Use the holiday break to catch up. Push your kids to the excellence that we know they can deliver because we see it in the classrooms.

The forecast looks better for 2021. With hard work and a bit of luck, we should begin to see things slowly returning to normal next semester. Don’t get tired. Don’t give up! Don’t let all your hard work be in vain.

GMS Basketball Cheer



Photo by Stacia Jackson

(front, l to r) Aaliyah Cobbs, Peyton Herrod, Ta’Niyah Loggins, Ashlyn Rice, Trinity Davis, Memrie Cox, Leasiah Taylor, (back, l to r) Elizabeth Mason, Cheyenne Tidwell, Kimble Harges, Chole Wright, Mallory Willis, Caitlyn Avery, and Naima Reed



MAKE SPIRITS BRIGHT with gorgeous limited-edition hues that complement every eye color and skin tone.

Shop our convertible **Eye & Cheek Makeup Vanity** and **Creamy Matte Lip Crayons** while supplies last.

MERLE NORMAN
cosmetics

1321 Sunset Drive St L
Grenada, MS 38901

662-226-0605

M-F 10-5 • Sat 10-2

MERLE NORMAN
cosmetics

merlenorman.com

© 2019 Merle Norman
Cosmetics Inc.

Grenadak12.com

Green Top Music Teacher Awarded Grammy Prize



GES 4-5 music teacher Amy Killebrew (left) won the inaugural L.U.C.Y. Award, presented by the GRAMMY Museum Mississippi at their virtual gala on November 12, 2020. The L.U.C.Y. Award, which stands for Lifting Up Children and Youth and is named for noted Cleveland community advocate Lucy Janoush, celebrates K-12 educators from the state of Mississippi who embody the educational mission of GRAMMY Museum Mississippi. The award was presented by the museum’s executive director, Emily Havens (right).

Grenada Elementary 4-5 music teacher Amy Killebrew has been announced as the inaugural recipient of the L.U.C.Y. Award presented by GRAMMY Museum Mississippi. Killebrew was honored during the Mississippi Museum’s 2020 Virtual Gala on Nov. 12. Killebrew received a \$2,000 honorarium and a \$1,000 grant awarded to the Green Top to support music education. In addition, Amanda Bonner of Hayes

Cooper Center in Merigold, Mississippi, was announced as a semi-finalist for the award. “We are thrilled to honor these two incredible female music educators who are doing their part to ensure that music education remains an active and vital part of secondary education in the state of Mississippi,” said Emily Havens, Executive Director of GRAMMY Museum Mississippi. “This award was created in

honor of one of our founders, the late Lucy Janoush. She’d be proud to know we are continuing to carry on her legacy by honoring those educators who are playing an integral role in the lives of our children and future.” “This means so much to me,” Killebrew said. “Music has always been a huge part of my life. I believe that every child should have access to music education.” Killebrew added that music has been proven to increase a child’s performance in academics. “It is our job as music educators to allow students to explore their creativity in music,” she said. “We teach fundamentals of music such as rhythm

and notation, but music is also about creativity. I hope that I always instill a love of music in each of my students that I teach.” Killebrew was recognized for her curriculum program called Rhythm Jam-boree, which she uses to teach her fifth grade students note names and values, how to read rhythm patterns, and how to distinguish the difference between steady beat and rhythm. By learning the note names and values and counting rhythm, her students build toward learning the treble clef staff and reading music so they can play pitched instruments. **See “Grammy” Continued on page 4**



*May your days
be
merry and bright...*



Grocery Basket

WE PUT MORE IN YOUR BASKET FOR LESS\$!

Supporting our community for over 38 years.
1770 South Commerce Street
Grenada 662-226-0541

Gifts Free Gift Wrapping & Free Delivery

Children's Gifts



Decorative Wood



Julia's Jelly & Jam



Honey & Lions Club Pecans



Nic-Naks Pottery



Cross Pens



doTERRA Oils & Diffusers



Criss Office Supply
2245 Commerce St. in Grenada • Hwy. 51 South
226-1901 or 307-2394 • Regular Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8-5, Sat. 9-12
Order online at www.crissofficesupply.com

Can you guess the weight of the big squashy pumpkin?



