The Grinnell College softball team has posted marked improvement over the last two seasons and is primed for an exciting season in 2017.

“We have all of our starters back from last season, and there has been a jump in all facets of our game,” noted head coach Amanda Reckamp. Offensive output has been a part of the Pioneers’ improved trajectory during the past several seasons. In the past two seasons, 14 offensive records have fallen — eight of them in 2016. “Our offense has been something we have relied on, and it has come up big for us,” said Reckamp. “This season we look to be consistent regardless of the competition. We had a few games we went from hot to cold last season, and a huge goal will be to find a stable and reliable lineup that will produce.”

“Being young was a descriptor that I used for our team the last several seasons, but we finally have a dominant veteran presence in our everyday line. This is the most experienced roster the softball program has had in about a decade. I’m excited to see what the 40th year of Grinnell softball will bring.”

Seniors Lydia Stariha ’17, Megan Gibson ’17, and Sage Juveland ‘17 will be a critical presence for the Pioneers. “Lydia, Megan, and Sage have seen this program climb the ladder and I know they want to end their careers on a high note,” Reckamp said. “They all will be a huge influence for us in all aspects. During their careers they have all come up clutch for us at one point or another. I have the utmost confidence in their skill and leadership.”

Defensively, the infield will again be led by Kayla Morrison ’18 at third base and Stariha at shortstop, as well as Emily Jordan ’19 behind the plate.

Morrison led the team in batting average for the second season (.414), hits (48), and RBIs (29). She was named to the All-Midwest Conference first team and All-Region second team. Stariha led the team in runs scored (31), breaking her own record from 2015, and steals (nine). Stariha also broke the most at-bats in a season record (125) that she achieved in 2015. “The best thing that I can say about Lydia and Kayla is they come back each year with a greater confidence in their skill and leadership.”

Andi and Sidney continue to make more and more nonroutine plays. Their arm strength and range is proving to make plays everywhere we have put her,” said Reckamp.

Gibson will continue to see playing time as a utility. “Megan has been asked to change positions a lot and has owned each request and continues to make plays everywhere we have put her,” said Reckamp.

Veteran pitchers Melissa Anderson ’18 and Maggie Remus ’18 will look to continue their success from 2015 and 2016. “The improvement has been obvious with Melissa and Maggie,” Reckamp noted. “The stats show that they have gotten better, and their maturity on the mound will be a calming presence for us this season. These two will be the leading forces for us this season.”

Anderson and Remus took the mound in nearly every inning last season, and that will not change as they look to control the Pioneers’ momentum in 2017. The outfield will take on a familiar look with Juveland in centerfield, Andi Left ’18 in left field and Sidney Litke ’19 in right field. Juveland has been a four-year starter in center for the Pioneers and was an All-MWC selection last season. “Sage is someone that doesn’t get the recognition she always deserves, but when she steals a hit from someone they take notice,” said Reckamp. “She is invaluable in the outfield, and each year it seems like her range gets bigger and bigger. Her bat has really become powerful over the course of her career, and she has shown great consistency so far in our team scrimmages.”

“Andi and Sydney continue to make more and more nonroutine plays. Their arm strength and range is proving to make our outfield defense one of our biggest assets.”

Reckamp knows the bar is set high for the Pioneers this season. “The obvious next step is to be one of the top four teams in the conference tournament at the end of the season,” she said. “If we focus our efforts to that end goal, I believe we have the talent, experience, and leadership to get us there.”

The Pioneers open up in Rochester, Minn., on March 4 against Macalester College and Gustavus Adolphus College and then head down to Clermont, Fla., for spring break.
2017 Roster

Front row (l-r): Megan Gibson, Andi Leff, Ashley Wehrenberg, Sage Juveland, Abigail Thomson, Mikyla Murphy, Emily Jordan, Lily Seibert, Sidney Litke.

Head Coach Amanda Reckamp

Amanda Reckamp was named Grinnell College's head softball coach in June 2010. Her team’s 2016 season was one for the books, as Grinnell compiled 16 wins — the most victories for the program since the 2006 campaign. Grinnell also had eight wins in Midwest Conference play, matching the most victories since 2006.

The 2016 squad set or tied 12 school records, five in individual categories and seven more in team. The year before, the 2015 squad got the ball rolling with eight school records.

During Coach Reckamp’s tenure, the Pioneers have produced 34 Academic All-Conference players, 23 NFCA Scholar Athletes, eight All-Conference players, eight Grinnell Athletic Department Award winners, one CoSIDA (College Sports Information Directors of America) Academic All-District player; and two All-Region selections.

Before coming to Grinnell, Reckamp was assistant softball coach at her alma mater, Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., 2007-2010. She also was assistant women’s basketball coach at the school during the 2007-08 campaign and served as assistant sports information director from 2004 to 2007.

