

Athletic Notes

The
1994
Lady
Braves
Softball
Team



The 1994 Lady Braves softball team are, front row from left, Kim Hetherington, Anita Gaskins, Michelle Lonsway and Felecia Corprew. Back row, from left, are Mandy McCain, Leigh Ann Osborne, Michelle Mitchell, Lori Paratore, Billie Rae Pullen and Jennifer Murden. Not shown are Missy Bedwell, Tracy Bennett, Heather Britt, Meredith Davies and Judy Enteman. —Photo by Cal Bryant

Girls' softball squad has solid foundation

By CAL BRYANT

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It hasn't been long ago that the word "soft" perfectly described Chowan College's women's softball team.

The Lady Braves were getting pounded at each and every turn—both on the field and on the recruiting trail.

Enter Jack Goldberg.

Goldberg, Chowan's veteran Sports Information Director, was handed the job of leading the Lady Braves on the diamond and following a dismal rookie season in 1991, he began to turn things around. A solid recruiting class that year coupled with a new-found energy by the young ladies already involved in the once-struggling program set the table for a school record of 28 victories against only 12 losses during the 1993 campaign.

"We've built a foundation the past two years and now with a great group of talented freshmen, the walls can start coming up," quipped Goldberg, the 1993 Coach of the Year inside the NJCAA Region 10 ranks.

"Now, we've moved on to NCAA Division II and I'm hoping to make it a smooth transition into a four-year program. I'm excited about the competition we've got scheduled and I feel confident that we can be competitive."

Goldberg counts five returning starters who will

form that solid foundation.

Sophomore flame-thrower Mandy McCain (11-5 last season with 46 strikeouts and a 1.67 ERA) tops the list of returnees. She is joined by fellow sophomores, hurler Leigh Ann Osborne (9-5, 1.35 ERA), and the slick-fielding Meredith Davies, who led the team last year in fielding percentage (.944) where she committed only two errors.

"Mandy is the type of athlete a coach can build a program around," admitted Goldberg. "She's a tough competitor who hates to lose and before she's done here at Chowan, she will rewrite the record book.

"Leigh Ann has made great strides in her pitching mechanics since last year. She's not a thrower anymore, she is now a pitcher and I look for her to be one of the keys to our possible success.

"Murph (Davies) is undoubtedly the best centerfielder I've ever seen," continued Goldberg. "She has loads of God-given talent and a cannon for a throwing arm. With an added year of experience, look for Murph to be a force in the outfield."

Goldberg will also be counting heavily on the services of a pair of junior returnees, infielder Billie Rae Pullen and outfielder Anita Gaskins, a product of West Craven High School.

"To help the team, Billie Rae is moving from shortstop to first base," Goldberg stated. "But that's the type of person Billie Rae is. Sure, she's a fierce competitor with a great glove and a strong arm, but most important of all, she is a true Lady Brave.

"Anita wasn't recruited, but she walked on and through her endless work habits, she earned a starting role in rightfield and she is still anchored there. She's our vocal leader and the sparkplug of the team.

"When you think of the work student/athlete, these five returning starters epitomizes that phrase," added Goldberg. "Four of the five have maintained a 3.0 or better grade point average which landed them on the Dean's List. In my opinion, that's where you start — providing leadership in the classroom and that carries forth onto the softball field."

The fourth-year Lady Braves skipper also has the services of a pair of returning lettermen, sophomores Felecia Corprew and Judy Enteman.

"Felecia is the quickest player on the team and being a utility fielder, she gives 110 per cent no matter where you put her," stressed Goldberg. "Judy saw limited playing time last season, but

due to her stepping up her work habits over the off season, she can definitely help us in our pitching rotation this season."

As the talk turned to the talented group of eight freshmen that dot this year's roster, Goldberg's eyes lit up like an over-decorated Christmas tree.

"With the abundance of talent and their eagerness to prove themselves, those freshmen lend the perfect blend to this year's team," smiled Goldberg.

Goldberg's recruiting efforts brought in five girls from Virginia which included All-State catchers Michelle Mitchell and Melissa Bedwell.

Norfolk's Jennifer Murden, who was tabbed as the Tidewater Independent Conference Player of the Year, is also a gem in Goldberg's core of freshmen.

"Jennifer has tremendous range and a strong arm from the shortstop slot and has the potential to be an excellent pitcher," stressed Goldberg.

Two more Virginia high school MVPs, Lori Paratore and Tracy Bennett, are both expected to make major contributions.

"Lori is one of the hardest workers on the team who has good range in the outfield," noted Goldberg. "As far as Tracy is concerned, I had recruited her for our basketball team where she is not making a name for herself, but she can play softball as well and has the potential to be an overpowering pitcher."

Leaving no stone unturned, Goldberg also landed a pair of excellent freshmen recruits from Florida, All-State performer Kim Hetherington and All-District standout Michelle Lonsway.

"Kim was the starting shortstop at her high school for three straight years, but she's making the shift over to third base at Chowan," pointed out the coach. "She is cat-quick and has a gun for an arm.

"We've got Michelle penciled in as a n outfielder, but she also has the tools to become a pretty good pitcher."

Hoke County native Heather Britt rounds out the Lady Braves' freshman class.

"Heather is a fundamentally sound infielder that comes from a strong athletic family," added Goldberg.

Another area which Goldberg feels is strong this season is the two volunteer assistant coaches that will aid his efforts.

"Tim Wilson and Shane Crandell have both brought their enthusiasm and hard work ethic to our team and that has allowed me the time to work on the entire program," closed Goldberg.

Chowan College — Lady Braves 1994 Softball Schedule

Feb. 27	Norfolk State University	Away
Mar. 4-5	Methodist Tournament	Away
Mar. 16	Christopher Newport University	Away
Mar. 19	Barton College	Away
Mar. 23	N. C. Wesleyan College	Home
Mar. 25-27	Ferrum Invitational Tournament	Away
Mar. 30	University of Maine (Preque Isle)	Home
Mar. 31	Methodist College	Home
Apr. 2	Mary Washington College	Away
Apr. 5	Mount Olive College	Home
Apr. 6	Barton College	Home
Apr. 8	Ferrum College	Away
Apr. 9	Averett College	Away
Apr. 10	Salisbury State	Home
Apr. 12	Norfolk State University	Home
Apr. 16	Hampton University	Away
Apr. 18	Elmira College	Home
Apr. 27	Virginia Wesleyan College	Away