COACH SCHROEDER
E-MAIL: teamilsoftball@aol.com
HOME: 309-378-4357
CELL: 309-825-4352

COACH THACKER
E-MAIL: athacker@blueridge18.org
CELL: 309-242-8030

2010 PLAYER ROSTER

Staci Gardner  Jordyn Fones  Addie Howe
Casey Thomas  Jade O’Neal  Reanna Fink
Brooke Palmer  Tierney Riddle  Tenille Perring
Lydia Plunk  Kristan Maxwell  Morgan Delaney
Devin Houser  Paige Weidner  Brandi Wain
Marcie Crawford  Jordan Ryan  Katie Tobin
Bethany Ash  Cassidy Nelson  Kadieshe Balzai
Hillary Foster  Jordan Wheeler  Paige Clarke
Kalyn Reynolds  Melinda Wilson
Hannah Mattingly  Jacqueline O’Neal

2010 TEAM MOTTO

“We will conclude our long journey together, with one final step toward success.”

PACKET REVIEW

All parents are asked to review the player packet with their daughter prior to the season, as team and school policies concerning your daughter’s participation is provided. Please complete all attached forms in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in loss of playing time.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to another exciting season of Lady Knight Softball.

It is amazing, how expectations shift from season to season based on the previous year’s success. It is understandable; however it has little meaning, as we prepare for this new season. At this time, we have 28 young ladies that desire to get better and we expect them to execute and prepare themselves for a very competitive schedule at both the varsity and junior varsity levels.

Last season the varsity players found the meaning of teamwork, as they advanced to the Elite 8 at season’s end. Again, it is important that this team places its focus on each other and the goals they have set as a team, not as individuals. Effort and preparation for this challenge will be key as improvement will be our major concern. Success will not be measured by wins or loses, but how we support each other. This also includes us as coaches, as we have goals too. As this year’s team motto implies, “we hope to make a step toward success, but this can only be accomplished together.”
FIRST PRACTICE
The team’s first practice session will be held on Monday, March 1, 2010. It will likely be held in the gym, as the weather usually does not cooperate in the early days of each season. Each player must have a physical on file in the office and have all player fees paid prior, to be able to participate in this and all following practice sessions. Failure to do so, may affect the participant’s playing time. The first week of practice will focus on conditioning, so if this is a concern, it is highly suggested that each player includes a conditioning program during their preparation for the new season.

FIRST GAMES
The new season for the varsity will kick off March 20 at Tolono Unity @ Noon. The junior varsity will begin their season against Rantoul March 29 at Rantoul @ 4:30 p.m.

TEAM’S WEBSITE
For those of you that are not aware, the lady knights have their own website, which provides up to date team information, varsity player stats, schedules, player profiles, player and game photos, and links to everything about softball around the state and nation. To gain access to the website, go to the school’s website, click on athletics, and then click on softball. We will also attempt to post all game cancelations on the web in a timely manner, but sometimes those determinations are made just prior to game time. http://www.eteamz.com/brhssoftballknights/index.cfm?

TEAM COMMUNICATION
Thanks to texting, team communication has improved greatly over the past two seasons. This season those that have text access will be informed of any cancelations or changes in schedule by Staci Gardner. The coaches will inform Staci of any schedule changes and she will send a text to all players. If you do not have texting capabilities, you will be contacted via phone tree. Please make sure that Staci has all the needed information to keep you updated.

ATTENDANCE AT PLAYER/PARENT MEETING
Each player and at least one parent are asked to attend the spring sports parent/player meeting, which will be announced on the school website in February. The meeting is usually held around the second or third week of February each year. Watch the school announcements and softball site for the date and time.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS
The following is a list of required and suggested equipment needs for your daughter’s participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required equipment</th>
<th>Suggested equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>glove suggested size 13 inch or larger</td>
<td>face guard/mouth guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunglasses: cheap pair, because they lose them</td>
<td>batting gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turf shoes: may also wear spikes but not suggested</td>
<td>sun screen-bug spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment bag: something to keep everything together</td>
<td>sliding pad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: bats and helmets will be provided, but if you have your own, that is great. If you plan on purchasing your own bat, make sure it is ASA approved and meets all NFHS guidelines. Helmets also must have the NOCE safety approval stamp. Any questions about bat size and weight should be directed to one of the coaches, as these differ per player, due to their strengths and abilities. Catching gear will be provided.

