

Spencer, Kaste, Thornley join softball league

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 21 March 2017 04:47 - Last Updated Tuesday, 21 March 2017 05:02



Jaclyn Spencer from the University of Northern Iowa, Miranda Kaste from Kirkwood and Chelsea Thornley from Webster University in St. Louis are the latest college athletes to join the new Iowa Women's Softball League for this summer.

There are now 38 players in the league, which has been formed by the Metro Sports Report as the only summer collegiate fast-pitch softball league in Iowa. The goal is to have four teams with 12 or 13 players apiece, so we're getting close.

Spencer, currently a freshman at UNI, enjoyed a remarkable high school career at Waterloo West. She was a three-time all-state selection and a four-time all-conference pick at Waterloo West, where she starred as both a pitcher and a hitter.

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Spencer had a career batting average of .489 with 39 home runs and 180 RBIs. She compiled a 49-34 record as a pitcher with 691 strikeouts in 560 innings in five years on the varsity.

Spencer has continued to be a dual threat at Northern Iowa. She's currently hitting .278 with two home runs and eight RBIs, and has a 5-4 record and 2.27 ERA in the circle with 60 strikeouts in 52.1 innings.

Kaste, who played at Muscatine High School, has been at Kirkwood for two years but has not been able to take the field in a varsity game while recovering from a broken leg. She is a talented middle infielder and was ticketed to become Kirkwood's starting shortstop before getting hurt.

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Kaste could start playing for the second-ranked Eagles in the next few weeks and she plans to play in the Iowa Women's Summer League after the college season is over.

Kaste was an all-conference shortstop at Muscatine High School in 2014 and 2015, hitting better than .400 both years. She helped Muscatine place fifth at the Class 5A state tournament in 2014 and finish with a 39-5 record.



Thornley, who is from Clinton, Mo., is a junior at Webster University, which is an NCAA Division III school in St. Louis. She plans to work as an intern in Des Moines this summer and is looking forward to playing in the Iowa Women's Softball League.

Thornley was a three-time academic all-state selection in high school and was named to the all-conference, all-district and all-region teams during her career. She has continued to receive academic honors in college and has been named her conference's Pitcher of the Week three times.

All told, 18 different colleges have at least one player in the league. The list includes Kirkwood, UNI, Coe, Mount Mercy, Luther, Wartburg, Waldorf, Illinois State, Indian Hills, Loras, South Dakota State, Upper Iowa, DMACC, Western Illinois, Southeastern Community College, Indiana State, Ellsworth and Webster.

Kirkwood has the most players in the program with nine. There are four players apiece from Coe and UNI.

In addition, the 38 players hail from 29 different high schools. Solon leads the way with four former Spartans in the program and Kennedy has three graduates in the league.

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The season will consist of 10 doubleheaders on Sunday afternoons, beginning on Sunday, May 28 and running through Sunday, July 30. All of the games will be played at Kirkwood Community College and Coe College in Cedar Rapids, beginning at 2 p.m. each day.



Here are the 38 players who have joined so far:

1. Erin Kuba, Indian Hills (CR Jefferson)
2. Peyton Baskerville, Mount Mercy (CR Kennedy)
3. Tianna Drahm, Northern Iowa (CR Kennedy)
4. Lexi Kinnaird, Kirkwood (Clear Creek Amana)
5. Maddy Ryan, Coe (Linn-Mar)
6. Mallory McArtor, Coe (Mid-Prairie)
7. Taylor Nearad, Kirkwood (Solon)
8. Bria Lenten, Loras (CR Washington)
9. Tawny Menster, Mount Mercy (Anamosa)
10. Maddie Hansen, Kirkwood (CR Jefferson)
11. Megan Bonnett, Luther (IC Regina)
12. Morgan Frost, Kirkwood (Don Bosco)
13. Taylor Kurtz, Waldorf (Mid-Prairie)
14. Haley Jones, Coe (Waterloo West)
15. Morgan Goedken, Wartburg (IC Regina)
16. Alyssa Wiebel, Illinois State (Benton)
17. Monika Bevans, Kirkwood (Solon)
18. Ali Herdliska, South Dakota State (Solon)
19. Erin Drahozal, Upper Iowa (Xavier)
20. Emily Ira, Western Illinois (Solon)
21. Sydney Robertson, DMACC (Vinton-Shellsburg)
22. Lexi Ferrari, Kirkwood (Alleman Catholic)
23. DoniRae Mayhew, Kirkwood (Bettendorf)
24. Morgan Christner, Illinois State (New London)
25. Paige Timmerman, Luther (CR Kennedy)
26. Megan Kublik, Kirkwood (Wilton)
27. Morgan Smith, Southeastern CC (Davenport North)
28. Gabi Carter, Indiana State (Kirkwood/CR Prairie)
29. Taylor Bell, Waldorf (Madrid)
30. Brittney Roby, UNI (DMACC/Twin Cedars)
31. Brooke Craig, UNI (Waterloo Columbus)
32. Abbie Young, Ellsworth (AGWSR)

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- 33. Hannah Onken, Wartburg (Greene County)
- 34. Kasiah Ehresman, Coe (Lynnville-Sully)
- 35. Bradi Yost, Ellsworth (Aplington-Parkersburg)
- 36. Miranda Kaste, Kirkwood (Muscatine)
- 37. Jaclyn Spencer, UNI (Waterloo West)
- 38. Chelsea Thornley, Webster University (Clinton, Mo.)

Anyone interested in joining the league is strongly encouraged to register now and reserve a spot, even if they have not finalized their plans for this summer. The \$100 player fee will be refunded if they are unable to play, with no questions asked.

The entire registration process can be handled on-line. Simply click on the link to the registration form that appears with this story.

The Metro Sports Report hopes all players will attend all of the games, but the company will certainly understand if a player needs to miss a few games due to a job commitment, family function, vacation or any other reason.

The league will use a continuous batting order with free defensive substitution, to make sure the playing time is as equal as possible for everyone.

Please contact Metro Sports Report president Jim Ecker for more information at Jim.Ecker@MetroSportsReport.com or by calling (319) 390-4236.

Scholarships are available. All anyone has to do is ask.

The four gold medal sponsors for the Iowa Women's Softball League are Ironside Apparel, Construction Materials, Emil's Hideaway restaurant and Hawkeye Convenience Stores. Play It Again Sports of Cedar Rapids is a silver medal sponsor.