

High school volleyball: North preview

By [Mike London](#) [Email the author](#) | [twitter](#) Published 11:14 pm Tuesday, August 13, 2019



North Rowan volleyball

Coach: Josh Yoder (1st year as head coach)

Key returners: Junior captains Roziah Ellis and Bella Smith

Key loss: All-county McKenzie Shoaf

2018 record: 0-18, 0-16 1A Yadkin Valley Conference (9th)

Playoffs: None

By Mike London

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SPENCER —North Rowan has dropped its last 42 volleyball matches, has no seniors on the roster and has no one taller than 5-foot-7.

That's a lot to overcome, but coach Josh Yoder is enthusiastic about the upcoming season.

Maybe he's crazy, but maybe he's not. There's nothing to lose and everything to gain for the Cavaliers. One win would be a step in the right direction. That's not a terrible position to be in.

"With no seniors, this season is going to really be about building this team for the future," Yoder said. "It's going to be about getting better every game and making our opponents have to work hard if they're going to beat us."

Yoder is a native of Ohio, but his family vacationed in the Carolinas. He grew to love the area.

He's a social studies teacher. When North had an opening in his field several years ago, he applied, got an interview and was hired.

He has a sports background, but he didn't coach anything until last year. His priority was getting settled in as a teacher.

Last season, he was named as the assistant volleyball coach for the Cavaliers and gradually took on a co-coaching role alongside head coach Lydia Allen.

Now it's Yoder's team. There are things he likes about it.

"We've got girls who are versatile, a lot of girls who are interchangeable parts and that's going to help with our rotations," Yoder said. "We're not the tallest team and we don't have the club players that some other

schools have, but we have some good athletes and we have three experienced players. We also have team chemistry. These girls get along and they work together well."

Bella Smith, a junior who suffered a broken arm last season, is back healthy. The 5-7 Smith might be manning the middle for the Cavaliers. She's a strong hitter.

Serving as a co-captain along with Smith is 5-5 junior Roziah Ellis. She's listed on the roster as an outside hitter, but she can play just about anywhere.

The third Cavalier who is a returning player is sophomore Sage Jensen, a defensive specialist.

North has three freshmen — Chloe Stoner, Kiasia Wallace and Jaylah Bethea — who are going to help the varsity right away.

Stoner, an outside hitter, is probably the most advanced.

"I'm really happy with how she's playing," Yoder said. "Great person, and she's not afraid."

The team also includes juniors Tiana Turner, Zoe Eaborn, Madisyn Smith and Anna Everhart, Smith and Everhart are the most likely setters.

The Yadkin Valley Conference has subtracted West Montgomery (West Montgomery and East Montgomery have combined into Montgomery Central) but has added Chatham Central.

"It's a pretty strong 1A league," Yoder said. "Gray Stone, Uwharrie Charter, North Stanly and South Stanly were all good last year. We're

scrimmaging some tough teams, and that experience is going to help us in our conference."

Besides the 18 league matches, North Rowan will be taking on non-conference opponents Thomasville and A.L. Brown. There's no match scheduled with Salisbury, the Cavaliers' biggest rival, or with any of the other Rowan programs.

The season gets started on Aug. 20 when the Cavaliers travel to Albemarle for a YVC matchup

"We jump right into conference play," Yoder said. "We're looking forward to it."