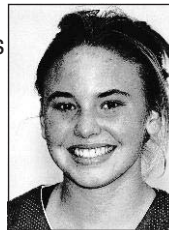


Lexi Baltas, St. Charles East

This 5-foot-6 junior guard was good all season, then really stepped up her game in the postseason. Baltas scored 22 points in a win over South Elgin, then led all scorers with 17 to knock off top-seed St. Charles North and win the regional title. She finished with team-leading averages of 12.2 points and 3.6 assists per game while making the Upstate Eight All-Conference team and her second spot on the All-Area team. Shot 72 percent at the free-throw line. "She's got the ball in her hands more than anyone, and she also plays great defense," St. Charles East coach Lori Drumtra said. "She's a complete player. She plays both sides of the court harder than anybody."

**Jenna Bell, St. Charles North**

Bell, a 5-foot-11 junior forward, made major strides this year to give St. Charles North another low-post threat with Kelsey Smith. She finished third on the team in scoring at 7.1 points a game and second in rebounding with 4 a game. "JB is a completely different player," St. Charles North coach Katie Sauber said of the transition from sophomore to junior year. "She has become a basketball player. Last year she got minutes here and there but this year she was a huge contributor for us."

**Kiley Hackbarth, St. Charles North**

From averaging 3.5 points a game as a sophomore, this 5-foot-4 junior point guard doubled that average to 8.7 this season. The 2-time All-Area selection also led the North Stars in assists at 3.4 a game while keeping her turnovers to a minimum. Her 40 3-pointers ranked second in the area. It was her feisty defense that coach Katie Sauber was most thankful for, along with Hackbarth's ability to run the offense. "She handles the ball so well," Sauber said. "Defensively she challenges everyone. She's come a long way."

**Stephanie Haugen, Rosary**

This 5-foot-6 junior guard was the go-to shooter for Rosary, finishing second on the team with an 11.9 scoring average. She made the all-tournament team while helping Rosary win the Oswego Christmas tournament. Led the area shooting 83.9 percent at the free-throw line. "She is one of the best pure shooters I've ever coached," Rosary coach Dave Beebe said. "Steph played the one, two, three for us this season, filling in for whatever position was needed for us."

**Emily Hinchman, Geneva**

Hinchman, a 5-foot-7 senior guard, made life miserable for opponents at the top of Geneva's 1-2-1-1 diamond press. She averaged 2.8 steals a game, then also was quite a threat on the offensive end with her 9.3 points per game scoring average and 3.3 assists a game. "She is just so quick up there," Geneva coach Gina Nolan said. "She has sparked our offense in so many ways through her defense, to be able to get a tip out to someone and have a score."

**Kara Lydon, Batavia**

This 5-foot-11 sweet-shooting senior will be missed at Batavia. She finished second in the area in free-throw percentage at 82.6, finished third in 3-pointers made while averaging just under 11 points a game. Lydon played on varsity three years at Batavia helping the Bulldogs improve from 13 wins to 21 to 22 this year. "It's been really fun watching Kara for three years," Batavia coach Tim DeBruycker said. "It's been fun watching that group develop."

**Katie Petrando, Rosary**

This junior forward was one of the more versatile players. She contributed a little of everything for the 21-7 Royals, averaging 9 points, 6.2 rebounds, 2.3 assists and 1.8 steals a game while earning a spot on the Suburban Catholic all-conference team, and the Oswego Christmas tournament team. "Katie had another all-around season," Rosary coach Dave Beebe said. "She was a force on the boards again and she picked up her scoring. One of our better defenders."

**Jordan Rettig, Rosary**

Only a junior, this 6-foot center already has passed 1,000 points in her career and has been on the All-Area team three times. She has many Division I schools recruiting her after averaging 18.1 points and 10.4 rebounds this season. Earned all-tournament spots at both Geneva at Thanksgiving and Oswego at Christmas. Also made the Suburban Catholic all-conference team again. "Jordan had many dominant games this season," Rosary coach Dave Beebe said. "She will play Division I basketball."

**Jaime Rust, St. Charles East**

For someone known for her defense, the Saints' 5-foot-9 junior guard contributes a lot on the offensive end as well. Rust finished second on the Saints in scoring at 9.8 a game and was a 3-point threat with 20 this season. Alas, the defensive numbers were there too: 5.2 rebounds and a steal a game. "Jaime is our defensive specialist," St. Charles East coach Lori Drumtra said. "She always draws our toughest assignment defending someone much bigger than she is, and she can defend on the perimeter too which is nice. What was nice about this year is she really stepped up her offense."

**Kelsey Smith, St. Charles North**

St. Charles North basketball will have some big shoes to fill next year without Smith, the school's all-time leader in scoring, rebounding and blocks — over 1,500, 1,000 and 500 respectively. No wonder she is headed to the Big Ten next year to play at Michigan State and made the Class 4A All-State team. After leading the North Stars to the supersectional as a junior, this four-time All-Area selection and 2008 captain finished her four-year career this season by averaging 17 points and 9.4 rebounds a game and adding variety to her game. "Kelsey developed her outside shot," St. Charles North coach Katie Sauber said. "If you leave her open she'll take that outside shot. That's one thing I've seen develop with Kelsey. Not only is she a threat inside the paint but if you leave her open she'll knock down those 10- and 12-footers."

