



25 GIRLS TENNIS PLAYERS TO WATCH in 2021



Iliana Armbrust

ILIANA ARMBURST, SALINA SOUTH

Armburst heads into her senior season after a two-year doubles partnership with Alexxa Nunemaker. The duo set a school record with 35 victories and finished third in Class 5A doubles, the best state finish by a Cougar tandem since 1992. Armburst and Nunemaker went 61-10 the past two seasons, taking ninth at state in 2019. Armburst, who qualified for state in singles as a freshman, will try to make her fourth state appearance after winning regional and Ark Valley-Chisholm Trail Division I titles a year ago.

KAYLA BABCOCK, BUHLER

Babcock will start her junior season with a new doubles partner after teaming with 2021 graduate Alexis Hutton to finish fourth in Class 4A. The Crusaders won a regional title and finished third at state as Babcock and Hutton finished the season at 20-10. Coach Matt Babcock said his early plan is to pair Kayla with Olivia Frederick, who was quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure two days before regionals and unable to compete in the 2020 postseason.



Kayla Babcock



Reagan Boleski

REAGAN BOLESKI, KAPAUN MT. CARMEL

Boleski starts her senior season as the Class 5A singles favorite after finishing third as a freshman and second each of the last two seasons to former teammate and current Wichita State freshman Clara Whitaker. All of Boleski's losses in her 26-4 junior season came to Whitaker, the fourth player in Kansas history to win four state singles titles. Boleski has a 74-14 career record in high school, and will try to help last year's runner-up Crusaders regain the 5A team title they won in 2019.

EMILY CHIASSON, BLUE VALLEY NORTHWEST

Chiasson will be looking to navigate this season without her multiple-year doubles partner, Rhea Desai. Chiasson enjoyed a breakout sophomore season with Desai going 17-3 after a 16-15 freshman campaign. Chiasson and Desai gelled as a tandem for the Huskies at the end of the 2019 season. The duo took a 10-11 record into the state tournament but battled their way to a sixth-place finish. They improved their regular season record last year, holding a 12-2 mark and the top seed in their regional. Chiasson and Desai showed their determination again when they dropped the opening set 6-3 in their state doubles consolation final against Sophia DeSimone and Sree Mylavarapu of Blue Valley. They came back with 6-2 victories in two straight sets to take third at state.

LILY CONRAD AND ELLA GRAHAM, WICHITA COLLEGIATE

The senior tandem of Conrad and Graham enter their final season as reigning Class 4A doubles champions after defeating Circle's Lanna Chase and Kenzi Gillispie in the 2020 title match to finish 17-1. After an early loss to Salina Sacred Heart's Isabella Matteucci and Katherine Weiss, Conrad and Graham evened the score, and dealt 5A champions Emma and Sarah Sinclair of Andover their only loss. Conrad's portion of the title came after she finished second in 4A doubles with Sallie Lair, while it was Graham's first trip to state.



Ella Graham & Lilly Conrad

GRACIE FOSTER, HUTCHINSON

Foster, a senior, enters her third season as Hutchinson's lead singles player after winning Class 6A regional titles each of the last two years. She finished 24-7 as a junior as the Salthawks qualified their entire team for state. Foster earned a first-round victory at state last season after falling in the opening round as a sophomore. Her singles record the last two seasons is 43-19. A trip back to state would be Foster's fourth, as she advanced in doubles as a freshman with Emilee Railsback.



Gracie Foster



Elyssa Frieze

ELYSSA FRIEZE, CHAPMAN

Despite losing two weeks of last season because of COVID suspension for all of Chapman's athletic programs, Frieze still put together an impressive freshman campaign in 2020. Frieze posted an 18-2 record that included an undefeated regular season. She wound up third at her Class 4A regional and then at the state tournament, Frieze bounced back from a second-round loss to eventual state champion Isabella Sebitts of Wichita Trinity to finish fifth in the singles draw with Frieze winning four of the six games Sebitts dropped at state on her way to the title. A stress fracture suffered last spring limited Frieze early in the summer, but she is back at full strength.

