

Sophomore Kim Garcia: "We never gave up."

Chowan softball: Always faithful

Always faithful. The Lady Braves of Chowan said this year's 29-3 record, that set a school record for winning percentage, was the testament to their faithfulness to each other.

"I thought the fact that we all finally came together as a team this year and played to the best of our ability is the main reason we were 29-3," junior hurler Cindy Jo Rash said. "It was a great year."

Classmate Kim Hetherington agreed.

"I thought we had a great season and really came together as a team," the junior second baseman said. "The team unity was like having 14 sisters."

Junior Jennifer Murden said the record of the team was good, but the fact they played together so much is what made it better.

"I felt like we came together as a team and started playing together well on the field," Murden said.

Freshman Neely McCulley agreed.

"It felt great to play with such an outstanding team," McCulley said. "I enjoyed playing with everybody."

Sophomore first baseman Tracy Bennett was out last season and said she found out this year how much she missed her teammates.

"After being out for a year, I realized how much this program really affected me," Bennett said. "The girls on this team are a very special bunch."

"We fought to the end together and came out victorious," she added. "It's been a wonderful year. Good job, Lady Braves!"

That fighting spirit was also a key to many of those on the team.

"What made this team so great was nobody ever gave up," sophomore pitcher Kelly Rothery said. "We got behind on some occasions, but nobody ever gave up and that was the difference for us."

"The best part of this season was the way we came together," sophomore outfielder Heather Cahoon said. "We came back in a lot of games to win and that was great."

Another sophomore outfielder, Kim Garcia, said she was pleased with the season and felt it was more enjoyable than her freshman year.

"When we were down, we battled back," Garcia said. "We never gave up."

Junior infielder Heather Britt, whose roles included starting, pinch-hitting, pinch-running, and being a designated hitter, said she had a



Tracy Bennett slams a hit to help the Lady Braves post another victory.

By THAD WHITE

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Cindy Jo Rash and Kristina Sublett cheer on their team during the Methodist College Invitational Tournament.

good time with the team again this season.

"Playing on a team that has been this successful is something I'll never forget," she said. "In high school, I don't think we ever had a winning record. To go from that to 91 victories in three years is amazing."

Freshmen Missy Newby and Kristina Sublett said they felt the pressure of playing on a top-notch team as freshmen.

"It was tough to be in a starting role as a freshman," Newby said. "I knew there was no room for error. I couldn't make mistakes."

"The team was great," she continued. "After not winning in high school, it was a completely different experience."

Sublett said, "It was difficult at first, but I came around later in the year. Playing on this team was a much different experience than high school. I really had a good time this season."

The team, serving with Chowan College a three-year provisional membership to the NCAA, was unable to qualify for what would have been a certain NCAA regional berth.

In lieu, many looked to the Montclair State University Invitation, a tournament in which 16 of the nation's best teams clash, for their post-season competition. Unfortunately, the tournament was snowed out.

"Although we didn't get to play in New Jersey, I think with our record and how well we did, this season was worthwhile," sophomore Kim Annis said. "I think we showed how good we were."

Summing up the season, junior catcher Michelle "Mickey" Mitchell said she was satisfied the Lady Braves were as good as anyone.

"It was hard to walk off the field for the last time this year after having such a successful season and knowing we could have contended with the best teams in the nation," she said.

"Even though we weren't able to show our talents at a higher level, I know, without a doubt, we were a championship team," Mitchell concluded.



Mandy McCain (left) and Meredith Davies, two seniors who have been the cornerstone of the softball program, have watched Chowan softball rise from the ashes of a junior college to one of the most respected NCAA Division III teams in the country.

1996 Spring Athletic Awards

Male Athlete of the Year

Brian Canaday

Female Athlete of the Year

Michelle Mitchell

Men's Tennis - Record 0-11

Most Valuable Player Chuck Allen
Most Improved Sean McClafferty
Coaches' Award Chris Brown

Cheerleaders

Most Valuable Player Gwendolyn Quarles
Most Improved Melissa Matthews
Most Spirited Mia Cornell
Academic Award Heather Madren

Women's Tennis - Record 2-6 (Division III - 2-3)

Most Valuable Player Meg Jackson
Most Improved Rebecca Crouss
Coaches' Award Delka Roland

Golf

Coaches' Award Preston McElhency
Most Valuable Player Randy Stilwell

Women's Basketball - Record 6-18

Coaches' Award Judy Enteman
Defensive Award Michelle Mitchell
Most Improved Catherine Taylor
Most Valuable Player Judy Wilkerson
Dedication Award Kristen Faucette
Hustle Award Amy Norris
Spirit Award Stacey Pierce

Men's Basketball - Record 13-12

Most Valuable Player Tyrone McCreary
Most Outstanding Defensive Player Tyrone McCreary
Coaches' Award The Entire Team
Most Improved Herman Spencer

Men's JV Basketball - Record 3-13

Most Valuable Player Jeff Bean
Defensive Award Rudy Crichlow
Coaches' Award Greg Melton

Softball - Record 29-3

Golden Glove Jennifer Murden
Hitting Meredith Davies
Pitching Mandy McCain
Most Valuable Player Meredith Davies

JV Baseball - Record 3-7

Coaches' Award Mike Coplin
Best All-Around Player Dean Dowdy

Athletic Trainers

Outstanding Trainer Judy Hill
Outstanding Student Sergio Serrano

Men's Baseball - Record 16-15

Hitting Award Chris Whitesel
Golden Glove Mike Yusko
Pitching Award Chris Coombe