

# 2025

## AVCA Thirty Under 30 High School



### **Ainsley Schultz**

Homewood High School

9th Grade Head Coach/Varsity Assistant

#### **Career Accomplishments to Date:**

- Homewood High School 9th Grade Championship Runner Ups (2024)
- Homewood High School Varsity Area Champions (2024)
- NASA South Volleyball Club JVA Worlds 9th Place (16 Club Division)

#### **Coaching Roles:**

- Homewood High School 9th Grade Head Coach (2024-Present)
- Homewood High School Varsity Assistant Coach (2024-Present)
- Birmingham Southern College Assistant Coach (December 2023- Till Closure 2024)
- NASA South Volleyball Club - Head Coach 16's (2024-Present)
- NASA South Volleyball Club - Assistant Coach 15-17's (2021-2024)

### **What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?**

When I took my jersey off for the last time, I knew I could not say goodbye. The minute I started coaching at Birmingham Southern College I knew I wanted to pursue a career in coaching. To watch the joy and growth within an athlete stem from a sport they fell in love with is an unbelievable feeling. To build a genuine connection from player to player to coach within a program that prioritizes family and accountability; one that is not perfect, but works tirelessly to fight for one another is a feeling that can not be traded.

### **What are your career goals in the sport?**

Ultimately, my career goals are rooted in the development of the whole athlete as a person. Helping my athletes learn to find joy in the pressure, prioritizing faith over fear, growth in failure, and embracing their strengths is a goal that continues to drive me each day in and out of the gym. Tangible career goals: State Championships, National Championships in club volleyball, and I would love to explore a future career in college coaching. Time to put Birmingham, Alabama on the map as a volleyball state!

### **Which coaches have influenced you the most?**

Mellissa Gilbert poured into me showing me the importance of leadership and offensive strategies. Mike McCoy showed me at the brink of failure there is always a way to power through and find success. Mandy Burgess instilled in me the confidence to lead a program. Laura Lyle taught me the importance of genuine connection between coaches and players. Kyndall and Katie Waters-McCormack exemplified what it means to stand by your athletes and create a family culture. Grace Burgess has been a mentor to me during my first steps in coaching, teaching me how to lead a program.

### **What do you enjoy most about your coaching job?**

My favorite thing about coaching is that it goes beyond the game. It is a privilege to walk alongside athletes who fell in love with the same sport I did 12 years ago. The emotion within the game, the fast pace strategy, and watching my athletes' hard work pay off all contribute to my love of coaching; as well as the simplicity within spending time with my athletes and using the game of volleyball to teach lessons beyond the inlines of the court. What a privilege it is to be a part of each athlete's journey within the game!