Conner Jackson



Zahking Conley



Kassidy Sanders



Landon Wilson

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Students at Grenada Elementary’s Red Top were offered the chance to guess a pumpkin’s weight for the annual Great Pumpkin Contest, sponsored by the GES Kidzeum and Bull Bottom Farms. Five students from the Red Top guessed correctly. The winners were Gabrielle Brooks in Ms. Chism’s kindergarten class, Landon Wilson in Ms. Ross’ kindergarten class, Zahking Conley in Ms. Carpenter’s first-grade class, Kassidy Sanders in Ms. Pollan’s second-grade class, and Conner

Jackson in Ms. Armstrong’s third-grade class. Bull Bottom Farms donated the giant pumpkin, along with several smaller pumpkins that students used to compare weights. As they often do in the Kidzeum, students took their classroom knowledge of weights and measurements and applied it to this popular hands-on activity. Kidzeum director Melanie Williams said she was delighted and surprised that so many students guessed the precise weight. The five student winners each received a pumpkin and treat bag. The Kidzeum staff thanked Bull Bottom

Farms and Tate Gordon, who donated hay bales to complete the fall harvest theme. The Kidzeum recently kicked off its popular holiday exhibit, which focuses on a particular country’s Christmas tradition. This year’s theme, Christmas in Canada, teaches students about the customs of our northern neighbor, complete with festive decorations and snowy surprises. The exhibit will run through the end of the semester. (By the way, if you guessed the pumpkin weighed 105 pounds, you’re correct!) *Photos by Melanie Williams*
Not pictured: Gabrille Brooks

“Grammy” Continued from Page 3

Additionally, Bonner’s science lesson helps students to understand how sounds come from vibration and the pitch of the sound is based on the length of the instrument. With her fourth grade science class, she conducts scientific investigations to test how different variables affect properties of sound, such as pitch and volume. Named after devoted Mississippian and community advocate, Lucy Janoush, who was instrumental in securing funding for the development of the Mississippi Museum, the L.U.C.Y. Award celebrates K-12 educators from the state of Mississippi who embody the educational mission of GRAM-MY Museum Mississippi. To apply, educators had to complete an online application by submitting an original unit of lessons covering a minimum of four weeks, and a video of themselves teaching one of the lessons within the unit submitted. Academic educators must incorporate music as a tool for teaching course content, while music educators must incorporate at least one other academic content area as a tool for course content. Killebrew is currently in her 17th year as a teacher at Grenada School District. She taught science at Grenada Middle School before taking a music position at Grenada Elementary’s Red Top school, where she taught second and third grade music for nine years. In 2018, she moved to the Green Top to teach music and direct the fifth-grade show choir group, Pizzazz. She is married to Casey Killebrew, and together they have a son, Bryce, a freshman at Grenada High School.

What’s For Lunch?

Check www.grenadak12.com • Under the Calendars/Menus Tab

Walmart						
Save money. Live better.						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December (Events subject to change)		1 Band in Auditorium GHS: JV Soccer vs. Lafayette (Home) 5:00 & 6:15 Visions Rehearsal in Visions Classroom 4:00pm - 7:00pm GHS: Boys Soccer vs. Lafayette (Home) 7:00pm	2 Band in Auditorium 21st CCLC-GHS Gym 3:30pm - 5:30pm	3 GHS: Soccer vs. South Panola (Home) 5:00/7:00 Visions Rehearsal in Visions Classroom 4:00pm - 7:00pm GHS Basketball-GHS Gym Kosciusko 5:00pm Band: Christmas Concert in Auditorium 7:00pm	4 Band in Auditorium GMS & GHS 60% Day GHS: North Robotics Practice Meet in GHS Gym 3:30pm - 10:00pm GHS: JV/V Basketball at Coffeeville 4:00pm	5 GHS: North Robotics Practice Meet in GHS Gym 7:00am - 10:00pm Christmas Parade 1:00pm GHS: Boys Basketball Bruce Classic at Bruce 2:30pm
	6	7 21st CCLC-GHS Gym 3:30pm - 5:30pm Visions Rehearsal in GHS Auditorium 3:30pm - 6:30pm GMS Basketball at North Panola 5:00pm	8 GHS: Soccer at New Albany 5:00/7:00 Visions Rehearsal in GHS Auditorium 3:30pm - 8:30pm GHS: V Basketball at Gentry 6:00pm School Board Meeting 6:00pm	9 21st CCLC-GHS Gym 3:30pm - 5:30pm Visions Rehearsal in GHS Auditorium 3:30pm - 9:00pm	10 GHS: MAAP U.S. History Test. Vision School Show 2:00pm Visions Winter Spectacular 7:00pm	11 GHS: Soccer vs. Columbus (Home) 5:00/7:00 GMS & GHS 60% Day GMS: Lego League State Tournament-GMS Gym & Cafe 3:30pm - 10:00pm GHS: V Basketball at Amata Etzy 6:00pm Visions Winter Spectacular 7:00pm
	13	14 Exams Week GHS: JV Soccer at Winona 5:00 & 6:15 21st CCLC-GHS Gym 3:30pm - 5:30pm	15 Exams Week Visions Rehearsal in Visions Classroom 4:00pm - 7:00pm	16 Exams Week GLAD: Student Awards Ceremony in GLAD Cafeteria 7:30am - 1:00pm 21st CCLC-GHS Gym 3:30pm - 5:30pm	17 Exams Week GHS: Soccer at West Point 5:00/7:00 GHS: JV/V Basketball at Winona 4:00pm Visions Rehearsal in Visions Classroom 4:00pm - 7:00pm	18 60% Day Exams Week GHS: V Basketball at JZ George
20	21 Christmas Holidays	22 Christmas Holidays	23 Christmas Holidays	24 Christmas Holidays	25 Christmas Holidays	26 Christmas Holidays
27 Christmas Holidays	28 Christmas Holidays	29 Christmas Holidays GHS: Boys Basketball - Coffeeville Classic at Coffeeville	30 Christmas Holidays	31 Christmas Holidays		

