

Vikings hope for revitalizing season

UMATILLA — Like the baseball team, the Umatilla softball team couldn't finish its season, either, but it had more to do with voluntary attrition than forced attrition. Williams, in his first year, wants to instill a competitive program and build fundamentals that will build over time.

"My expectations (are) to win some games. I don't know how many, but to be more competitive than we have in (the) years since we restarted this program. My goal down the road is to stay here and to make

this team a team that will go for a division title and maybe make the playoffs in a couple years...I want to work (in) that direction."

Williams is pushing a team-first mentality that he thinks has been lacking in Vikings softball in recent seasons. He wants to build team unity and respect.

He's not looking at a good record as an indication of a successful season. He isn't so much concerned with winning games as he is with building a culture and a foundation.

VIKING SOFTBALL



Coach: Monty Williams, 1st year
2014 season: 0-17, 0-14 (Eastern Oregon League)

Postseason story: The Vikings did not participate in the postseason.

Key Returners: Courtney Dohman, jr.; Mari Paz, jr.; Gabriel Ramires, sr.; Chelsea Winters, sr.; Joye Garcilazo, sr.

2015 Schedule

Thu., March 19	at McLoughlin	4 p.m.	Tues., April 21	at Irrigon	4 p.m.
Tue., March 31	at Pilot Rock	6 p.m.	Fri., April 25	at Grant Union(2)	3 p.m.
Wed., April 1	vs. McLoughlin	4 p.m.	Mon., April 27	at McLoughlin	4 p.m.
Fri., April 3	vs. Vale (2)	1 p.m.	Fri., May 1	vs. Riverside (2)	1 p.m.
Tue., April 7	vs. Irrigon	4 p.m.	Tue., May 5	at Heppner	4 p.m.
Fri., April 10	at Nyssa (2)	1 p.m.	Fri., May 8	at Elgin (2)	1 p.m.
Tue., April 14	at Heppner	4 p.m.	Fri., May 15	vs. Echo (2)	1 p.m.
Thu., April 16	vs. Pilot Rock	4 p.m.			

PIRATE SOFTBALL

Coach: Shayne Arndt, 1st year
2014 season: 8-16, 3-11 (Eastern Oregon League)

Postseason Story: The Pirates did not participate in the postseason.

Key Returners: Silvia Gonzalez, sr. INF.



2015 Schedule

Mon., March 16	vs. Pilot Rock	L 0-12
Thu., March 19	vs. Irrigon	4 p.m.
Mon., March 23	Riverside Tournament	(2) 10 a.m.
Tue., March 24	at Knappa	12:30 p.m.
Mon., March 30	vs. Irrigon	4 p.m.
Fri., April 3	at Echo (2)	1 p.m.
Tue., April 7	at Tri City Prep (WA)	4 p.m.
Tue., April 14	at Vale (2)	1 p.m.
Fri., April 17	vs. Nyssa (2)	1 p.m.
Fri., April 24	vs. Enterprise (2)	1 p.m.
Tue., April 28	vs. Prescott (WA)	4 p.m.
Fri., May 1	at Umatilla (2)	1 p.m.
Mon., May 4	at Columbia (WA)	4 p.m.
Fri., May 8	vs. Grant Union (2)	2 p.m.
Tue., May 12	at Prescott (WA)	4 p.m.
Fri., May 15	vs. Elgin (2)	3 p.m.

Cougars know they can get better

COUGAR SOFTBALL

Coach: Bryan Bailey 3rd year

2014 season: 9-14, 5-9 (Eastern Oregon League)

Postseason Story: The Cougars did not participate in the postseason.

Key returners: Bailey Strofe, sr., SS/2B; Erika Parks, sr., C; Kenzie Blankenship, sr., 1B; McKenzie Gonzales, sr., RHP.



2015 Schedule

Mon, March 16	at Heppner	(W 15-4)
Thu., March 19	vs. Union	3 p.m.
Wed., March 25	vs. Heppner Tournament	10 a.m.
Wed., March 25	vs. Heppner Tournament	2 p.m.
Wed., March 25	vs. Colton	3 p.m.
Fri., April 3	vs. Riverside	1 p.m.
Tue., April 7	at Weston-McEwen	4:30 p.m.
Sat., April 11	at Elgin (DH)	1 p.m.
Tue., April 14	at Baker	4 p.m.
Fri., April 17	vs. Grant Union (DH)	1 p.m.
Tue., April 21	vs. Heppner	4 p.m.
Fri., April 24	at Vale (DH)	1 p.m.
Thu., April 30	vs. Weston-McEwen	4:30 p.m.
Fri., May 8	vs. Nyssa (DH)	1 p.m.
Sat., May 9	at Portland Christian/	2 p.m.
Tue., May 12	at Irrigon	5 p.m.
Fri., May 15	at Umatilla (DH)	1 p.m.

ECHO — Last season was full of under-achievement for the Echo Cougars, third-year coach Bryan Bailey said. His team knows it and is coming into the 2015 campaign with a renewed sense of purpose and vigor.

"We got a great schedule this year. We're gonna see some quality teams. We're back up playing 3A again, I think we're gonna be in the playoff hunt this year. I'm pretty excited about what we've got."

The Cougars struggled to score runs last season.

In response, Bailey has focused on more fundamental approaches to hitting and he likes the improvement he's seen so far. He said Stofe, Parks, Blankenship and Gonzales are going to need to be the driving forces to take Echo into the playoffs and beyond.

Those four are going to be relied upon. Strofe, who has really emerged as a leader, will return to her spot at shortstop last year,



EO file photo

McKenzie Gonzales scores for Echo during a game last season. Gonzales aims to be on of the Cougars key cogs this year.

Blankenship will resume her post at the initial pillow, Parks is an all-league caliber catcher who might get that recognition this year, and Gonzales will step into the circle as Echo's primary hurler.

It really helped the Echo softball team, which is made up of girls from Stanfield and Echo, that both girls basketball teams had relatively successful win-

ters.
"It breeds confidence," Bailey said. "The one I really see it in is Bailey Strofe. Last year, she took on the role of being our shortstop, and she struggled at it. She just didn't have the confidence. And this year with the success of basketball, (she) rolled right into softball practice and you can see the confidence in her."



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