Due to the bitter cold conditions that the team may face during early season games, we encourage that the girls dress warm, bring blankets, and wear sweats under their uniform.
UNIFORM ITEMS
Each player will receive a complete team uniform prior to the season’s first contest, consisting of team jersey, pants, socks, and shorts. Each player should have purchased a uniform black t-shirt that is theirs. You could have also purchased a long-sleeve black turtle neck for those cold days. **Note: all lost or not returned uniform items will be charged to the player for replacement.**

SCHEDULES
At this time, the varsity schedule is complete and can be viewed and downloaded from the school website. You can obtain by going to athletics and click on schedule, then select softball from the options box. The tentative, but incomplete junior varsity schedule is also posted on that site at this time. We expect to add additional games or innings to the schedule as some schools determine if they will have a junior varsity team this season.

PHYSICALS AND MEDICAL PROBLEMS
Each player will be required to have a physical annually to participate and must have on record in the office no later than Feb. 28, 2010. Also, please notify the coaching staff of any and all medical problems or situations which may arise due to your daughter’s participation in the sport. Such items may include: asthma, allergies, past and present injuries, mobility issues, or lingering illnesses. The coaches reserve the right to limit or suspend player participation due to what they feel may be detrimental to the player’s well being or that of the team.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
If you are a nurse, EMT, trainer, or doctor, and will be attending all or some events, please notify the coaching staff of your expertise. It may be good to know who is qualified, in case of injury or illness.

TRANSPORTATION
Transportation will be provided by the district to most athletic events, unless prior arrangements are made. Review school policies regarding transportation.

There may be situations that may dictate a player requesting to ride home after an event with another player’s parent. This must be accompanied with a note of permission or request from the parent. At late notice, a parent may contact the coach via phone to make the request. A player must always ride home with an adult older than the age of 21, unless arrangements are made prior. There also may be times when the player will be required to ride the bus home from an event with the team. Parents will be notified of those required dates one day prior to the event.

PLAYER FEES
All player fees should be paid prior to the first practice session (March 1, 2010). Failure to do so will result in lost practice time/playing time. Please contact the office about your player fee status.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS-ASSISTANCE
The academic standards for participation are set by the district school board in conjunction with IHSA guidelines. We require that all of our participants meet or exceed these standards to allow participation. Each player will be monitored each week that these standards are being met.

If we notice your daughter may require academic assistance, we will do what we can to find her help, through teacher or team member assistance.

ABSENCE POLICY
We realize that each participant’s situation of absence may differ from player to player. School policies are defined when it comes to participation on game days. It requires a participant to be in attendance for classes no less than ½ of the school day. **Note: a player must be in attendance for 5th hour classes, not after the school’s lunch period.**

Absence for funerals, doctor appointments, school related appointments or sessions are considered excused absences.
Yes, there are games and practice sessions during spring break for the varsity team. Sometimes spring break creates extended absences for some players during this period, as the team policy allows for participants to go on vacation with their families; not with another family or friends. Going with another family or friends is considered an unexcused absence. Being absent during this period (excused or unexcused) may result in loss of future playing time, as someone may take your job, as you are providing someone else to excel at your position. Those on an unexcused absence must also realize that they will sit out one complete contest for each game missed. What games they sit out will be determined by the coaching staff and may or may not be in consecutive order or immediately following the offense. We ask that if you a planning on being absent during this spring break period, you notify the coaching staff prior to March 10th of your intent. We would like this notification in writing from the parent. We also require a phone call, email, or note from a parent be provided for any and all absences. This way, we know you know.

