

# SPORTS

## Senior dominated softball team ready for small-ball

**By Mike Monahan**  
ARCOLA - I think our biggest thing is we are going to have to be small ball and that kind of worries me a little bit because I have never been a small ball player or coach. I think we can get it figured out and hopefully it works out for us," said Arcola softball coach Cara Roberts, who is in her sixth season.

Gone from last year are Elizabeth Humphrey, Adriana Warren and Avery Kessler. Warren hit .468, which was second best on the team with 31 runs batted in and nine doubles. Avery hit .337 and Humphrey hit .302.

The Lady Riders have seven seniors, one junior, five sophomores and two freshmen on the team for a total of 15, just one below last year.

"Kiera Hohlbauch (who is headed to play softball at Eureka) is going to be one of the main seniors and she will probably see the pitching circle the most games," said Roberts. "We have Jacey Kessler back as a catcher (junior) and a lot of utility players that can play anywhere. Kacie Sisk (sophomore) will see the pitchers' circle too. Our defense, in my opinion, is better when Kiera is in the pitching circle. It is great that we have seven seniors and a lot of them are leaders on the team. They know what they are doing and they have been in the sport for four years now."

Roberts also feels the defense will be a strength. "We have been working quite a bit on hitting and I feel our defense will be a strength," said Roberts.

Eva Hopkins, a senior, is going to play softball for the first time since coach-pitch.

"I think she can help quite a bit with running the bases and speed in the outfield," said Roberts.

As usually the weather has not allowed Arcola to be on the softball field at all. They have been out twice, but not on the field due to finishing construction of the revamped field. Roberts hopes it will be ready next week or the following week.

"We were able to get outside and just work on pop flies and stuff like that," said Roberts.

Through 28 games Hohlbauch hit .500 with 32 RBI's and 14 home runs and was the team-leader in both categories. Arcola was 14-15 overall and 6-3 in the LPC, good for third place last season.

"It is definitely hard to get things done when you are inside," said Hohlbauch. "When we were outside we really utilized our time well."

Hohlbauch said she has worked on being more of a leader with Warren and Avery Kessler gone.

Roberts said freshman Ema Simpson is a really good catcher and can also play shortstop or pretty much anywhere.

"As a catcher she looks so natural and that will be a big help this year and maybe in the future as well," said Roberts.

Roberts said Makenzie Thomas will move to first base.

"Thomas played outfield for us the last three seasons," said Roberts. "She is tall and has got the length to play first base (when Hohlbauch

is pitching) and so that is where I am expecting her to play. She has played infield before, but not on the varsity, but I think she can handle the job."

Roberts said there are still people fighting for positions such as Reyli Vega and Grace Wagoner are battling it out," said Roberts of second base. "It is good to have two seniors both do that as they both want to be on the field. Vega can also play short, so that is good."

Vanessa Condarco is expected to fill in for Ava Simpson, who is out for a few weeks with an appendix removed.

"I think Vanessa will be a big asset in the outfield and I am expecting her to play center for us," said Roberts.

Grace and Makenna Wagoner, twins that started last year with Makenna playing in the outfield and Grace in the infield, which is expected to be the case there again.

"We lost some games last year that I think we will win this year," said Hohlbauch. "We were in a lot of competitive games last year that we lost."

Assistant coach is Stephanie Flier, who is in the guidance department in the high school, is a 2013 Cumberland grad and had plenty of success during her high school years playing on the third place team in 2011 (24-8 third place in Class A) and on a controversial second place team where the state championship game was called in the sixth with a runner on first and one out and the top of the order up. The game was called with Milledgeville ahead 5-4.



### ARCOLA SOFTBALL ROSTER 2022-23

Head coach: Cara Roberts 6th year 50-78 .391

Assistant coach: Stephanie Flier

#### Seniors

Name	Number	Position
Vanessa Condarco	21	OF
Keira Hohlbauch	30	P/IF
Eva Hopkins	24	OF
Makenzie Thomas	12	Utility
Reyli Vega	1	IF
Gracie Wagoner	3	IF
Makenna Wagoner	4	OF

#### Juniors

Jacey Kessler	10	C/OF
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#### Sophomores

Hayden Gauna	31	IF
Kaydence Nichols	7	IF
Shelby Roberts-McGeehon	15	OF
Ava Simpson	14	OF
Kacie Sisk	5	P/OF
Nohemi Vasquez	20	OF

#### Freshmen

Miaya Brian	13	IF
Ema Simpson	2	C/IF

### 2023 SCHEDULE

(all games start at 4:30 p.m. unless noted)

March 20 at Shelbyville;

March 21 at Central A&M;

March 22- vs.

Windsor/Stewardson-

Strasburg at Stewardson-

Strasburg;

March 23 MERIDIAN;

March 27 CHRISMAN;

March 31 SULLIVAN

April 1 VANDALIA, TEU-

TOPOLIS, 10 a.m.;

April 3 at Okaw Valley\*;

April 4 EFFINGHAM ST.

ANTHONY;

April 5 at Tuscola;

April 7 at Villa Grove\*;

April 8 MARTINSVILLE, 10

a.m.;

April 10 at Arthur-

Lovington-Atwood-

Hammond\*;

April 11 at Mattoon;

April 14 CUMBERLAND\*;

April 17 at Heritage\*;

April 20 at Salt Fork;

April 21 TRI-COUNTY\*;

April 22-vs. South Central,

Edwards County at

Kinmundy, 10 a.m.;

April 24 at Argenta-

Oreana\*;

April 28 BLUE RIDGE\*

May 1 CERRO

GORDO/BEMENT\*;

May 3 URBANA;

May 5 at Decatur St.

Teresa;

May 11 CASEY-WEST-

FIELD;

May 12 MARSHALL;

May 15-20 Class 1A

regional tournament, TBA

\*-Lincoln Prairie

Conference game

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