Chargers Wounded Warrior Game

Active military members, GHS NJROTC students and South Panola Air Force Junior ROTC students participated in a special presentation of the flag at the Wounded Warrior game. Participants were: Bailey Bowen, Aidan Carollo, Andrew Wallace, John Boler, Arananda Herrod, Dakota Luke, Taki-lya Anderson, Jakameon Perry, Shawn Wicker, Kevion McGee, Keianna Miller, Jonathan Brown, KimHong Kanghheng, Avery McMechan, Chandler Tyler, Chance Melton, Mirian Lorenzo, Chamcyah Burden, and Grenada High School NJROTC Chief Reese Foreman.



By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

This year's Wounded Warrior football game at Grenada High School was dedicated to "Hometown Heroes," honoring the Grenada medical community. In light

of this year's COVID-19 pandemic, the annual observance of military personnel expanded to include first responders and healthcare workers on the frontline of the worldwide healthcare crisis.

A ceremony to honor the Hometown

Heroes was held during halftime at the Oct. 16 game against West Point. A parade of vehicles circled the football field track and featured representatives from UMMC-Grenada and the Grenada clinics, Fast Pace Urgent Care, Providence

Nursing Home, and Quick Care Clinic and Pharmacy. The event also memorialized Shelley Smith, a highly respected local nurse practitioner who specialized in women's healthcare. Smith died from COVID on September 28.



Jahiem Shack and Jacob Chavis



Ella Simmons



Coach Kuhn and Cedonte Miers



Jadarius Steen



Garrian Edwards



Joe Moss and Landon Trusty



(Photo right)
Lauren Dungan



Kayden Ashmore

(Photo left)
Jada Carpenter Photos by Ezzard Beane

Two GSD Teams Compete at BEST Robotics Meet



NJROTC members Ian McCullough and Tyner Kelly inspect their robot.



GMS Robotics team (front, l to r) Tristin Wilson, Kelsey Hodges, Irie Zelinski, Darshi Kher, Emily Smith, (middle, l to r) Alyssa Walker, Miley Jones, Layla Taylor, (back, l to r) Skylar Mims, Layla Escobedo, Gabrielle Willis, Ayla Sturdivant, Allen Tribble, and DeAysia Golden.

Two teams from Grenada School District designed robots and competed remotely in the annual Mississippi BEST Robotics competition this fall.

Students from Ryan Melton's robotics class at Grenada Middle School and a team of Chief Newtroin Foreman's NJROTC cadets competed against other Mississippi schools to design and build a robot that could assist in a medical crisis.

This year's statewide competition, entitled "Outbreak," required teams to build a robot out of provided materials (e.g. wood, plastic pipe, sheet metal) and program it to assist in a hypothetical scenario. Robots were required to bring patients to a testing center and then on to various quarantine locations.