She graduated from Westminster in 2007 with a bachelor’s in secondary education with a concentration in business and minor in entrepreneurial studies. In 2009, Reckamp earned her master’s in athletic administration and activities from William Woods University in Fulton.

Reckamp enjoyed a successful career as a catcher for Westminster that included Academic All-American recognition from CoSIDA.

She set school records for RBIs in a game (six) and season (31), home runs in a season (nine) and most putouts in a season (217) and career (402). She served as team captain from 2005-2007, twice earned all-conference honors, and once was named All-Region. As a senior, she led her team in batting average (.393), hits (44), doubles (nine), home runs (nine) and putouts (217). She was named the school’s Co-Female Athlete of the Year in 2007.

Assistant Coach Holly English

Holly English joined the softball staff in September 2016. English served as a part-time volunteer during the 2016 campaign and now will take on a more formal role with the program.

English played collegiate softball at Spoon River College and then transferred to Monmouth College, where she served as a student assistant for the Fighting Scots softball team.

She graduated from Monmouth with a B.A. in physical education and health and a coaching certificate in 2008. She currently teaches at Davenport Central in Davenport, Iowa. English has coached a mix of both softball and basketball at the high-school level for eight years.

English’s primary responsibilities will be recruiting management, program operations, and video management in addition to assisting on the field.

Assistant Coach Casey Price

Casey Price joined the Pioneer softball coaching staff in August 2016 and will oversee the pitching staff.

Price most recently served as a pitching consultant/volunteer coach at Florida Tech University. She helped the Panthers’ pitching staff to a 26-8 record in 2016. Price also was an instructor at Florida Tech’s summer camp the past two years, as well as doing private pitching and hitting instruction in her home state of Iowa.

Price was head coach at State University of New York at Oswego 2010-2014. In 2013, Price was named SUNY Athletic Conference Sandra Hollander Coach of the Year after guiding the Lakers to a 17-20 overall record and a 9-9 conference record to earn the second consecutive sixth seed in the SUNYAC championships. She took the Lakers to three SUNYAC championships during her four-year tenure.

In the 2013 conference tournament, the Lakers were the first No. 6 seed in SUNYAC history to knock off the No. 1 seed. In three seasons, Price coached four All-SUNYAC players, including a first-team All-SUNYAC performer and Eastern College Athletic Conference Upstate All-Star first-team honoree.

Prior to coaching at Oswego, she served as a volunteer assistant pitching coach at Division II University of Massachusetts at Lowell and a volunteer assistant pitching coach at SUNY Plattsburgh. Price has also been an active clinician and private instructor in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, and Oklahoma since 1992.

Price competed collegiately at the University of Oklahoma, which recruited her as a pitcher after she was a three-time all-state high school player in Iowa before converting to an outfielder. She was named Freshman Female Athlete of the Year at Oklahoma and was later placed into the Oklahoma Women’s Athletic Hall of Fame as the first player to score a run at the Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City.

Price received her bachelor’s degree in communications from the University of Oklahoma in 1992. She continued her graduate studies and completed her elementary education degree, also at the University of Oklahoma. Price received her M.S. in education from SUNY Oswego in 2000.

She taught in the Baldwinsville Central School District in New York since 1999 and returned to her home state of Iowa in 2013 to continue teaching. She is currently teaching in the Newton, Iowa, School District.

Assistant Coach Damian Imhoff

Grinnell college physical education/athletic department mission statement

The Department of Physical Education (athletics, recreation and wellness) contributes to the liberal education of the campus community by offering intercollegiate sport and recreational, intramural, and wellness activities. Valuing and embracing all forms of diversity, the department provides opportunities that stimulate personal growth and awareness within an inclusive, gender-equitable environment.

Athletics

Sport practices, as well as competitive experiences, instill sportsmanship and fair play.

Participants benefit from an integrated, cocurricular experience that upholds the academic mission of the College as the department provides individualized and group instruction in a safe environment, celebrates academic excellence, and emphasizes experiential learning.

Wellness and Recreation

As part of physical education, wellness and recreation encourage both a sound body and sound mind. Live Well Grinnell, intramurals, outdoor recreation (GORP), and PE activity classes provide opportunities and support for all members of the Grinnell community (students, staff, faculty) as they seek their vision of optimal wellness in all dimensions. The Charles Benson Bear 39 Recreation and Athletic Center provides accessible state-of-the-art spaces for a variety of wellness and recreation activities.

Physical Education

By offering group and individualized instruction through activity classes that promote skill development and physical fitness, the department aims to encourage members of the community to enjoy personal well-being and develop lifelong wellness.

Theoretical-based sport courses contribute to the College’s lively academic community, emphasizing written and oral discourse, critical thinking, and practical experiences. Coursework helps students gain new knowledge that equips them for life and work beyond Grinnell.

Meet Results • Schedules • Information > pioneers.grinnell.edu • All athletic events are free and open to the public.