

It's hard to think about softball with all the winter weather in the forecast, but for one local athlete, Salem senior Morgan Hasty, it's always softball season.

Hasty, who is the daughter of Pam and Brian Hasty, has decided to continue her softball career beyond this coming season by verbally committing to play at Johnson C. Smith University, in Charleston, North Carolina.

Johnson C. Smith is a Division II college.

Salem Head Coach Jennifer Morris said Hasty works hard to improve her game and is glad to see that dedication to the sport paying off.

"Morgan is one of the most dedicated athletes I've ever coached by far," Morris said. "She puts in more hours than I've ever seen a player put in, and it shows. She's already been a two time All-(Mid Southern) Conference selection."

When last season ended with the Salem Lady Lions coming up just short in the Class 3A Sectional championship game at North Harrison, Hasty went right back to work.

Morris said Hasty plays on a very competitive travel team and has gotten better since the season ended.

That's saying something because Hasty's numbers as a junior were already off the charts. Her batting average was just below .500, which means she got some type of hit at least once in every two plate appearances.

Her on-base percentage was an even higher .570.

"Morgan has worked hard to prepare herself to have an outstanding senior season, and prepare herself for the next level," Morris said. "JCSU got a steal with Morgan, she is a dream to coach; she works hard all of the time, is a leader by her play, is excellent in the classroom, and above all is an all-around outstanding young lady. I'm very proud of her for this accomplishment of playing for a D-2 school of her choice, and it's an honor to be her coach."

Hasty, who primarily plays third base, said it has always been a dream to play college softball and is looking forward to the opportunity in North Carolina.

She said chose the school for a number of reasons. She said the diversity of the students and the school's close proximity to down-town Charlotte.

Those factors, combined with a good recruiting visit made her choice an easy one.

"We really went there just to check it out, but I really liked the smaller campus," she said. "Plus, the coaches and the players I met were really great and I knew it's the place I wanted to be."

In addition to her hot bat, she also is a solid defender. She was charged with just six errors all of last season.

Hasty has been a key contributor in the rebuilding of the Salem softball program.

Morris took over a team that was 7-13 before her arrival and finished last year with a 16-8 record.

Salem lost just one senior from that team and should be poised to compete for both a Mid Southern Conference championship and a sectional title.

Like her coach, Hasty says the sky is the limit for the Lady Lions this spring. She said how

much they accomplish will depend on whether or not everyone buys in.

"It can't be just one or two girls here and one or two there, we all have to buy in and be on the same page," Hasty said.

As for her personal goals, Hasty said she would like to make the All-MSU team for the third year in a row and would also like to make a run at being named All-State and Academic All-State.