NEWS RELEASES-PLAYER RECOGNITION

Recognition is perhaps the best tool that a coach has to motivate his players for a job well done. Scrapbook material may not mean much now, but in the future years it may become a treasure. Each week I will be providing the Farmer City Journal and Piatt Count Republican about the previous weeks varsity play. We will also attempt to provide the Farmer City Journal with information about junior varsity play each week. The News Gazette and the Pantagraph will only provide scores of games following each evenings play, but may provide stars of spring notations for outstanding performances. Each player will be highlighted in the Farmer City Journal at some time during the season. These releases will be conducted by the Athletic Boosters. Individual photos for these profiles will be taken by Dawn Fones prior to the season.

PLAYER SAFETY

Parents, please review the following safety hazards with your daughter prior to her participation this season. Softball provides countless hazards that may result in injury.

1. Always look around before swinging a bat
2. Never throw a bat
3. Always keep your helmet on, while on the field of play, or until you reach the dugout area.
4. Always begin your slides early, to avoid jamming your foot or ankle into a base.
5. Always drive carefully to all games and practice sessions, we would rather you were late than be involved in an accident. Just let us know if you are or may be delayed.
6. Wear your sunglasses….you cannot catch what you cannot see.
7. Always make eye contact with teammates before throwing the ball to them.
8. During warm-ups, always throw in the same direction
9. No rough housing
10. Always stay at least 3 feet from the batting cage netting, as it gives.
11. Never put your fingers in the fencing
12. Do not wear jewelry, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, or other to practices or games.
13. Make sure that all of your equipment is in good condition.
14. Use a sliding pad, sliding shorts to help eliminate scrapes and cuts.
15. While riding the bus, stay seated and enjoy the ride, be quiet at all stops, and make sure that all equipment is secure and not rolling around. Also report any unsafe actions or situations to the coaching staff.

TEAM PHOTOS

Team and individual photos will again be taken. Notification of a date for this photo session will be announced, with photo forms being provided prior.

SPORTSMANSHIP – SELF CONTROL

Sportsmanship goes far beyond each team member. We also ask that parents, fans, coaches, and community display their best sportsmanship at all of our contests home and away. Also, all players are reminded that even if they make an error or strike out, never display anger or lack of self control by questioning a called strike or put out (that is my job, to have a cow). Most umpires accept questionable
calls to be protested by coaches, but not by players. Also, never let your opponent see you sweat. If they sense you are falling apart, they will go for your throat. Everyone may have a bad day at the plate or in the field, but compounding it with a display of anger just brings everyone down around you. Always remain positive, because you are better than that, you are a knight!!

TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL GOALS
After last year’s success, it becomes easier to set lofty goals for this season. But remember goals are just nothing more than motivational tools and should be used to primarily prepare us for what lies ahead. There is little doubt, that we will have a target on our back when it comes to conference and seasonal play. Individual goals should always be reachable with consideration for what role you are going to play towards the success of the team. There is nothing wrong with anticipation of a great season individually, but be realistic in setting your goals. Each year as a team, this program sets its sights on winning 20 games and a regional title. I do not expect these goals to change for this season, as both are reachable, but placing individual productivity over teamwork will not provide the season we all expect. Remember this as you prepare for another exciting season and thank you for being a team player!

PLAYING TIME
I totally realize that playing time is very important to the development of each individual and everyone wants to see their daughter get an opportunity to contribute as member of the team. Believe me when I say, playing time may be my highest priority, but I will not ever place an individual into a situation that I feel they cannot succeed.

At the junior varsity level, we will continue our team policy of attempting to get everyone into every contest during the regular season, while playing in JV tournaments will be dependent on game situations. At the varsity level, I anticipate on carrying about 12-13 full time players, while perhaps bringing up a JV player on occasion, due to need, them playing well at the JV level, or anticipation of that player being a full time player next season.

All full time varsity players can anticipate enough playing time to become a varsity letter winner for the season. To letter, a player will be required to obtain no less than 16 player points (or ½ of total games played) to qualify. Players will be awarded a point for each game appearance and 2 points for each game of a doubleheader. In addition, all players will receive 2 points for being a member of the IHSA play-off squad. Note: a player that doesn’t complete the season in good standing will forfeit all awards or recognition at season’s end, this includes remaining academically eligible, without being disqualified due to 2 consecutive weeks of failing grades (school policy).

