

SPORTS



Viking Phoebe Eley gets a hit in the Vikes' game against Bowie State. ECSU won the March 25 game 24-14.

Franklin Scott Jr. photo

Coach: team needs more student support

by Jemayne King

Littleton Parker, head football coach at Southampton High School, once said, "Win and everybody wins with you, lose and you lose alone."

This sentiments could sum up the current plight of the Elizabeth City State lady's softball team. This season the Lady Vikings are (3-17).

All wins have come within the CIAA.

Coach Tom Godwin attributes low participation from young ladies on campus as the reason for the disappointing number of losses.

"I know that there are a lot of young ladies on campus who have some softball experience," said Godwin. "I know that some of these girls are real ballplayers. There are many young ladies out there who receive Incentive Scholarships who are former softball stand outs."

Unfortunately, said Godwin, not enough students are volunteering for the team.

"We can't begin to think about winning without strong contributions from the skill positions, like the catcher and pitching staff," said Godwin. "Once that is established we can then try to

build around them."

Coach Godwin knows he has young ladies such as Janetta Norman, Malinda Keys, Sharanda Claude and Jobina Lee to thank for the success the team has experienced this season.

"The girls that I have really work hard," he said.

When asked about fan support Coach Goodwin said that the low game attendance has been a sure fire deterrent.

"I think that they should shut down various parts of campus when we play," said Godwin. "I mean, how many games have you gone to?"

On April 14th the Lady Vikes dropped a triple header to the Lady Panthers of Virginia Union, 18-9, 11-3, and 16-0.

Utility player Malinda Keys describes this season as a disappointment. However she added, "Despite the losses it's been a pleasure playing for Coach Godwin."

Sophomore first baseman Jobina Lee has the same sentiments.

"Being able to play for Tom Godwin has been a good experience," she said. "However I don't know right now if I'll be playing softball next year or not."

Senior pitcher and second baseman Rebecca Collins won't be around for another season. "I felt as if I brought a good attitude, and energy to the team," she said. "I'll be graduating and I'll miss my teammates."

Collins said the season had been a disappointment to her as well because of the losses. "They need to emphasize more teamwork in the future to be successful," she said.

Why don't more students support the game?

Some students might be alienated from softball more than other sports, according to one ECSU sophomore "because the game isn't like basketball where you can see someone run up a court. There's a lot of aspects of the game, and to enjoy you it you have to understand it, and to understand it you have to study it.

"You also have to be a supporter of female athletics to want to go to the games, and unless you have a friend playing, you might not want to go," the student added.

"The facilities (the bleachers and softball field) aren't the best either. The players could also stand to use some

uniforms. There's a lot of things you could examine for why they aren't winning. Not winning games is a sure-fire recipe for not having fans out there."

Dr. Edward McLean, Director of Athletics, pointed out that low student turn-out to watch softball games is related to the time that games are held.

"We have to take in mind that when we are playing softball a lot of students are in class, at one o'clock in the afternoon," he said. "We can't schedule them at other times because of the darkness."

Although games are broadcast on the radio, McLean said that this time of year students are more interested in football and basketball "and the emphasis is on getting away from campus. That's a variable we must keep in mind."

McLean said that inclement weather has been another factor that might influence fan support.

"A couple of times it's been freezing when the games were going on," McLean said. "You have to be a star supporter to be out there and cheer softball when it's freezing cold."