

Saladino, Belz to Canada with all-stars

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Two Kirkwood softball stars have been named to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Softball All-Star Team.

Graduated sophomores Shyanne Saladino and Sam Belz will compete against the top competition in the world at the Canadian Open Fastpitch International Championship in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada on July 15-21.

Saladino and Belz, both pitchers, will join 14 other NJCAA players from around the country on the team.

Kirkwood head coach Joe Yegge, who was selected to be on the coaching staff, knows just how tough the competition will be versus international teams.

"These teams are the best in the world," he said. "We're going to have to play at the highest level to advance in the tournament. There is no room for error. If you give a team like USA or Japan too many chances you're going to end up on the losing side."

Saladino, who will continue her college career at Missouri Western State University, ranked in the top 10 in the nation in wins (25) and strikeouts (200) this year. She also boasted an ERA of 1.28.

Belz also ranked in the top 10 in wins (24) and had a 1.50 ERA. She will be continuing her career at the University of Northern Iowa.

"Both Shyanne and Sam did really well for us this year," said Yegge. "Not only were both of them near the top in the country statistically, but they brought a toughness that you expect from your team leaders."

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"It's that kind of effort that gets you selected to a top-notch team like this. To have two players make the squad speaks volumes for our program here at Kirkwood."