BRYNNA HAMMEKE & KYLA METRO, CENTRAL PLAINS

Hammeke and Metro took third place in the Class 3-2-1A doubles last year after placing fifth in 2019 as freshmen. Hammeke and Metro won the Phillipsburg Regional and went 3-1 in the state tournament, nearly reaching the state final but falling in a third-set tiebreaker in the semis to Sacred Heart's Isabella Matteucci and Katherine Weiss. They bounced back with a 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 win over Ellsworth's Jaycee Cunningham and Stephanie Soukup in the third-place match. Hammeke and Metro finished with a 26-5 record last season.



Brynna Hammeke



Kyla Metro

JILLIAN HARKIN, MANHATTAN

The younger sister of Manhattan state champion Daniel Harkin, Jillian is putting together a resume that's just as impressive, if not more so, than her brother. In her first



Jillian Harkin

two seasons, Harkin has compiled a gaudy 66-2 record with both losses coming to eventual state champions at the Class 6A state tournament. As a freshman, Harkin finished third at state, the lone loss a three-setter to eventual champion Alisa Prinyarux of Blue Valley Northwest in the semifinals. Last year as a sophomore, she posted a 31-1 record, the lone defeat 6-0, 6-4 to Blue Valley North's Callie Flanagan in the 6A championship match. Harkin has swept

Centennial League and regional titles both season and is the top returning placer from last year's state tournament, helping lead the Indians to a third-place team finish.

BRYSON LANGFORD & GRETA STECHSCHULTE, SM EAST

Langford and Stechschulte clinched back-to-back 6A state titles in doubles, helped clinch a second straight team title for the Lancers and still have not dropped a single doubles match to any Kansas high school players. The duo holds a 45-2 record as a doubles team over the last two seasons. Langford went 28-0 as a sophomore while Stechschulte went 27-1, her only loss in a season-opening singles match against eventual 6A third-place finisher Jillian Harkin of Manhattan. The juniors, who have played tennis together at the Overland Park Racquet Club since they were 4 years old, return looking for the state three-peat in doubles and as a team, with Shawnee Mission East also winning a share of the 6A state title in 2019.



Bryson Langford

Greta Stechschulte

ABIGAIL LONG & KATIE SCHMIDT, SM EAST

For those wondering how the Lancers duo of Langford and Stechschulte stay sharp enough to go undefeated across two years of high school doubles action in Kansas, look no further than the steep competition they face in practice. In 2019, SM East had Quinci Cartmell and Bridget Epstein finished fourth at state. In 2020, Long and Schmidt nearly finished their freshman campaigns undefeated as a pair, if not for their three matchups with Langford and Stechschulte. The Lancers' No. 2 doubles team went 21-3 as they settled for a state runner-up finish and shared the glory of leading SM East to a state title as a team. This year Long and Schmidt will get the rare opportunity to spend almost every practice challenging the team that denied them a state doubles championship.



Emma Mantovani

EMMA MANTOVANI, WICHITA COLLEGIATE

Mantovani, a junior, has reached the Class 4A singles final each of her first two seasons despite not winning a regional. She won the 2019 title as a freshman, rallying past Circle's Annabelle Adams in three sets to cap a 25-9 season. Mantovani took down Adams in another three-set thriller in last year's semifinals, but paid the price in a 6-0, 6-0 loss to Wichita Trinity's Isabella Sebits in the final. Mantovani, with a 46-18 singles record, has been part of two Collegiate state team championships the past two seasons in Class 4A.

ISABELLA MATTEUCCI & KATIE WEISS, SACRED HEART

Matteucci, a senior, and Weiss, a sophomore, were oh so close to finishing last season with a Class-3-2-1A doubles state championship on their resume, instead settling for helping lead the Knights to a co-team title with Kansas City Christian. The duo posted a season record of 31-5 and survived a grueling 4-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7-2) semifinal win to reach the championship match. That match also went three sets with Matteucci and Weiss finishing runner-up to KC Christian seniors Juliet Bartels and Emma Sand after a 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 loss. Three of their five losses came to the KC Christian duo. Matteucci played singles as a freshman and sophomore, capturing North Central Activities Association titles at No. 2 as a freshman and No. 1 as a sophomore. She took 12th at state in singles as a freshman.



