

Raiders seek to continue success

Return playoff trip on Seneca Valley softball's agenda

By Derek Pyda
Eagle Staff Writer

JACKSON TWP — Making the WPIAL softball playoffs eight out of 11 seasons is a pretty good percentage.

But George Trew is focused on making it 9-of-12.

Seneca Valley's veteran coach returns five starters after the Raiders tied for second place in Section 3-AAAA a year ago and reached the WPIAL quarterfinals.

Outfielder Elayna Nagy is the team's top returning hitter, batting over .400 as a sophomore in 2015. Sophomore shortstop Morgan Aloï (.400), junior third baseman Maddie Schultz (.350) and senior outfielder Tori Pfabo also return.

Junior first baseman Riley Morrone started as a freshman, but was hampered by an injury last year. She is now back in the mix for the Raiders.

"Riley is a good, solid all-around player," said Trew. "We are not a home run hitting team. Most of what we do is line-drive base hits, but we have three or four girls who can hit one out.

"We have a lot of speed, so we should be stealing a few more bases this year."

Two other players who lettered last year as freshmen — outfielder Morgan Prouty and second baseman Jodi Frontino — should add some key hits to the Raiders' lineup.

Trew is looking to fill the large void left by the graduated Nikki Matz, who was the team's starting pitcher the last three seasons.

Junior Katie Hickman and freshman Claire Zimmerman will both get a shot to show what they can do in the circle.

"They're two different types of pitchers," said Trew. "Claire is a bit faster, while Katie hits her spots well. Katie didn't see much varsity time last year because we had Nikki.

"They need to take control for us and it may end up being a combo thing between the two of them."

The Section 3 slate will not be easy, especially with defending section champion North Allegheny and perennial playoff participant Shaler on the schedule. Both teams reached the PIAA postseason last year.

Trew is entering his 16th season as head coach at Seneca Valley. He has compiled an overall record of 184-102 (.643), including eight total trips to the district playoffs.

"We've had good kids who play a lot of softball," he said. "Megan Meeder has been one of my assistants for 10 years and my son, Ben Trew, has been with me for nine years. We also get a lot of help from our junior varsity coaches, Nicole Lollo and Scott Stewart. There's a lot of continuity and that helps. It's a good atmosphere."

Following are some of the top returning high school softball players in the Butler County area. Included are each player's current class and available statistics from last season:

Seneca Valley: Elayna Nagy (Jr. OF, .430 BA), Morgan Aloï (So. SS, .400 BA)

Butler: Noel Pfabe (Sr. SS), Anna Heade (Sr. 3B)

Mars: Mallory Eperesi (Sr. 2B, .460 BA), Isabelle Berkopec (So. SS, .429 BA), Maggie Olshenske (So. C/1B/OF, .500 BA)

Knoch: Avery Keller (Jr. C, .547 BA, 24 RBI), Jessi Reed (Sr. P), Celia Knappenberger (So. P/1B)

Freeport: Kristie Radvan (Jr. P)

CW North Catholic: Elayna Derzak (Sr. P, 1.72 ERA, 122 K, .511 BA), Bridget Hudson (So. OF, .400 BA)

Slippery Rock: Cheyenne Hindman (So. P, 1.75 ERA, 130 K, .450 BA)

Grove City: Jordan Malczak (Jr. SS, All-Region), Lauren Wentz (Jr. 3B, All-Region), Hannah Bumbaco (Jr. OF, All-Region)

Moniteau: Kennedy DeMatteis (Jr. P, 1.78 ERA, 177 K, .568 BA, 39 RBI), Kristina DeMatteis (Jr. C, .580 BA), Gabby Stewart (Jr. OF, .567 BA, 34 R), Cortney Claypoole (Jr. SS, .418 BA), Alyssa Dailey (Sr. 2B, .406 BA), Sara Hull (Jr. 3B, .450 BA)

Karns City: Taylor Downs (Sr. P), Alyssa Stitt (Fr.), Ashley Coon (Sr. SS)

A-C Valley: Lauren McNany (Sr. SS, All-Conference), Halee Wetzel (Sr. OF, All-Conference)



Seneca Valley's Elayna Nagy connects vs. Fox Chapel during a WPIAL Quad-A playoff game in May. Nagy and the Raiders have been perennial playoff participants and look to make some postseason noise again in 2016.
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