**All-area roster**

Player	School	Pos.	Ht	Yr.
Lexi Baltas	St. Charles East	G	5-6	Jr.
Jenna Bell	St. Charles North	F	5-11	Jr.
Kiley Hackbarth	St. Charles North	G	5-4	Jr.
Stephanie Haugen	Rosary	G	5-6	Jr.
Emily Hinchman	Geneva	G	5-7	Sr.
Kara Lydon	Batavia	G/F	5-11	Sr.
Katie Petrando	Rosary	F	5-10	Jr.
Jordan Rettig	Rosary	C	6-0	Jr.
Jaime Rust	St. Charles East	G	5-9	Jr.
Kelsey Smith	St. Charles North	C	6-4	Sr.
Natalie Tarter	Batavia	F	5-8	Sr.
Bri Tye	West Aurora	G	5-3	Sr.
Taylor Whitley	Geneva	G	5-9	Sr.
Lauren Wicinski	Geneva	F	6-1	Jr.
Kat Yelle	Geneva	G	5-7	So.

Special mention

Kelsey Augustine (Geneva, jr., C); Anna Conrad (St. Charles North, sr., G); Sara Fruendt (Batavia, jr., G); Melissa Norville (Batavia, sr., G/F); Kiara Towles (West Aurora, jr., F); Devin Vaughn (West Aurora, jr., G).

Honorable mention

Sam Dudman (Geneva, jr., F); Brooke Frantzen (Aurora Central, sr., F); Katie Hatch (Kaneland, sr., F); Becca Heimsath (Batavia, sr., C); Alyssa Galvan (Kaneland, sr., C); Jasmine Johnson (West Aurora, jr., F); Tasha Lalos (St. Charles East, sr., G); Rachel Mertens (Aurora Christian, sr., G); Alex Messacar (St. Charles North, sr., G); Stephanie Pogwizd (Aurora Central, sr., G/F); Sara Rose (Kaneland, sr. G); Kara Schmier (St. Charles East, jr., F/C); Sonya Steder (Aurora Central, sr., G).

The starting five

G: Taylor Whitley, G: Bri Tye; F: Natalie Tarter, F: Jordan Rettig, C: Kelsey Smith.

Not done yet**Players to watch in 2009-10**

Jordan Rettig, Rosary; Kat Yelle, Geneva; Kiley Hackbarth, St. Charles North; Lauren Wicinski, Geneva; Lexi Baltas, St. Charles East; Jaime Rust, St. Charles East

Coach of the Year

Gina Nolan, Geneva

The winners**Conference champion:**

Geneva

Regional champions:

Geneva, St. Charles East

Sectional champion:

Geneva

Supersectional champion:

Geneva

The future**Teams to watch in 2009-10:**

Geneva, St. Charles East, Rosary, St. Charles North

— **Compiled by John Lemon**

Natalie Tarter, Batavia

Her college future is in track, as the reigning Illinois state champ in the 300 hurdles is headed to Wisconsin next fall. But this 5-foot-8 forward has had a mighty impact on the hard court the last three years as well — each one ending with a spot on the All-Area team. Tarter capped her career by surpassing the 1,000-point mark in a game Jan. 15 against DeKalb. She finished leading Batavia in scoring at 14.7 a game while also averaging 4.4 rebounds and 1.2 steals. "I think initially she was a great athlete playing basketball," Batavia coach Tim DeBruycker said. "The biggest difference is that she knows how to use her athleticism."

**Bri Tye, West Aurora**

The smallest player on the All-Area team at 5-foot-3, the senior guard has never let it stop her from making the biggest impact on the game. She led the area with 48 3-pointers this year while averaging a team-high 13.9 points and 6 assists her game. Her coach Connie Siljendahl said Tye would be, "Impossible to replace." Tye also set West Aurora's single-season assist record and was a two-time All-Area pick. "She pretty much carried the team this season," Siljendahl said. "We missed so many shots under the basket or her assists would be even better. She led us."

**Taylor Whitley, Geneva**

Geneva basketball won't be the same next year without this 5-foot-9 guard. Whitley graduates as the Vikings' all-time leading scorer with 2,094 points and counting heading into this weekend's state tournament. She averaged 20.4 this year along with 3.1 rebounds, 3.2 steals and 3.3 assists a game. The two-time captain of the All-Area team and four-time All-Area team member has led Geneva to a 104-14 record in her four years. Headed to Indiana State. "She's tough as nails and hates to come off the floor," Geneva coach Gina Nolan said. "I've been so lucky to have Taylor on my team."

**Lauren Wicinski, Geneva**

With all the havoc Geneva's guards cause, this 6-foot-1 junior post has a similar effect around the basket. She led the Vikings with 6.3 rebounds a game while finishing second on the team in scoring at 11.5 points a game. Second straight All-Area selection. "She's been such a force for us inside," Geneva coach Gina Nolan said. "The way she goes up for a rebound with two arms, she's dominant in there. She has carried us a few times. She has been invaluable to us out there."

