

You Can Softball Award Recipients

Player Winners

Nominee: Kayla Lyman, Treynor Softball

Kayla just finished her sophomore year at Treynor. She is a two year starter in left field for our team and has become one of most our dependable players. Kayla has had a tough couple of years with family issues. Despite off the field problems that she has to deal with, she is always positive and shows a great work ethic to her teammates. She has a love for the game and is a true competitor.

Nominated by JoEllen Travis, Head Softball Coach, Treynor

Taylor Johnson – Martensdale St. Mary’s

Taylor was a member of the 2008 Martensdale St. Mary’s Softball Team. To say the least, Taylor has had an injury plagued career. She is a junior this fall and has had chronic back problems throughout her career. In the 2008 season she was the starting 1st baseman on the State Tournament team. In the semi-final game against Alburnett she pulled the quad muscle in her left leg on a stretch. She has to be carried off the field. With less than 12 hours before the Championship game Taylor was able to tolerate the pain and be cleared by trainers to play in the game. It was without a doubt one of the most courageous athletic performances I have ever seen.

Although Taylor was not selected as an All-Conference or All-District performer she shined greatly in the tournament and was selected to the State All-Tournament team. Her heart and determination she showed was noticed by everyone.

*Nominated by Todd Verwers

Ericka Tank, Manning High School

Ericka suffered an injury to her ACL in the winter of 2008. She worked hard with her therapy to get be able to start the season with her team as their starting pitcher. Ericka was the starting pitcher in 17 of Manning’s games. Ericka was a quiet team leader and kept her composure during difficult times and led the team to an improved season which was highlighted by a victory over conference foe, Charter Oak-Ute.

*Nominated by Manning Head Softball Coach, Jenny Linde

Coach Award Winners

Kyle Fichter, Head Softball Coach, Fremont-Mills

Kyle Fichter has coached softball at F-M for 4 years after coaching baseball there for 7 yrs. From 1989 to 2007 F-M had 2 seasons that were winless and have had 2 winning seasons. Besides winning games, the program also struggled to find enough girls to participate. As recent as 2002, 10 girls were out and two of them were asked to play. During Kyle’s first year F-M was 5-16 and started 6 eighth graders, the next year they were also 5-16, but were much more competitive. The third season they were 16-12 and made it past the first round of regional play for the first time in a number of years. Finally, in the 2008 season F-M ended up 25-7 and made it to the state tournament for only the second time in school history and the first time in 38 years. This team consisted of 11 juniors who were on those teams and getting beat those first couple of years and they finally got to see their efforts pay off. Kyle has had a positive impact on the Fremont-Mills program and appears to have a strong foundation for success in the future.

Nominated by IKM-Manning Head Softball Coach, Joy Gross

Todd Verwers: Martensdale St. Mary's, Head Softball Coach

This is Todd's first experience as a head coach. In just two seasons, he ranks #1 in school history with 65 softball wins. The 2006 MSM team was 16-20; in Coach Verwer's first season he led them to a 32-9 season, which was a single season record. They were eliminated in the regional final. Last summer in the school's first appearance in the Girl's State Softball Tournament they reached the Championship game where they were defeated by Newell-Fonda. Coach Verwers has an overall record of 65-15. He also coached JH basketball for seven seasons Colfax-Mingo and now has the JH positions at MSM in football and JH Girls' Basketball.

Nominated by IKM-Manning Head Softball Coach, Joy Gross

Lanny Kliefoth: Exira High School

Although Lanny has been coaching for 25 years he has done an outstanding job of rejuvenating the Exira High School Softball team, his first year his team was 17-15, and made it to the District Final. His second year they finished 18-14 and won their conference with a 10-0 season. This year Exira again went undefeated in the conference and barely missed the state tournament losing 1-0 in the regional final. Lanny has a very positive attitude his teams are buying into the theory that they can excel at the sport while making their program competitive year in and year out.

Nominated by Joy Gross, IKM-Manning Head Coach