

## Sommer helps Lions sweep Warriors

Written by Jim Ecker

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Linn-Mar shortstop Katie Sommer was a dirty, grimy, happy mess after the Lions swept Washington Tuesday night at Franklin Field.

Her eye-black had streaked down her face on both sides. Her black-and-red uniform was covered with dirt and chalk marks. And there were beads of sweat all over her shoulders and arms.

Yup, it was another successful night at the ballpark for the all-state crackerjack and leadoff hitter supreme. And yes, she was a mess.

"Oh gosh, I know," she said with a bright smile. "I've been in the dirt.

"I do my best to try and stop everything," she explained. "You're going to get dirty."

Sommer, a 5-foot-4 dynamo who bats from the left side of the plate, had a typical night with six hits, three stolen bases, terrific bunts, ringing line drives and special plays in the field.

"She is just outstanding," marveled Linn-Mar Coach John Begley. "I think she is the best shortstop I've ever coached. She makes all the plays.

"And offensively, holy cow is she quick around the bases. If they blink, she's going to take another base."

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Washington blinked and Sommer scored from second base on a wild pitch.

Begley, 67, is the new head coach at Linn-Mar this year, but he's also coached at LaSalle, Springville, Solon and Jesup, along with numerous years at the ASA level.

"I've had some good shortstops," he said, "but she covers more ground than anybody else and makes more outstanding plays, because she's so quick. She gets the ball that other kids can't get to. That's what separates her."

Sommer hit .515 and stole 53 bases as a junior at Dubuque Senior last year. She's hitting around .600 this season with 44 steals.

Sommer and her twin sister, Kristie, transferred to Linn-Mar this year and have helped turn the Lions into winners. Linn-Mar finished 16-22 last year, but the Lions are already 18-9 this season and 13-5 in the Mississippi Valley Conference.

The Sommer twins have not done it all by themselves, of course. Maddy Ryan (13-9) tossed a two-hit shutout with five strikeouts in the first game and belted a two-run homer in the nightcap, and many other players contributed to the sweep.

The Lions appear to enjoy playing for Begley, who makes it fun but also will bench a player if she fails to back up a throw on defense.

"He's awesome," said Ryan. "I really like his way of coaching. He's really focused on having a positive attitude, no matter what happens, and just leaving it all on the field."

"His knowledge of softball is out of this world," added Katie Sommer.

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The Washington Warriors have also enjoyed a revival this season under new head coach Erin Jones. The Warriors went 14-25 last year, but they're sitting with a 17-8 overall mark and 11-7 record in the league.

### Game 1

Linn-Mar 300 000 1 - 4 9 0

Washington 000 000 0 - 0 2 2

W - Ryan. L - Bruner.

### Game 2

Linn-Mar 300 322 1 - 11 15 1

Washington 001 004 0 - 5 10 0

W - Braughton. L - Emily Oler.