



Saint Viator Softball Team Heads to Spring Training

March 30, 2010



Centerfielder Bridget Urbanus takes some early season batting practice.

The Softball Diamondplex, part of the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World in Orlando, was the site of spring training this week for the Lady Lions from Saint Viator High School.

Its 16-member varsity team left on Thursday for the multi-sport complex, to get in a week of batting practice, as well as pitching and fielding, before playing four official games against teams from across the country.

“Every year our transition from practicing indoor to going outdoors has been abrupt and caused us problems early in our season,” says Dan Twarog, head coach. “In Florida, we’ll be able to play outside every day, on a dirt field and against live pitching.”

After spring break, they return to face an intense regular season schedule, with three to four games per week scheduled through April and May, or more than 30 contests, including tournament appearances.

While the team has been practicing daily, they spent Saturday afternoon visiting with children living at Park Place at Sunnyside Village, a home-like setting for victims of physical and sexual abuse, as well as those who are abandoned or neglected.

Everyone on the team bought gifts for the children, Twarog added. He said team members looked forward to playing with the youngsters and getting a different perspective on their week of intensive softball training.

“This idea of incorporating Christian service is all part of the Viatorian identity and one of the hallmarks of a Saint Viator education,” says Tim Carlson, athletic director.

The Lady Lions return this season as defending regional champions, with 11 players, including eight starters. They compete in the East Suburban Catholic League Conference, but also play surrounding public school teams in non-conference match-ups.

They are led by a pair of all-conference pitchers, in junior Julie Sweeney of Elk Grove Village and Melanie Slawny of Palatine, as well as juniors Tayler Lenart of Inverness and Angelica Dickey of Arlington Heights, behind the plate.

Their outfield includes a pair of basketball standouts in seniors Ronnie Mack of Prospect Heights in left field, and Bridget Urbanus of Wheeling in center, who also was named all-conference last year. Junior Torey Lenart of Inverness covers right field.

The infield includes junior Kristen Cozzi of Roselle at first base, senior Amanda Presslak of Elk Grove at second, senior Abby Dickey of Elk Grove at third, and sophomore Alex Flasch of Palatine starting at shortstop.

Twarog points to senior Jennie Michalik of Arlington Heights as one of his talented utility players, along with juniors Allyson Joyce of St. Charles, Jaclyn Koziol of Prospect Heights, and Kelly O’Brien of Rolling Meadows; and freshman Maggie Dickey of Elk Grove.