

## Softball Mid Southern Conference outlook for 2010

Written by Administrator

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Since every season is new in high school sports, hope springs eternal in every sport played, to some degree or another.

The high school softball season will start in early April, and here is a look at the way the Mid Southern Conference race will be shaping up in 2010, from the point of view of the coaches of the teams.

When Megan Smith injured her ACL late in the basketball season, she not only ended her senior season in girls' basketball, but also her senior season in softball. So Salem will have to manage without her on the field this season, according to Coach Bob Motsinger.

Motsinger was asked if it looked very likely she would be able to come back at all in 2010 in softball.

"I doubt it," he said recently. "It doesn't look like it. I think her injury was more than just an ACL."

Smith underwent surgery to repair the injury within the last 10 days, and is recuperating. Smith led the team in 2009 in batting average, runs batted in, total hits, and extra base hits. As a pitcher, she had 150 strike outs on the year, 115 walks, and had an ERA of 1.6.

Salem graduated only one senior from 2009, Courtney Lamb. Still, the team will see the return of six seniors this year, and also six juniors.

Among the seniors are Kera Anderson (left field), Jamie Cornett (designated hitter and out field), Jana Cornett (first base), Brooke Graham (pitcher), Chelsea Hasty second base), and Amanda Troncin (third base). Hasty will be the team captain.

The six returning juniors are led by Jordan Wroblewski, who will split time between being short stop or a pitcher. Wroblewski was a co Most Valuable Player last year with Smith.

Smith will be missed on the mound, according to Motsinger. "We had a fairly decent defensive team last year, but we don't have a pitcher that's going to get 150 strike outs."

Looking around the Mid Southern conference, Motsinger said that Corydon Central will have to be considered a key favorite, due to the return of their pitcher Jenna Keinsley for her senior season.

Motsinger pointed out that Eastern has Andrea Hornung's services again this year, and will be in the hunt.

Just a little to the southwest, North Harrison will most likely have a successful run in the conference. Motsinger said, "They're always good. They're well coached, and they've got good athletes, and are pretty tough."

Motsinger added that Clarksville will probably be in the thick of things, and is a well coached team.

The key to the balance in the conference in recent years and this year is the rise in the number of good pitchers on so many teams.

"It's kind of evened the teams up a little bit," said Motsinger.

To the east in Washington County, a few miles down State Road 60, Eastern coach Sherry Winger has finally seen graduate in 2009 the final four starters from the two Class AA sectional titles the team won in both 2007 and 2008.

The team does have two seniors this year, with one having some experience as a starter.

As Winger put the situation, "We're rebuilding." Winger said that in a small school setting, rebuilding on a regular basis was quite common.

Back is senior pitcher Andrea Hornung, who Winger hopes to see big things from this year.

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"I think she's one of the best pitchers in Southern Indiana," said Wininger.

Another contender for the conference title is Corydon, and Wininger is impressed with returning senior pitcher Jenna Keinsley. She also thinks that Silver Creek could be pretty good this year, with several young athletes on the rise, and Wininger thinks that the sophomore class at nearby Salem will be a key. She noted the loss of Megan Smith from the Salem line up, and was sorry that she was injured. "I feel bad for her," said Wininger. "She's a good kid."

Wininger noted that Clarksville had most everyone back, but with North Harrison and Brownstown Central both losing so many seniors from 2009, she put them a little behind the other teams in the race.

Down in Harrison County, North Harrison coach John Lambert lost six seniors from 2009, but he has plenty of returning players from last year's 14-10 co Mid Southern Conference champions. Corydon Central won the other half of the conference crown.

Lambert has only two seniors this year, with one of them pitcher Courtney Crone, who will also help out from time to time at first base. The other senior in 2010 is Cassidy Bowyer (right field).

Juniors Brittni Sears (second base), Hillary Fonda (left field), Bailey Sanders (pitcher and first base) round out their class' returning players, and sophomores Alyssa McAfee (center field and pitcher), Amber Longest (catcher), Cassie Wagner (third base and outfield), Brittany Sanders (short stop and both second and third base), and Miranda Whelan (infield and outfield) round out the roster.

Despite losing so many seniors from last year, Lambert points out that "all of those kids have seen some varsity playing time," but admitted that it will still be the youngest team the school has seen in four or so seasons. "We're going to do the best we can."

"We've got some good kids," said Lambert. "I think we're going to be okay this year."

In the conference race this season, Lambert thinks that "we'll learn pretty quick how we stack up against (the other teams)."

Every year, the league race is something that they strive for, and even though they have a relatively young team compared to last year, Lambert said that every year, the younger players "step up, and have a bigger year than they had (the previous) year."