Traditionally, teams travel to Mississippi State University to compete in the Mississippi BEST competition. Due to health restrictions, this year's competition was held virtually. Using a series of

webcams, the robots were judged and monitored during its tasks by judges from around the state.

Both GSD robots accomplished their tasks. The GMS and NJROTC teams placed sixth and seventh respectively. Melton won the Dale Jordan Award for coaches and mentors, and the 8th grade team placed fifth for the competition's top prize, the BEST Award.

Students competing for the BEST Award documented their progress through an extensive engineering notebook, created a website to display their progress, used CAD (Computer Aided Design) to help test and design the robot, and programmed the robot from scratch with a system called ROBOTC. The students even filmed commercials to promote their robot.

Mississippi BEST is designed to inspire and interest students in engineering, science, and technology through partici-

pation in an exciting sports-like technology contest.

Competing students had six weeks to design, develop, and test their robot. During this time, the students experience the same problems, challenges, and breakthroughs that an engineering team encounters when it takes a product to market. The weeks of hard work culminated in the thrilling day-long competition. The inspiring event combined the excitement of a high school football game with the strategy of a chess match and the intellectual challenge of a science fair.

Both coaches were proud of their teams.

"Our students were the only middle school team competing, and they were also a rookie team," said Melton. "None of the members in the class had competed in BEST before."

Of his NJROTC team, Chief Foreman said, "The cadets are steadily improving at building and programming robots. They are currently working on their next robot for the FIRST Robotics Competition that will take place in the coming months."

GES 4-5 LEAP Students Service Project



GES fourth and fifth grade gifted students in the LEAP classes of Frankie Fortier and Muffet McPhail packed shoeboxes filled with gifts for children in need around the world. The service project was part of the Operation Christmas Child mission and teaches kids the power of giving. Students who worked on the project include (front, l to r) Jenna Costilow, Logan Grace Bridges, Lily Williams, (back, l to r) Tucker Hood, Jax White, Bentley Shriver, and Brylee McCammon.



GES 4-5 students who packed shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child include (front, l to r) Emma Rocha, Aubrey Hicks, Mary Ashton Surrell, (back, l to r) Shelby Harper, Caroline Harrison, Nolan Hollingsworth, and Remington Skeen.

GSD Parent Resource Center

423 S. LINE STREET • 662-227-3370
ADULT EDUCATION CENTER/ ROOM 10

HOURS: Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 and 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m.

Free computer access for school related items

Free ACT Practice test

Free financial literacy help

Free FAFSA application and help

Free printing for school related items

Personal Loans

Personal loans \$500-\$15,000

V.P. Jody, Assistant Manager Angela, Financial Service Manager Angel, and Branch Manager Kandice are ready to help with your financial needs.

20+ Years Combined Experience!

Payment Plans to fit your budget*

Family Choice Financial

1105 Sunwood Drive • Suite 5 • Grenada, MS
662-307-2170 • Behind CVS Pharmacy

*All loans governed by arbitration agreement, most refunds are calculated on Rule of 78's, and all loans are subject to our normal credit criteria

Annual Parade at GES 4-5

“District Champs” Continued from Page 1

Next season, Grenada will move up to the more competitive 6A division. Kuhn said his players will prepare for new challenges by spending the winter in the weight room. He hopes that they’ll have the opportunity for spring practice, but nothing is guaranteed at this point.

During the school closing last spring, the team was not able to complete its critical spring training. Summer practices were interrupted as well, once for 17 days when the team recorded too many contact exposures and were forced to quarantine.

Kuhn said the team never had many COVID cases, just mostly contact, but it put a strain on the team. The coaching staff never knew from week to week who may or may not be eligible to play. There were games, including the season’s only division loss to Lafayette, where numerous key players were out.

“But every team in the state is facing these same challenges,” Kuhn said.

The coach said his players understand that they were fortunate to have played at all this season. Many schools in the surrounding area halted their programs this year.

“It’s been a different outlook for these guys,” Kuhn said. “I think it will help them throughout life to understand that things aren’t guaranteed and to take advantage of the opportunities you have.”



Photos by Kayla Henson

The GES 4-5 Green Top carried on its traditional Veterans Day parade this year, even in the face of COVID safety measures. Typically, students march before the crowd of veterans, carrying posters and reciting messages of honor and thanks. This year the veterans formed the parade and processed along the route by vehicle as students cheered, applauded, and brandished homemade signs. Participating teachers and students were Mrs. Tyler, Kaitlin Cole, Rakiya Daniels, and Mrs. Poe.



