

2009 Pre-Season Century Club National Top 100 Rankings



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Emily Juhl hopes to lead Sacred Heart to state and national glory this fall. Photo by www.arcticferret.com

New for 2009, we will present our pre-season National Top 100 rankings in waves of 25, starting with the top 25 teams in the land. Once we have completed revealing the top 100 teams plus those on our Honorable Mention list, we will publish the complete list in one article.

Nationally-Ranked Teams 1-25

1. **Sacred Heart** (Louisville, Kentucky)

Last year's record: 29-10; 2008 final ranking: 20

The Valkyries haven't been to the 16-team, one-class Kentucky state tournament often and have only one state title, in 2003, to their credit. So why do we pick them to be top dog nationally in a Top 10 filled with defending and many-time state champions?

Call it a hunch.

Eric Garvey's team returns 13 varsity players from last year's squad, which had a strong showing at the Mother McAuley Nike Challenge and defeated state and national power **Louisville Assumption** in the regional final before falling to **Mercy Academy** in the state championship match. Among the players back are two studly outsiders, **Emily Juhl** and **Kelsey Dunaway**, two great setters, **Caitlin Dotson** and **Colbey Cameron**, and the best back court east of the Mississippi, **Ashley Potts**, **Shelby King** and **Katy Potempa**. The team isn't tall, with no player approaching 6-0, but it is very skilled in all spots, deep and ultra competitive.

Mercy's win, which ended Assumption's four year reign atop the state, is yet another reason we think this is Sacred Heart's year. We know that Sacred Heart is thinking, "It's our turn."

<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->Mercy graduated a ton from last year's squad and Assumption's losses are also significant. All signs point to Sacred Heart ruling the Blue Grass State in 2008. And we all know that if you win Kentucky, you HAVE to be in the national discussion.

Sacred Heart will play one of the nation's toughest schedules in 2009. Attending the Durango Fall Classic, the Nike Challenge and the St. Joseph's Tournament of Champions, Sacred Heart may play 20 or more nationally-ranked teams during the season. If the Valkyries survive that gauntlet, there will be no question who the national champion should be come year end.