**Kat Yelle, Geneva**

Yelle shares many of the traits as senior Taylor Whitley. The 5-7 Yelle averaged 9.3 points, 2.9 assists and 2.1 steals a game but has potential to score much more, as evidenced by a 20-point game against Elk Grove and 25 against Lake Park in the sectionals. "Kat is such a fierce competitor," Geneva coach Gina Nolan said. "She's just come on so strong. There's some games where she might not score much for us but what she does handling the ball and distributing the ball is one of those things that doesn't show up in the box score but we don't have the success we have without her."



Whitley: Leaves Geneva as all-time leading scorer

Continued from Page 1

Ruitenbergh helped Taylor make a smooth transition to varsity.

"I loved everyone on that team," Taylor Whitley said. "Those seniors always made me feel part of the team."

Now Whitley has taken on the leadership role, and it is making a difference on players like sophomore Kat Yelle, who had 20- and 25-point games last week at the Addison Trails sectional.

"I love the underclassmen on the team and try to be a leader," Whitley said.

"I look up to her so much," Yelle said. "She's a role model for me. I'm going to be really sad when she leaves. I love working with her."

Like Hinchman, Yelle is impressed not just with Whitley's basketball abilities but how she makes her teammates better.

"She's a court leader," Yelle said. "She's someone who boosts you up on the court and gets you fired up. Whenever you see her score it fires you up."

Four years of highlights

Whitley made an impact starting with her first game as a freshman against Morris, when she scored 11 points. She ended up averaging 12.9 points, 3 assists and 2 steals that year while helping Geneva win just its third regional title and advance all the way to the Addison Trail sectional championship game.

Whitley followed with an even more impressive sophomore season. She led the area in scoring at 19.6 points a game, winning MVP of the Western Sun Conference with a 21-point average in conference play. She broke the school record with 38 points in a game and scored 30 or more points four times.

By the time Whitley finished her junior year, she already held the school's all-time scoring record with 1,441 points.

A lot of points — and a lot of victories

Not only did Geneva senior Taylor Whitley become the first player — girl or boy — in school history to reach 2,000 points, she did it on a team that won game after game after game the last four years. Here's a closer look at some of the milestones along the way during the Indiana State-bound Whitley's brilliant Geneva career.

Year	PPG	Points	APG	FG pct.	FT pct.	SPG	Record
Freshman	12.9	388	3.0	NA	77	2.2	26-4
Sophomore	19.6	549	4.1	54	75	3.9	25-3
Junior	18.0	504	3.3	50	75	3.7	21-7
Senior	20.4	653	3.4	60	74	3.3	32-0*
Totals	17.7	2,094	3.5	NA	75.3	3.3	104-14

* Through Geneva's Class 4A supersectional win.

First point:	Nov. 15, 2005 against Morris
1,000th point:	Nov. 27, 2007 against Rochelle
1,500th point:	Nov. 28, 2008 against Joliet Catholic
2,000th point:	Feb. 18, 2009 against West Chicago

Most points in a game: 38, most recently this year against Rosary. Also did it once as a sophomore.

And she hasn't let up this year, going out with her best year statistically and the team's best run ever.

It's not just her own teammates and coaches who have been impressed.

"You've got to give her credit for being a productive part of their offense and team for four years," Batavia coach Tim DeBruycker said. "That's hard to do, to step out there freshman year and be productive — and keep doing that all the way through."

"She has consistently increased her scoring every year and been able to keep that program as one of the tops in the area. That's what you have to give her credit for."

Unlike DeBruycker, Elk Grove coach Ryan Kirkorsky only coached against Whitley once — and that was more than enough.

"Whitley is just a basketball player," Kirkorsky said. "She knows how to draw contact, she knows how to get in the paint. When they need a big basket they get it in her hands and she gets to the paint and either gets fouled or makes the shot or both."

Past girls All-Area captains

1998: Molly Jones, St. Charles

1999: Katy Issel, Batavia

2000: Karen Bauer, Geneva

2001: Nicole Manny, St. Charles East

2002: Lindsey Koehn, Geneva

2003: Jill Krivacek, Rosary

2004: Claire Sheehan, St. Charles East

2005: Claire Sheehan, St. Charles East

2006: Bailey Hansen, Geneva

2007: Taylor Whitley, Geneva

2008: Kelsey Smith, St. Charles North

Whitley will continue her basketball career next fall at Indiana State, which she picked over other Division-I programs such as Northern Illinois, Eastern Illinois, Cleveland State and Bradley.

"I loved the coaches, and the head coach is really intense," said Whitley, who also factored in academics for one of the main reasons, at the time of her decision.

But there's two games left to go at Geneva, two games to

be played where every Illinois girls basketball player dreams of ending her career — Red-bird Arena. She'll be on the same court next year as a visiting player at Indiana State.

"We've always wanted to and always said how awesome to get to state and now to get there is so cool," Whitley said. "We're so excited, we can't believe it. It's awesome."

The same could be said for Whitley's last four record-breaking years.