

## Highlanders win softball regional; to play in state Finals Friday at Ben Davis in Indianapolis

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 11 June 2009 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 11 June 2009 10:31

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The Floyd Central Highlanders won their own IHSAA Class 4A softball regional Saturday night. The team defeated Plainfield 3-1 in the title game Saturday night, and Columbus North 4-3 in the second semi final game.

Floyd Central coach Joe Witten's team will face Class 4A no. 15 West Lafayette Harrison Friday night at Ben Davis High School.

Floyd Central last won regional titles in softball in 1994 and 1995, when the tournament was still in a single class.

Back in 1995, the regionals had Jeffersonville, and other teams of the same Class 4A size. Witten thinks that it is now harder to win a sectional or regional than it was then.

"Now it's so difficult," said Witten of the tournament. "Winning the sectional is a big deal. (And) in our area, the Hoosier Hills Conference has been strong for years."

This year's team at Floyd Central has been a standout for several reasons, not the least of which is the team's strong belief that they will succeed.

"This team has believed so much that they can do it. I wouldn't bet against them," Witten said. "You can have all of the talent in the world, but if you don't believe in your coach, or believe and trust in your team mates, it hampers your team progress."

### **Championship Game-Floyd Central 3, Plainfield 1 -**

A Highlander pitching change might have gotten Floyd a few more outs defensively, according to Witten.

Witten started Jordan Batliner and she threw three scoreless innings, but thereafter went with Samantha McClure, who had started in the semi final game against Columbus North. Witten said he thought that by the time Plainfield made adjustments in their hitting, Floyd had already bought themselves at least a few free outs.

Witten said that it wasn't planned out in advance, but they decided to go with it at the time.

He said that Batliner and McClure have very different styles, and totally different deliveries.

McClure had gotten enough treatment on her arm from an athletic trainer between games to pitch in the title game, according to Witten.

"When you've got a lead in the post season, you're looking for those outs," said Witten. "If we didn't give up too many runs we'd have a chance to win."

Floyd Central struck first in the scoring column in the bottom of the third inning, scoring a lone run.

The Highlanders went ahead 3-0 in the bottom of the fifth frame when they pushed across two more runs. Cherrod Gwaltney and Paige Davis both scored, with Davis scoring when the Plainfield catcher failed to catch a throw.

Plainfield scored a lone run in the top of the sixth when the Quakers' Michelle McGary drove in a run when she doubled in team mate Lindsay Kivett with two outs.

In the game, Floyd had three runs on six hits, and they committed three errors.

### **Semi Final Game-Floyd Central 4, Columbus North 3 -**

The Bull Dogs might have been pitching their ace, Cassie Loweth, but the Highlanders scored three big runs in the bottom of the second inning. The biggest run was scored in the bottom of the seventh.

Kallie Krammes scored the winning run as a pinch runner when team mate Cherrod Gwaltney hit a two out single to center field. Krammes had started the game in her first start of the year.

The Highlanders went ahead 3-1 in the bottom of the second frame when Brittany Mills hit a two run triple after hitting the right field fence.

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The Highlanders' advantage slowly disappeared when the Bulldogs scored one run each in the top of the third and fifth innings.

"They were really good," said Witten. "They may have been the best team we saw in Indiana this year. They hit the ball so well; they work so hard at it."

Columbus North had seven hits to eight for Floyd Central. Floyd had one error, to no miscues for the Bulldogs.

"We haven't given up seven or more hits all year," Witten said. Join St. Mary of the Knobs to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in style! Their 4th Annual Reverse Raffle is set for Friday, March 13 at 7:30 p.m. Only 100 tickets sold in increments of \$100, \$50, and \$25. Total cash prizes of \$5,500 – even losers have a second chance to win!