



Wittenberg Softball 2002 Season in Review

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CONTACT: Ryan Maurer
Office of Public Relations
Office: (937) 327-6114
Home: (937) 342-1654



SETTING THE SCENE: Injuries and bad luck combined to derail what was expected to be a strong 2002 softball season for the Wittenberg University Tigers, leading to a 12-21-1 overall record and a sixth-place finish in the North Coast Athletic Conference with a 5-8 mark. That said, there were plenty of positives that the team will carry forward.

The season started off ominously enough for the Tigers as freshman infielder/pitcher **Jen Fleming (Dayton, Ohio/Chaminade-Julienne)** was injured for the season in the first game of the spring season in Ft. Myers, Fla. Wittenberg finished the Spring Break trip 5-4-1, but after another freshman, outfielder **Jennifer Baggett (Beavercreek, Ohio/Beavercreek)**, was felled by an injury a few weeks later, the Tigers really started struggling, losing 10 straight games at one point before rallying to nearly qualify for the NCAC tournament and then ending the campaign with six straight defeats.

Perhaps the most telling statistic of the 2002 season was Wittenberg's record in one-run games. The Tigers were 3-6 in games decided by that margin.

The 2002 squad included just one senior, co-captain and shortstop **Christy Schneider (Fairfield, Ohio/Fairfield)**, and just one junior, co-captain and centerfielder **Beth Walters (Columbus, Ohio/DeSales)**. Both were important players for the Tigers, as much for the leadership they provided as the statistics they compiled. Walters, projected to be the team's lone senior in 2003, will return next year to anchor what is expected to be a much more seasoned team that has the talent to challenge for the NCAC title again.

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YOUTH MOVEMENT: Of the 13 players on the roster, 11 of whom were healthy at season's end, eight were freshmen and three were sophomores. The hope is that the growing pains of 2002, including a .240 team batting average (46 points below that of the Tigers' foes), a .299 on-base percentage (35 points below opponents) and an earned run average of 4.72 (1.78 above opponents), will quickly translate into useful lessons for 2003 and beyond.

The team's top underclassmen, as it turned out, was freshman pitcher/utility player **Norah Gillam (Canfield, Ohio/Canfield)**, who was named NCAC Newcomer of the Year. Gillam started all 34 games at a variety of positions and ranked second on the team in batting average at

.314, first on the team in hits with 33, second on the team in runs batted in with 16, first on the team in earned run average at 3.65 and second on the team in pitching wins with four.

The team leader in pitching wins was freshman **Christy Cartaya (Mason, Ohio/Mt. Notre Dame)**. And of the seven players who hit at least .200 while playing a majority of the games in 2002, three were freshman, Gillam, Baggett and second baseman **Katie Niemeyer (Findlay, Ohio/Findlay)**, and two others were sophomores, pitcher/utility player **Carmen Montgomery (South Charleston, Ohio/Southeastern)** and catcher **Kristen Hillebrand (Cincinnati, Ohio/McAuley)**.

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TAG TEAM ON THE MOUND: The name of the game in softball is pitching, and the Tigers have a lot of young arms in the lair. Hopefully, the struggles experienced in 2002 will lay a strong foundation for the future.

As mentioned previously, Gillam led the team in ERA. She was one of three pitchers to get an almost equal number of starts and innings during the season. Cartaya was the team leader in wins with five and had a 4.92 ERA in 10 starts and 14 appearances (71.1 innings). Montgomery led Wittenberg with 15 appearances, 11 complete games and 76.0 innings pitched, but she had a hard-luck ERA of 5.57.

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POSTSEASON HONORS: The Tigers placed two players on the All-NCAC first team — Beth Walters and Norah Gillam, who parlayed her final all-around play and pitching into NCAC Newcomer of the Year honors. Christy Schneider concluded her career with second-team All-NCAC honors, and Carmen Montgomery also earned second-team honors in the outfield.

Walters topped the Tigers with a .356 batting average and a .449 on-base average, numbers that placed among the best in the NCAC as well. She was second in hits with 32 and first in runs batted in with 21, home runs with three, walks with 13 and fielding percentage at 1.000. She did not make an error in 50 chances.

Gillam's accomplishments have already been detailed. Schneider finished the year the team's leader in runs scored at 25, despite missing nine games mid-season due to a concussion. She ranked second in doubles with seven and third in total bases with 34. Montgomery started all 34 games at a variety of positions, including

pitcher, third base and left field. She batted .245 and drove in 10 runs while also leading the team in several pitching categories.

Rounding things out, Walters was named first-team all-region and Gillam earned second-team honors.

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THE COACH: Becky Hall (Urbana '97) completed her fourth season at the helm of the Tigers with a 85-70-1 overall record. She was the NCAC Coach of the Year in 2000 as she guided the team to the best record in school history, its first NCAC championship and the only berth in the NCAA Division III tournament ever.

Wittenberg University 2002 Softball Results

(Record: 12-21-1, 5-8 NCAC)

Mar. 10	vs. Drew&	L, 2-3
Mar. 10	vs. Marycrest&	W, 7-3
Mar. 11	vs. Lakeland&	T, 3-3
Mar. 11	vs. Fitchburg St.&	L, 7-8
Mar. 12	vs. Emmanuel&	W, 7-0
Mar. 12	vs. North Park&	L, 0-1
Mar. 12	vs. Roger Williams&	W, 4-2
Mar. 13	vs. Rockford&	W, 10-2
Mar. 13	vs. Curry&	W, 3-2
Mar. 14	vs. North Central&	L, 1-9
Mar. 18	CUMBERLAND	W, 5-1
Mar. 20	@ Heidelberg	W, 10-7
Mar. 20	@ Heidelberg	L, 3-5
Mar. 23	@ Albion	L, 5-6
Mar. 23	@ Albion	L, 6-11
Mar. 24	@ Adrian	L, 1-5
Mar. 28	@ Thomas More	L, 6-7
Apr. 1	@ Mt. St. Joseph	L, 0-8
Apr. 1	@ Mt. St. Joseph	L, 2-4
Apr. 6	ALLEGHENY*	L, 2-9
Apr. 6	ALLEGHENY*	L, 2-6
Apr. 9	OHIO WESLEYAN*	L, 1-7
Apr. 9	OHIO WESLEYAN*	W, 3-1
Apr. 17	KENYON*	W, 5-4
Apr. 20	@ Hiram*	W, 1-0
Apr. 20	@ Hiram*	L, 1-6
Apr. 21	@ Oberlin*	W, 2-1
Apr. 21	@ Oberlin*	W, 7-4
Apr. 23	@ Denison*	L, 0-7
Apr. 23	@ Denison*	L, 4-5
Apr. 27	WOOSTER*	L, 1-4
Apr. 27	WOOSTER*	L, 4-7
Apr. 30	@ Capital	L, 0-3
Apr. 30	@ Capital	L, 2-10

* NCAC Games

HOME GAMES IN CAPS