Katie Weiss & Isabella Matteucci



Sree Mylavarapu

SREE MYLAVARAPU, BLUE VALLEY

Mylavarapu returns for her senior season looking to build on her fourth-place finish last season, but she will have to do so without her longtime doubles partner, Sophia DeSimone, who graduated in the spring. The duo went 45-18 over the last three seasons and finished third at the 6A state tournament in 2019. Last year at state, Mylavarapu and DeSimone ran into eventual two-time state champions in Bryson Langford and Greta Stechschulte of SM East last year and in a 6-0, 6-3 loss became the only team last year to take more than a game off the East duo during best-of-three set matches in the postseason. Mylavarapu will have to take a swing at playing singles or find a new doubles partner as she looks to build on her 56-27 high school mark.

SAGE RIGGS, GARDEN CITY

Riggs emerged as the top player in the Western Athletic Conference last year, compiling a 30-6 record in her junior season. She's aiming to reach the Class 6A state tournament for a third straight season. Riggs never dropped a match against a WAC opponent last year en route to being named WAC Player of the Year. She took second place at the regional tournament at Wichita North. Riggs has racked up 60 wins in two seasons, also amassing a 30-6 record as a sophomore.



Sage Riggs



Isabella Sebits

ISABELLA SEBITS, WICHITA TRINITY

Sebits, a junior, stormed through the Class 4A singles bracket last year to earn her first state title. She lost just four games in the tournament, defeating 2019 champion Emma Mantovani of Wichita Collegiate 6-0, 6-0 in the final. Sebits also downed Mantovani to win the Pratt regional. Mantovani derailed Sebits' title bid her freshman year in the 4A semifinals, when she finished fourth. Sebits takes a 55-12 singles record into the 2021 season.

SARAH SINCLAIR, ANDOVER

Sinclair and older sister Emma combined to win the Class 5A doubles state title last year in their hometown, but this year it's back to singles for Sarah. Sinclair took sixth in that division as a sophomore, winning the Emporia regional on her way to a 28-9 record. She was 12-7 in singles with a regional runner-up finish as a freshman. The Sinclairs defeated another sister duo, Bishop Carroll's Heidi and Hope Lubbers, 6-2, 7-5 in the 2020 championship match, completing the state bracket with four straight-set victories.



Sarah Sinclair



BRYNN STEVEN, BISHOP CARROLL

Steven, a sophomore, is the top returning player for reigning Class 5A champion Bishop Carroll. She finished 22-9 and fourth in 5A singles. All of her losses came to the top three finishers at state: Kapaun's Clara Whitaker and Reagan Boleski, and Carroll teammate Paige Stranghoner. Steven, who also finished fourth at regionals behind the same trio, lost just eight games in her first two state matches before falling to Whitaker in the semifinals. She won a tiebreaker from Stranghoner in the third-place match before losing in three sets.

Brynn Steven

GRACE UNRUH & LAUREN SWEENEY, SEAMAN

After playing doubles with different partners in 2019, Unruh and Sweeney joined forces last year and had a banner season. The duo compiled a 32-3 overall record, capturing City, Centennial League and Class 5A regional championships. Their bid for a Class 5A state championship ended in the state semifinals with a 6-2, 6-4 loss to eventual state champions Emma and Sarah Sinclair of Andover. They wound up finishing fourth at state, suffering two of their three losses on the season at the state tournament. Unruh, a senior, also posted a 30-5 record in doubles as a sophomore, teaming up with Emma Biggs to win city and regional titles and place seventh at state. As a freshman, she went 27-5 in doubles play with Emma Dowd, who was Sweeney's doubles partner in 2019 when the duo also qualified for state.



Lauren Sweeney & Grace Unruh