

# Outlaws softball squad earns a 'B-minus'

By Tom Mauldin  
Correspondent

When asked to give his Sisters High School varsity softball team a grade, Coach Dave Smith paused, took a deep breathe and said, "a B-minus."

But the second-year coach was quick to add that late-season injuries prevented a higher mark.

"The Outlaws went from the beginning of the season as a C to mid-season C-plus to a finish of a B-plus," said Smith. "The reason I give a B-minus is because towards the end (of the season) we lost four players, three players due to concussions and one had an injured knee, so we did not finish as a whole team."

"On a second note, if we were to grade each individual player by themselves, I saw vast improvements in all and we would rate the players as B."

Smith said he based his evaluation on what he and Assistant Coach Kerry Mooers saw during the course of the season, as well on comments of coaches SHS played against.

Smith said due to illness, required attendance at school functions, and "Snow-mageddon," practices rarely were attended by a full team.

"We did not see the field until the first week of our first game," said Smith.

Despite the obstacles, the Outlaws went 4-11 in Sky-Em League and 6-14 overall to double their 2016 records of 2-13 league and 2-16 overall. In 2015, SHS won two games.

"I am learning each season. Part of me wants to say we met the expectations given the amount of time we were permitted, but then again I think these girls have a lot more in them and they have not hit their peaks of what they are capable to do on the field,"

said Smith. "They know that in order to get better they need to do simple things in the off-season such as playing catch, get involved in some type of workout program, join a travel team or play another sport."

The 2017 Outlaws are graduating four seniors — Savannah Ryan, Kylie Steiner, Brenda Isarraraz and Amanda Smith. Ryan played two years with the Outlaws and is planning on attending COCC for general education, then she will pursue a career in nursing to be a nurse-practitioner. Steiner has played for the Outlaws for four years and will attend the University of Montana to study Psychology. Isarraraz will attend COCC and study fire science. And Amanda Smith will be headed to Walla Walla Community College where she will join the Warrior softball team in the fall.

Coach Smith notes the seniors will be hard to replace.

"These girls were pivotal both on and off the field," he said. "They supported their teammates in so many ways."

But the future is bright for Outlaw softball. Smith wants to get back to the "glory days" of 2010 when the Outlaws were co-champions of the Sky-Em.

The 2018 Outlaw roster will be full of returnees, including Mya St. Clair and Cassidy Ling-Scott, who were two of the Outlaws' most consistent players after not playing in 2016. St. Clair returned from a year in Texas and Ling-Scott took 2016 off.

With all-league pitcher Amanda Smith graduating, the Outlaws will hand the ball to Ling-Scott, St. Clair and Hartford.

"These players can take it to that next level," said Smith.

In addition to a dozen returning players, Smith expects at least seven girls coming up from Sisters

Middle School.

Also expected to return in 2018 are Sophia Affatati, Hartford, Emma Ransom, Denise Tapia, Graciela Isarraraz, Nancy Montecinos, Grace Maiden, Beth Anne Yount, Rylee Funk and Haley Andrews.

"The biggest thing I have learned coaching high school softball and getting a program going is you can't build it overnight," said Smith. "It takes time, effort, enthusiasm, a love for the game and being able to be an effective communicator with these young girls. I enjoy every minute of it ... there is no greater joy than to see these girls build confidence in themselves."

But before Smith moves on to the future, he said there were several surprises this season.

"We had several individual surprises. From girls playing softball for the first time, to girls playing for their second year to walk-ons and returning players," said Smith, who praised first-time players Brenda and Graciela Isarraraz, Denise Tapia, and Emma Ransom. "Ransom had some experience from previous years, but what caught my eye is her ability to hustle and work hard. These girls were determined to get the

sport down. They stayed after practice to work on throwing, hitting and catching. We saw improvement every week."

The Outlaw coach praised the work ethic and improvement of second-year players Maiden, Yount, Montecinos, Hartford and Affatati.

Looking to the future, with numbers expected to grow from next year's freshman class and a dozen returning players, optimism is high for Smith and his crew. Among his main goals include improve "our skills, to become more competitive and the most important thing is to have fun."

"I also want to do more fundraisers so we can acquire some needed equipment."

That and more time on the field, he said.

"Another goal I have is to work with the girls as much as I legally can. To put on some camps and to hopefully have some type of travel team so these girls can get the experience they need on the field," continued Smith, who coached a summer travel team in California. "The other teams in our league have at

least three to four girls playing year-round, so that puts us at a disadvantage. I know a lot of the girls want to play more, but they are just busy. A lot of the girls work during school and more so during the summer. We will work around their schedule if they want to practice more."

Smith's additional goal is to see more Outlaws attend the Fastpitch Northwest's College Exposure Tournament in Centralia, Washington. He said he has nominated five local players for the Fastpitch NW Prospect Evaluation Camp to be held at Sisters High School on June 23. Players who perform well there are invited to a college exposure event in mid-July.

"The future of Sisters Softball is looking brighter every year, especially if we get the up-and-coming freshmen," said Smith. A few he said he hoped to see in Outlaw uniforms next year are Anessa Stotts, Tatum Sitz, Hannah Maiden, Madi Larrabee, Jordan Foley and Lala Debari.

"There's a lot of work that needs to be done," said Smith.

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**Fri. • 6/23 • 6:30 PM John Shewey/Tim Blount**  
*Birds of the Pacific Northwest* Join us as John Shewey and Tim Blount present their book describing and illustrating more than 400 bird species commonly encountered in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and British Columbia.

**Friday • 6/30 • 6:30 PM Bryan Denson**  
*The Spy's Son: The True Story of the Highest-Ranking CIA Officer Ever Convicted of Espionage and the Son He Trained to Spy for Russia* The Spy's Son takes readers deep into life inside a CIA family, a federal prison, and the colorful world of spies and spy catchers on four continents.

**Wednesday • 7/5 • 4 PM Marie Bostwick**  
*The Promise Girls* An emotional novel about families and the love, memories and secrets that bind them together. It follows the lives of two sisters, former child prodigies, whose modest lives fall short of their once great ambitions.

**Thursday • 7/6 • 4 PM Jane Kirkpatrick**  
*This Road We Traveled* Tabitha Brown is determined to follow her son out of Missouri to embark on the Oregon Trail. She brings along with her a hired wagon, her reluctant daughter, and optimistic granddaughter. Tabitha knows the road won't be easy, but she may be unprepared for the perilous journey.

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