And finally, playing time, positioning, or batting line-up assignments will not be discussed.

FUNDRAISING
Fundraising plays a huge part in providing the needs for any program, but perhaps none more than softball, as the equipment costs have risen out of sight in recent years. We have created several ways to help support the girls, which have allowed us to do provide some things that other programs cannot. I must admit the support that the parents and community at Blue Ridge has been terrific in support of these fundraising projects. I thank each of you for your efforts in the past and your future efforts in making the lady knights the best.

**Hit-a-thon:** the annual hit-a-thon in the past has played a huge part in raising funds of not only supporting the team, but community and charity needs as well. This year, a good portion of the hit-a-thon profits will be used to support the varsity team’s voyage to the national invitational tournament in Tennessee, as have the **volleyball concessions**, which will go to those players and families that worked those game nights. The profits from the hit-a-thon provided by non-varsity members will go to the team’s activity fund, which is used to purchase equipment and awards at season’s end.

**Softball concessions:** in the past, all profits from the softball game concessions have gone directly into the team’s activity account and will again be deposited this season in the activity fund.
State Farm grant money: these monies are deposited directly into the activity account and are provided from those State Farm employees that provide no less than 40 hours of volunteer work annually to the community or school supported team or event. The State Farm grants have allowed the team to make major purchases for the team. If you have any questions about this program, please inquire.

Basketball cookie sales: beginning with the first girls and boy's basketball games this season, the softball team will be selling fresh baked cookies at each contest. Again, the profits will go to assist the team members that work to raise money to attend the NIT.

In addition, the hit-a-thon for pledges will be held on October 25. Players however, may continue to acquire additional funds through donations up to April 1.

Again I thank everyone for assisting the girls through their fundraising efforts.

PARENT COACHING
We as coaches realize it is very difficult at times to watch your child not do well in the field or at the plate. We have all been there!!

At Blue Ridge, it does not seem to be a problem, but thought it needs to be addressed. Parent encouragement is a great thing, but when the parent begins to tell the player where to play in the field, how to bat, or what pitches to throw, we have a problem. It is up to the coaches, to determine where we want our defense, as specific game situations or what types of pitches are thrown to opponents. I am sure you understand how confusing this may be for our players, which may result in mistakes being made. We ask that you encourage, but not coach.

OPEN GYM PERIODS
I have already been asked by several players about open gym opportunities, because they want to work on their game. At this time, I will attempt to provide open gym times for the girls beginning on or after November 1. Following the holiday season (Thanksgiving and Christmas) the open gym times will be extended, as sign-up will be required due to the limited batting cage opportunities. An open gym schedule will be posted on the team website, from which the girls may choose the times they would like to attend. After their sign up, it will be posted on the web page in creating a schedule of use. There may be available space opportunities each day following school, but check the schedule posted in Coach Thacker’s room, Room 214.

Parents are asked to assist in their daughter’s attendance in chaperoning during her batting cage time. Adult supervision will be required. Many times, the batting cage will be accessible by contacting Mr. Alexander for the key. Prior arrangements are suggested.

UPCOMING SEASON COMMENTS
If you have reviewed the team’s upcoming schedule, both varsity and junior varsity, you are already aware how much of a challenge the 2010 season will be. In the HOIC, I expect us to remain competitive with everyone. I am sure, everyone realizes the challenge the team will face at the NIT, which consists of 11 state champions and runners-up in the list 40 teams. While we will be the second smallest school in the field I don’t believe I need to remind anyone, that going to the NIT is not about wins or loses, but the journey and experience that this team has been provided.

Again, at season’s end, we hope to be able to compete with anyone in the hoi tournament and in the regional/sectional/super-sectional/state tournaments. Again, on field leadership will be the key to this team’s success as I will be looking to my veterans to lead with desire, sportsmanship, and companionship in the name of teamwork. Let’s go get’em!