

# New seniors looks to make it five-straight to state for Lyons

**By MIKE COURSON**  
Lyons softball is on the verge of a dynasty. The Lady Lions have yet to win a state title, but the squad enters the 2017 season looking for a fifth-straight appearance at state. With the loss of some key players, the road back to state will be a tricky one.

“The tradition has started but not sure how it will carry out,” said Lyons coach Marlin Clark, back for a 13th season. “You must have players playing in the summer to make it continue. It’s a commitment from past players who played. They paved the way. Hopefully, those playing this year will see that commitment it took to win from past players.”

Often what happens in the circle determines the outcome of the game. For a second-straight season, Clark will have some changes in his pitching rotation. Last season, Laura Pineda led the team with 72.1 innings of work. This year, the ball rolls to senior Ruth Pineda. Last season, Ruth threw 41.2 innings, striking out 44 and allowing 35 hits. Control was a small issue with 21 walks.

Will be relying on her even more this year,” Clark said. “She needs to be a leader that our family can follow.”

Sophomore Logan Griffitt saw eight innings of action in the circle last year. Clark will lean on her to fill in some innings

there and elsewhere. “We will need Logan to fill in wherever she may be needed,” said Clark. “She will have her pitching duties, but where else we will use her will be determined by what we need.”

Clark will be missing some power in his lineup. Morgan Michaelis hammered out a .652 average last season, leading the team in RBIs, runs, and doubles. Laura Pineda batted .493 with five home runs and 11 doubles. Ashlee Tingle was also a multi-year player for the Lady Lions who drove in 13 runs last year.

Elsewhere for the Lady Lions, senior Fiona Jaime filled in for Laura Pineda at short when Pineda pitched. Jaime will have to fill those shoes full-time this season. Jaime batted .297 and drove in nine runs last spring.

Junior Bailey Hollinger returns at third base. She batted .375 as a sophomore and finished third on the team with 18 RBIs. “She has good hands at third. We will need her to be more consistent at the plate. She had several key hits in our run towards the regional championship game,” Clark said.

Senior Jessica Smith will fill some big shoes left by Michaelis at second base. Smith is coming off a knee surgery and batted .188 last year with limited plate appearances. Junior Alexis Villanueva returns to first base after



The 2017 Lyons softball team is, back row: Andrea Bagby, Isabella Sizemore, Ashley Fierro, Gabriella Guzman, Alexis Villanueva, Bailey Hollinger, Sarah Denton, Daci Stover, Logan Griffitt, and Cynthia Ortiz. Front (seniors): Katie Marshall, Fiona Jaime, Jessikah Smith, and Ruth Pineda.

(photo by Vickie Folck)

batting .219 on offense last season.

“Alexis had never played first, but gave it her best and learned quickly how to play that position,” said Clark. “We will be expecting her to step up her hitting as well.”

Numbers are not necessarily an indication of success. Clark is minus four seniors with a wealth of state experience, but will look to some new faces to continue the winning tradition.

“With only 11 out last year in our run toward the state tournament we made it four in a row,” he said. “Our goal is to go again. However, to achieve that goal we have several spots that must be filled. The big-

gest is to fill the vacancy of Morgan Michaelis. We’ll see who is ready to step up from the freshman and sophomores that have decided to come out this year.”

Last year’s seniors were the only Lady Lions to make it to four state tournaments. But Clark knows what stage was set by players like Cara and Brooke Johnson, Brenna McClure, Lauren Barker, and Breanna and Deanna Lutschg. He’s looking for a new generation of players to set the stage for the newcomers.

“Can we do it?” Clark asks. “Yes, it has to begin every day at practice with hard work and discipline, giving it our all and doing things the right way.”

Sterling and Lyons

have provided some great softball games in the past, including last year’s regional championship game. The two teams will not play in the

regular season as Sterling begins play in its new league. The season winds down on the road against perennially-tough Pratt and Larned.

## Lyons softball 2017

March 31	@Hoisington
April 4	HESSTON
April 11	NICKERSON
April 18	@Halstead
April 21	KINGMAN
April 25	HILLSBORO
April 28	@Haven
May 2	SMOKY VALLEY
May 5	@Pratt
May 9	@Larned
May 15-19	Regional
May 25-26	State

# Lady Eagles battle cold rain in season opener; run past Lincoln

**By MIKE COURSON**  
A little rain and cold could not stop the reigning Class 2-1A runners-up Tuesday afternoon. The Ellinwood softball team played host to Lincoln, taking game one 16-1 in three innings. Game two was postponed due to the rain.

“There are going to be times like that,” said Ellinwood coach Jason Duvall. “We had never played in a game like that, so it did help us in that aspect in understanding the ball was going to be wet. We didn’t have any balls hit at us, so that was the rough part. We were able to work some things at the plate with some of our younger kids from the left side.”

Senior Allison Panning proved to be dominant in the circle again. She struck out two in each of the first two innings and struck out eight on the day. She kept the Lady Leopards hitless, and the one run against her was unearned.

Offensively, the Lady Eagles did not have to do much early on as Lincoln struggled to find the strike zone. Five-straight Ellinwood players walked in the first inning.

Kaitlyn Pohlman led off by reaching on a dropped-third



Ellinwood senior Allison Panning opened the season with three innings of no-hit softball Tuesday against Lincoln. Right: Sophomore Kaitlyn Pohlman works on a slap hit before the rains postponed game two.

(photos by Mike Courson)

strike. Jenna Oelke reached on an error. Brittney Beck, Allison Panning, and Kaitlyn Panning all walked, and those first five all came around to score.

“I had six to seven of them we were working on slapping with,” Duvall said. “The first time through, they all slapped. Some of them came through a second time and slapped. Later

in the second inning, we put them on the other side and let them hit some balls.”

Ellinwood plated nine runs in the second inning to go ahead 14-0. Lincoln got on the board in the third inning before the Lady Eagles scored two in the bottom half of the frame to complete the run-rule.



The Lady Eagle bats did come to life in spite of the conditions. Beck hit a grand slam in her one official at bat and walked twice. “You heard

the pop and you knew it was gone,” said Duvall.

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