New volleyball coach fostering fresh mind-set.

Mary Clark will be the first to admit she is a demanding person.

She sets her expectations high in her English classroom, at home on the farm and now on the volleyball court.

Clark has taken over the reigns as head coach for the Swedes this season.

Although it's her first head coaching position, Clark is not new to the coaching scene. She served as assistant varsity coach at Minden and Lexington St. Ann's earlier in her teaching career as well as leading freshman teams and junior high girls at Gothenburg.

"I have a genuine love for the game of volleyball," Clark said. "I want the girls to see that and develop that but I'm also hoping to build disciplined mechanics."

Actually, she's not hoping for the mechanics, she is demanding it.

"Volleyball is a game of discipline," she said, "both mentally and physically. You not only have to get the movements right but you have to be in the right mental state too."

So far, she said, the attitude and work ethic has been outstanding.

“The girls have really pulled together as a team,” Clark said, “and I think they are willing to fill certain roles.”

Players may not land in the same roles they’ve played before.

“We are probably going to push the number of substitutes we’re allowed each game because we’ve got a lot of position players,” the coach said. “You will see very few girls play all the way around the rotation.”

The Swedes have seven returning letter winners to build around including four with Swede all-time Top 10 statistical spots and one all-conference first-team player.

Emily Max led Gothenburg at the net last fall with 139 kills and 66 stuff blocks.

GHS VOLLEYBALL

Sept. 3—at Broken Bow (v-r-v), 5 p.m.
Sept. 8—SUTHERLAND/SOUTH-WEST (r-v), 5 p.m.
Sept. 12—GWC Tourney at Broken Bow, 11 a.m.
Sept. 15—N.P. ST. PATRICK (r-v-v), 5 p.m.
Sept. 22—MINDEN, AXTELL (r-v), 5 p.m.
Sept. 26—Hershey Invite (r-v), 11 a.m.
Sept. 29—Perkins/Chase Co. (r-v) at Grant, 5 p.m.
Oct. 3—GOTHENBURG INVITE (v), 11 a.m.
Oct. 6—LEX/MCCOOK (r-v), 4:30 p.m.
Oct. 15—at Southwest (r-v), 6 p.m.
Oct. 20—Broken Bow Invite (r-v), 4 p.m.
Oct. 24—Cozad Invite (v), 12:30 p.m.
Oct. 27—COZAD (v-r-v), 5 p.m.
Oct. 30—Valentine/Ogallala at Ogallala (r-v), 5 p.m. MT
Nov. 2 & 3—C1-11 sub-district at Lexington, TBA
Nov. 12-14—State at Lincoln

“Emily is a joy to work with,” Clark said. “It will be fun to build around her and see how the team evolves.”

With the mix of experienced upperclassmen and talented youngsters, Clark said the girls push each other to improve daily.

“I think the group gets the concept of team without I,” she said. “I just want them to come to the court every day with enthusiasm and a willingness to take risks.”

The Swedes open their season on the road at Broken Bow on Thursday and return home for a

triangular with Sutherland and Southwest on Tuesday.

The Southwest Conference tournament follows on Sept. 12 at Broken Bow.

Clark said being a first-year coach makes it difficult for her to look at the competition and predict an outcome.

Minden and Ogallala have always had strong programs, she said of SWC opponents, and Kearney Catholic's tradition will top the C1-11 district.

For now, though, Clark isn't concerned with opponents.

"We're working on passion and discipline," she said. "When we've got those figured out, the rest will come."

Members of the 2009 Gothenburg volleyball team are (*denotes letter winners):

Seniors—Kristi Block, Michelle Jack, Emily Max*, Kira Peterson*.

JUNIORS— Abby Ambler*, Ali Clark*, McKenzie Geiken*, Abie Jensen*, Joslyn Oliver*, Lindsay Schnackenberg, Janae Wiggins.

SOPHOMORES—Makayla Franzen, Erica Houchin, Leah Loostrom, Peyton Maline, Jamie Messersmith, Kersten Nelson, Kelsey Wahlgren.

FRESHMEN—Kaylee Beyea, Maddy Costello, Bailey Gibbens, Tylyn Haynes, Kenzie Hiebner,

Amanda Larson, Brooke Piester, Jacey Wiggins.