(photo left)
Braylee Garrard



(photo right)
Semarion
Cooley



Chansity Reed

Ole Miss
**BRING YOUR VISION.
BUILD YOUR LEGACY.**
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
in Grenada

Financial aid to help you cover the cost
An application process we'll walk you through

APPLY NOW
**IT'S NOT
TOO LATE**
FOR *Spring* 2021

Ole Miss | Grenada

1060 Avent Drive in Grenada
on the Holmes CC-Grenada Center campus

For more information, contact Associate Director Jessica Coker-Hughes
by phone at (662) 227-2348 or by e-mail at jlcocker3@olemiss.edu

OUTREACH.OLEMISS.EDU/COMMUNICATOR

GHS Charger Volleyball



(back, l to r) Sadie Stockton, Harlee Williams, Lora Ryals, Lydia Barefoot, Jessie Muilwyk, Brooke Thomas, Rylee Murphree, Kira Finkley, (front, l to r) Leah Kinard, Allison Escobedo, Ella Brooke Horan, Olivia Lashley, Alexa Milholland, Meredith Meriwether, Kate Blankenship
Not pictured: Sydney Albritton, Briella Simmons, Amelia Taylor, Harlee Williams, Kelsey Federick

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Their first season was hampered by COVID restrictions, and their coaches had no experience coaching volleyball. And yet, against all odds, the Lady Chargers volleyball team completed its first season with a winning record of 11-4.

The team's goal was to make the district playoffs the first year, and they did. Though they fell in the first round to Neshoba Central, the Lady Chargers set a high team standard and built a talented roster of future players.

Head coach Collin Ray and assistant coach Cameron Tawater were both selected from the GHS football staff to lead Grenada's first girls volleyball team. When the program was announced early this year, the coaches fielded great local interest.

Team try-outs were set for the spring but were pushed back due to the school shutdown. That didn't dampen enthusiasm for the new sport.

Coach Ray said 109 girls showed up for try-outs over two days during the summer. To help with the selection process, Ray and Tawater sought advice from the volleyball program at Mississippi State, which sent coaches to Grenada to help identify the most promising players.

Twenty girls from grades 9-12, along with seven middle school players, were selected.

"We didn't have a middle school team, this being our first year," said Coach Ray, "but we wanted to keep some of those girls and let them get some practice time to build for the future."

Ray said that once the program has some experience under its belt, they plan to organize a middle school girls volleyball team.

The junior and varsity squads practiced and conditioned over the summer as Ray and Tawater learned the finer points of volleyball. By their first match on Aug. 24, the girls were ready to take the court, hosting Winona in the GHS gym. They won handily and went on to clench victory in matches throughout north Mississippi, including Okolona, Columbus, and Cleveland.

Coach Ray said the team was gratified by all the support from parents and boosters. Due to COVID restrictions, tickets were sold only to participants, but Ray believes they would have seen a packed gymnasium under normal conditions.

Ray and Tawater agreed the girls played great in their first season, but the program has a lot of work to do to prepare for some of their most difficult opponents in the 5A district, including New Hope and Lake Cormorant.

"Some of these schools have strong, established volleyball programs," he said. "It's relatively new in our part of the state, but there are several schools that have been playing volleyball for years."

The Lady Chargers continue post-season practices, including strength and conditioning training on the new sand court behind the softball field. The coaches plan to hold try-outs for next season's team in the spring.

As for the two rookie coaches. "We've both learned a lot," Ray admitted. "I believe we discovered different ways to approach the game that will help us in the future."

Grenada School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristics protected by law in any of its policies, practices, procedures or program operation. Grenada School District is an equal opportunity employer.
For inquiries regarding this policy on discrimination contact: Title IX Coordinator, Mrs. Kim Ezell; ADA/504 Coordinator, Dr. Lyle Williams; Grenada School District, 253 S. Main, Grenada, MS 38901; 662-226-1606



LANDMARK REALTY

www.landmarkgrenada.com
662-226-4454

Grenada Lake CHARTERS

197 Scenic Loop #333 • 662-227-9210
www.grenadalakecharters.com

"FISH WITH US"
GSD Student of the Month
Keelin Bender



