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▶ Liberty Christian sophomore Hannah Morris, a verbal commit to Liberty University for 2016.

Recreation league is just one opportunity offered through Central Virginia Volleyball, Lynchburg's largest volleyball club. The non-profit — led by Rustburg coach Kristen Hardy and Heritage coach Kelly Bryant — also offers travel teams (Heart of Virginia) each year from December through April and a developmental league

for girls who can't afford or don't have the time for travel ball.

There are other clubs around Lynchburg, like U-Turn and Won By One. Some of the girls taking part in recreation play for these clubs when the high school season ends and for a girl who wants to play in college, participating in club ball is a must.

The CVVB rec program has grown every year since beginning more than a decade ago. In 2013, for example, 26 teams took part in the spring program. This year, rec director Ben Taylor said 32 teams are registered and 321 girls, ages 8-18, are competing. CVVB has also added a boys league this year.

Roughly half of the girls are in or entering high school. Recreation gives coaches and athletes a chance to see the competition well before the season begins.

For instance, Amherst squared off against Brookville on Thursday. Heritage played a combined team from Holy Cross and William Campbell.

Hansen, who also plays tennis in Naruna, is in her fifth year of volleyball.

"I use this as practice before school conditioning starts," she said.

Hannah Montgomery, a tall freshman from Virginia Episcopal, said she's attracted to the sport because of the team atmosphere.

"In rec league, you get the opportunity to try different things," she said. "If you're working on a new serve, rec league is a great time to figure out if you'll be able to use it in a game."

Rustburg's Bree Statesman watches the competition closely. She'll remember her opponents when the high school season arrives and especially when conference play signals the start of postseason.

"I'm trying to get back in the swing of things and get the chemistry back with my teammates," she added.

Kirsti Pounci played JV volleyball for Brookville last year and even made a varsity appearance during her school's postseason run. She also joined HOV's U15 National team this past season. For a squad that lost seven seniors, she knows Brookville will reload in 2014. So, she's focusing on learning new skills now.

"You don't always have to play your position," she said of rec volleyball. "You can play other positions and learn different skills."

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#### Schedule 2014

Date	Opponent	Result / Time
8/30	at 23 North Carolina	L 29 - 56
9/6	at Norfolk State	W 17 - 0
9/13	vs. Brevard College	W 56 - 31
9/20	vs. Bryant	W 38 - 21
9/27	at Indiana State	L 19 - 38
10/4	vs. Richmond	L 39 - 46
10/11	at Appalachian State	W 55 - 48
10/25	vs. Gardner-Webb	W 34 - 0
11/1	at Presbyterian	W 28 - 7
11/8	vs. Monmouth	W 34 - 24
11/15	vs. Charleston Southern	L 36 - 38
11/22	at Coastal Carolina	W 15 - 14
11/29	at James Madison	W 26 - 21
12/6	at Villanova	4:30 ET



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Bryant said local teams also get a chance to breed young talent through the program. For instance, her Heritage team already features standout players like Chyna Carter, Maryah Sandidge and Julia Hicks. Then there's rising freshman Mara Beth Hammersmith, who is playing with her new teammates a little early.

"In the [Virginia High School League], it would be illegal to play an eighth grader," she said, "but here, it's perfectly fine."

Notable players have come through CVVB, including Rustburg's Michelle Heath (William & Mary), Nelson's Ashley Wells and Altavista senior Sydney Morris, who is headed to James Madison University.

Bryant and Hardy both said CVVB is looking to expand by buying or building a new location. Right now, the organization rents gyms at Sandusky and Linkhorne Middle, while holding tournaments at Liberty University or Sweet Briar College.

"We'd like to find something now," Bryant said, "so that we're set up when the travel program starts again."

Contact Ben Cates at (434) 385-5527 or [bcates@newsadvance.com](mailto:bcates@newsadvance.com).

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