

Marty Wilcox steps to the plate for Team USA in Prague

BY MAILE MUNRO
STAFF WRITER

"Marty's bat is definitely a valuable asset to our softball team," said sophomore softball player Calli Pastor. "We can always depend on Marty to get that needed RBI."

At nine years old, junior softball player Marty Wilcox started training in her family's homemade batting cage in their barn.

"Her swing was so ugly I immediately thought there was no way she can be a ball player," said father and childhood coach John Wilcox '83, in an email interview. "She certainly proved me wrong."

From June 2-11, Wilcox was invited to represent the U.S. in the Jourds Softball Tournament and an Austrian invitational in Prague.

"I get to wear USA," said Wilcox. "It's so cool."

According to the press release by USA Athletes International, is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing amateur athletes the opportunity to participate in International Olympic style events throughout the world.

Sarah Cutright '13, now a Graduate Assistant Softball Coach at Indiana Technical Institute of Technology, was able to travel to Australia last summer to compete with the same program.

"It was absolutely unbelievable to play at the international level and to play wearing USA on our shirts," said Cutright.

Also, the organization allows them to broaden their educational experience.

Darrell Phipps '00, Office Manager of USA Athletes International, extended the invitation to Wilcox back in the fall based on her athletic skill and her leadership qualities to represent the U.S., Guilford College, and Charleston, W.Va. — her hometown — in a positive manner.

"I never thought I would have this opportunity," Wilcox said. "Out of nowhere Phipps asked me, and I was like yes."

Opportunities to play softball for the U.S. are few since softball was taken out of the Summer Olympic games in 2008.

In baseball, there are opportunities to play professionally in the States. Softball player's only professional option is to play overseas.

Wilcox's team will play against the Australian national team and an Austrian club team, amongst others.



Junior **Marty Wilcox** bats in a game against Roanoke College on March 12. The Quakers won 9-7. Their record is currently 19-3.

"Marty is an excellent example of the type of athletic ambassador USAAI seeks to bring into international competition," said Phipps.

Over the years, Wilcox stood out to John, who has coached hundreds of kids in softball and baseball.

"What separated her early from the other players was her strong work ethic, drive and sheer determination," said John.

"I never had to ask her if she wanted to practice, she was always asking me if I would practice her."

Wilcox's self-motivated discipline continues to impress those around her.

"You give her 100 ground balls, she wants 150," said head softball coach Dennis Shores. "If she gets 10 throws, she wants 20. If she has 58 swings, she wants 100."

Wilcox strives for excellence in every aspect, whether she is fielding pop flies or training during the off-season.

"There really isn't anything I could throw at her that she would struggle with," said Carly Hess, head strength and conditioning coach and assistant volleyball coach. "These workouts are a cakewalk if you make them that way."

"They're a nightmare if you're giving your all."

Wilcox and the rest of the softball team give it their all in the gym and on the field.

"We've really picked it up with our workouts," said Wilcox. "We're a lot more serious. We just really want it now."

As the softball team continues to strive for excellence, Wilcox looks to life after Guilford.

She said that she definitely wants to pursue a career in a sports related field.

As a business major with minors in human resources and sports management, Wilcox plans to stay close to softball.

"I'm going to get a masters," said Wilcox. "That's when I'm going to figure my life out."

While Wilcox continues to weigh her post-graduation options, but she is focused on the present: Guilford's softball season.

"She certainly brings energy and entertainment that is much needed on this team," said Pastor. "None of us can hold back ... excitement and intensity when Wilcox is fired up."

Looking into this year's NFL draft: a rundown of the possible top prospects

BY CHASE CLAUSEN
STAFF WRITER

The Houston Texans posted the worst NFL record 2-14 in 2013. There is much speculation about who will be chosen first in the upcoming draft.

Standing at 6 foot 5 inches and weighing in at 266 pounds, Jadeveon Clowney has been the favorite for American football sportscaster and NFL media analyst Charley Casserly.

Casserly, a former NFL general manager, went to four Super Bowls with the Washington Redskins. He also drafted Mario Williams instead of the highly scouted Reggie Bush in 2002 for the expansion Houston Texans.

On the NFL Network's "Path to the Draft" Casserly said, "the best talent in the draft is Jadeveon Clowney."

"(He) makes rare plays against the run, rare plays against the pass," added Casserly. "Maybe the most talented defensive end I've ever scouted."

Senior O'Shawn Bryant said that Clowney is the smartest first pick overall.

"He is beast," said Bryant. "Imagine him and J.J. Watt together."

If the Texans draft Clowney, their defense would gain credibility with two dominant pass rushers that could attack the quarterback on every snap.

Clowney tallied 162 tackles his senior year of high school. Over 29 of those tackles were sacks, forced 11 fumbles and he recovered six fumbles.

Rare for a defensive player, he scored five defensive touchdowns, while leading his Stallions to a 13-2 record. Scout.com listed him as the number one college football prospect in the nation.

After a fabulous sophomore year, critics thought his junior season was subpar at best after suffering a rib injury.

Granted, NFL franchises are not worried about his injury or his high school statistics. They are looking at his college development and combine workouts.

After a recent transaction, it looks as though Houston may strengthen their offense instead of their defense.

On March 21, Houston traded Matt Schaub, who started at quarterback, to the

Oakland Raiders for a sixth round pick.

Historically, quarterbacks have proven to be the prime focus for the number one pick. In the last 16 years, 12 quarterbacks were drafted as the first overall.

In the middle of January, Mel Kiper announced Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel as the first pick in earlier mock drafts, according to ESPN.

Arguably the most entertaining college football player, Manziel sits high atop draft boards. He used an unconventional approach with his uncanny scrambling ability to win the 2012 Heisman Trophy.

Yet, the top quarterback prospect is Teddy Bridgewater of the University of Louisville.

According to Bleacher Report, Bridgewater will be the first quarterback off the board, followed by Blake Bortles, a prospect from the University of Central Florida.

There is no denying Bridgewater's talent, but will he really be the first quarterback taken overall?

Chris Barnette '08, assistant football coach and offensive coordinator, said that Bridgewater fits the standards of the best quarterback in the draft.

"Teddy has a good head on his shoulders," said Barnette. "But, the quarterback that will put people in the stands is Manziel because he is an exciting player to watch."

With the exception of this year, the Texans normally do not lack attendance.

The Texans should choose a quarterback that will have longevity down the road, and Manziel does not quite fit this mold.

For instance, take a look at Robert Griffin, the Washington Redskins' quarterback. He moves well out of the pocket, yet still managed to tear his ACL while scrambling during his rookie season.

University of Central Florida quarterback, Blake Bortles possesses first overall potential due to his 6 foot 5 inches and 232 pound frame — practically a replica of Andrew Luck.

One issue is that he has years to go before contributing as an elite performer like Luck.

As of now, the first pick in the draft is up in the air. It could easily be Clowney, Manziel, Bridgewater or Bortles out of the picture.

The Radio City Music Hall in New York will host the draft on May 8.

STUDENT ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



CALLI PASTOR
SOPHOMORE
SOFTBALL

VS. EASTERN Mennonite
(Mar. 22)

Hit a walk-off single in the 8th inning for the win and went 3-4 with two RBIs.



MITCH ROBINETTE
JUNIOR
GOLF

AT PANTHER INVITATIONAL
(Mar. 17-18)

Earned ODAC Men's Golf Player of the Week Award. First time winning the award this season and the third time in his career.



LILLY COLLEY
SENIOR
LACROSSE

(Mar. 19 & 22)

Earned her second straight ODAC Lacrosse Player of the Week Award. In two wins she recorded 16 points, with 8 goals and 8 assists.