

**For Immediate Release**  
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Lucy Beckham High School

**Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Karolyn Belcher**  
Chief Academic Officer

**Dr. Joe Williams**  
Executive Director of Middle and  
Secondary Learning Community

**Anna Dassing**  
Principal

## Media Release

### **Beckham girls' tennis team wins first state title in school history**

*Piper Charney also captures individual SCHSL state championship in program's inaugural season*

**Mount Pleasant, SC** – Lucy Beckham High School has been open for less than two months, but the brand new school already has a South Carolina High School League state championship. The Bengals' girls' tennis captured the AAAA title with a 5-1 victory over Greenville in the state finals this past weekend at the Florence Tennis Center.

Two days later, Piper Charney added to the LBHS tennis program's impressive start by winning the SCHSL AAAAA-AAAA individual state title (17-1); teammate Ella DeFord finished in third in the individual bracket.

"They are both skilled athletes, who work incredibly hard," said Beckham's head coach, Lizl Kotz. "Piper plays number one for our team and her opponents are hungry to play against her. She helps raise their level of play and has always handled 'being the one to beat' so well. Piper is great at noticing when a teammate needs encouragement and steps right up. Ella, who is an 8th grader, plays with maturity and laser-like focus. She is thoughtful and a great team player. I am excited to see the places her tennis will take her!"

Before winning it all, the Bengals rolled to Region 7-AAAA and Lower State titles. They finished the season with a 21-1 record.

"I believe that performing well starts with a mindset rooted in gratitude," said Kotz. "Gratitude is a perspective changer and the antidote needed to ease the pressure some of these athletes feel. This year, in particular, many of the tournament players on the team had most of their tournaments canceled due to COVID-19. Therefore, it was not difficult to convince the players to view competition as an opportunity to feel grateful for instead of something to feel intimidated by."

"We are so proud of our LBHS girls' tennis team," said Principal Anna Dassing. "They have worked hard this season and their Bengal spirit, focus, and determination drove them to success. When you combine committed athletes, stellar coaches, and a winning spirit and attitude, you get champions."

Beckham Athletic Director Scott McInnes said that in his many years of being involved in athletics, he has never seen a better group of girls try out for a tennis team.

"They're the best team I've been around in a long time," said McInnes. "I had a couple of other championship teams in the past and I could tell on that first day that we were going to be very good. For me, it is so refreshing, especially in the middle of COVID-19. It was so nice to have athletics and to be able to celebrate outside together was amazing."

Kotz added that tennis can be a very lonely sport.

"Unless you participate in high school or college tennis, you are out there battling it out all by yourself," said Kotz. "I think it's such a great thing for these tennis players to enjoy the benefits only a team environment can provide."

During the team's first practice they couldn't even touch each other's tennis balls. Everyone was required to wear masks, have their temperatures checked, and social distance. No fans were even allowed to attend the first match.

"The girls did great," said McInnes. "I am super proud of them. They have a really good coach in Mrs. Kotz and it all starts with her. She is an excellent mental coach and that separates her from everyone else."

"Keep in mind that our team consists of freshmen and sophomores," said Dassing. "You are going to continue to see great things come from this group of amazing young women."

"As a coach and an athlete myself I of course enjoy winning but mostly I enjoy seeing these players learn life lessons through competition that I know will serve them well for the rest of their lives," said Kotz.

### **Team Roster**

The team roster is listed at the bottom of the article and should read:

1. Piper Charney
2. Ella DeFord
3. Perrin Rogers
4. Annie Wilbourne
5. Kaia Reiter
6. Lila Small

7. kayla Fergus
8. Blythe Myers
9. Kate Daniel
10. Mackie Black
11. Lilliana Iacofano
12. Kaia Hamill
13. Abby Jones
14. Ellie Gitter

For more information contact Scott McInnes at (843) 953-2900.

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.