

GLOVES IN THE DIRT

By Michaela Forkenbrock

If you happen to drive by the ball diamonds after school, you will see 26 Lady Tiger Softball players out on the field with their gloves in the dirt, ready to take on any challenges that may be thrown at them. With only one senior on this year's team comes the biggest challenge of the season--lack of experience. "We are still very young. However, I have a great bunch of girls that want to learn, want to improve, and have the desire to win," commented Coach Hamlet. Looking further into the season, Coach Hamlet sees Chase County, Northern Heights, and Council Grove as the three biggest threats to the Lady Tigers.

Senior Rachel Owens, pitcher, has been playing softball for 10 years and is excited to play another season of the sport she loves. She enjoys watching girls improve on the basic skills and fundamentals of the game. Lauren Volkman is a junior, but this is her first year playing softball. "Getting tan and spending time with my friends on the field" are two things Lauren would like to accomplish this season. Kennedy Criqui, sophomore, is looking forward to seeing how much the team has improved since last year and continues to improve this year. She has been playing softball since T-ball and has played every position on the field. Kennedy is unsure about what position she will play this season. Freshman Teagan Sturdy is planning on playing third base this season. She has been playing softball since she was 4 years old, but used to pitch and play first base. Teagan said, "I can't wait to play with such great individuals that have a love for the game as much as I do and make great memories with my teammates."

Sophomore catcher, Sadie Sellers, and pitcher, Mariah Wells, have set goals for the season. Sadie's goal is to "be accurate and have a good batting average by slapping" and Mariah's goal is to "have a winning record." Coach Hamlet has also set some goals for the season; she would like to be in the top three in the league, be at least .500 for the season, and most of all, see improvements consistently throughout the season.

When asked what she enjoyed most about coaching softball, Coach Hamlet said, "I really enjoy the relationships with the players. I also love it when I see a player get a great hit or make a great play. It is just an incredible sport and I love being a part of getting to teach the skills to the girls." The Lady Tigers will kick off the season playing their first game at Central Heights on March 28th.