

Warriors working on softball improvement

Written by Jake Koolbeck

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Cedar Rapids Washington has not had a strong softball team in awhile, but the Warriors continue to make strides in the right direction. After finishing last year at 5-33 the Warriors will have some work to do this season.

Washington loses a strong senior class from last year and will need girls to step up and fill their roles if the Warriors are going to continue to improve.

Despite the struggles in the past, the Warriors will look to take a positive approach into each day and continue to improve.

"Our goals this year are to keep on improving and competing daily," Coach Fanaye Wooldrik said. "Staying positive and improving daily will be keys to making us successful."

Key Losses:

Washington lost a strong offensive group that included four of the top five hitters from last year. Jordan Carr (.364, 36 hits, 19 RBI) led the graduated group that led the Warriors in all offensive categories.

Carr, Gail Barnum, Sam Short, and Jordan Pilcher departing taking 131 hits and 53 RBIs with them.

"It will be a big loss for sure, especially considering we have to replace them with some young, inexperienced players," Wooldrik said. "We are going to have to rely on the girls that played last year to step up and, hopefully, bring those others along."

Key Returning Players:

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Washington's top returning player is sophomore Bria Lenten (.303, 30 hits, 10 runs, 9 RBIs).

"Bria will definitely help us bring those other kids along," Wooldrik said.

Lenten will be the key to getting the offense going for Washington and will need to do big things for her team.

"Bria is going to do great things for us this year," Wooldrik said. "She is basically a veteran for us now even though she is only a sophomore."

The pitching staff returns and another year should toughen them up. "I think pitchers become tougher every year and I think that is true for both of ours," Wooldrik said.

Kirsten Peterson (3-18, 6.67 ERA) will be the leader of the staff and will be joined by Caiti Peterson (2-15, 5.06), who should know the in and outs of varsity pitching.

Washington could also get help from athletic sophomores Callie Cook (.254) and Hannah Schroeder (.183) who can play multiple positions and hit the ball very well.

Outlook:

Washington softball has been down but steadily improving under Wooldrik, who has done a great job in a tough situation.

Last year's team, despite its 5-33 record, did an excellent job of continuing to improve the Warrior program. The team that returns this summer should continue to take positive steps toward improvement.

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"Over the past three years we have scored more runs and committed fewer errors. If we can continue that trend it will only be a good thing for us," Wooldrik said. "Last year's group really got the ball rolling in pushing us in the right direction. This group will continue to do that."

If the Warriors continue to improve offensively, defensively and in the circle, this should be a better year for them. I see Washington being able to hit double digit wins but the Warriors are still a ways away from competing with the top dogs of the MVC.

"We can not just give teams extra outs, especially in a league like ours. Teams will make you pay for those mistakes," Wooldrik said. "If we can limit our walks and errors it will help us be competitive this year."