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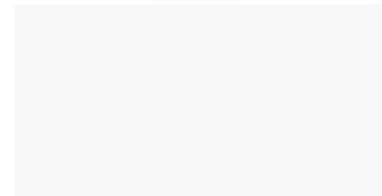
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HIGH SCHOOL

Smarts, slaps and speed: Meet 17 of Section V's top leadoff hitters



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Ask 10 Section V softball coaches what they're looking for in a leadoff hitter.

Don't be surprised if you receive 10 different answers.

Caledonia-Mumford coach Dan Dickens kept it simple when explaining why Maddy DeVore is the Raiders' leadoff hitter. He said he wants his best hitter to get as many at-bats as possible. And DeVore, a senior, has been batting leadoff for three seasons now. She collected her 100th hit as a junior, earning second team all-state in 2022 after collecting 48 hits on a .615 batting average, 38 RBIs, 50 runs, six home runs, five triples and 10 doubles. She was a third team all-state pick as a sophomore.

DeVore makes a case as one of the Section V's best leadoff hitters. But there are plenty more No. 1 hitters who make a great case.

Top leadoff hitters in Section V

Mikayla Bengsch, Webster Schroeder

The senior second baseman has been the Warriors' leadoff hitter for three seasons. Bengsch is a state champion who's a great contact hitter with a good eye who can make pitchers work. Bengsch can hit for power and is a "super" smart baserunner who's "extremely" intelligent, puts pressure on defenses and has a ton of experience as an all-state selection; Scored six runs and five RBIs in 2023; .484 BA, 38 runs, 20 RBIs in 2022.

Morgan Brace, Letchworth

The senior enters her third season batting leadoff. Brace can hit from either side of the plate. The shortstop can swing for power and play small ball and is cerebral and fast with great instincts. She loves base running. and sees as many pitches as possible to give her lineup a better look at the pitcher Her stat lines: .500 BA, .500 OBP, six hits, two doubles, two triples, five RBIs in 2023; .409 BA, .512 OBP, .712 SLG, 26 RBIs, 37 runs, 21-for-21 SBs in 2022.

Maddie Brei, Fairport

The entire offense is in play when Brei's at bat. Up from No. 2 last season, Brei is a contact hitter who handles the bat better than anyone at Fairport. The senior first baseman a threat to steal bases and pressures defenses with her knowledge and approach to the game.

Hannah Carney, Batavia

The sophomore was team MVP last year. Carney is one of the Blue Devils' three leadoff hitters, has a low strikeout rate and hits to all fields; .468 BA in 2022.

Julia Clark, Batavia

The junior has speed and ability to steal bases at a high rate. Clark is also a great bunter; .413 BA in 2022.

Kylie Conway, Pavilion

The sophomore captain is a "great" role model who can bunt, slap and hit, and has the team's high OBP. Conway is also an experienced travel player.

Jessie Crye, Avon

The freshman pitcher is in her second season batting leadoff for the Braves. Crye is a smart base runner who rarely strikes out. Her on-base percentage skyrocketed from .461 to .600; .500 batting average, six runs, three stolen bases, 0 strikeouts in 2023; .420 BA, 29 runs scores, seven SB, three strikeouts in 2022.

Kelsey Davis, Keshequa

The junior infielder can hit for power and average. Davis has great instincts and speed on the bases, leading the team to a 20-3 record in 2022. Here stat lines: .727 BA, .786 OBP, four RBIs, five runs, a triple and three SBs through three games in 2023; .545 BA, .688 OBA, 34 hits, 11 RBIs, two doubles, two triples, 8 walks, one SF, 25 runs in 2022.

Maddy DeVore, Caledonia-Mumford

The senior is Fredonia-commit who has 11 hits with a .611 BA, 15 runs, three doubles, two triples, four walks and five steals this season.

Emma Dunaway, Wellsville

The senior shortstop is the Lions' spark plug on offense. A team captain and great leader, Dunaway has "tremendous" bat speed and a low strikeout rate. She's is an "outstanding" baserunner with smarts and always looks to take a extra base; .500 BA.

McKinlee Harris, Bolivar-Richburg

A versatile hitter who can bunt, drag bunt and hit for power. Harris also runs the bases well and sparks the batting lineup; .571 BA, four hits, a double, triple, three RBIs, three runs in 2023; .467 BA, 36 hits, five doubles, three triples, one home run, 30 RBIs, 35 runs in 2022.

Lila Fortes, Batavia

The freshman is a very good contact hitter who only struck out once last season; .325 BA in 2022.

Mylee Miller, Fillmore

The eighth-grader is one of the Eagles' fastest players. She can read pitches well, is patient in the box and can put the ball in play with teammates on base. Miller also knows when to attempt a steal for better scoring position; .471 OBS, third highest BA on the team.

Maeve Petitti, Brockport

The junior captain is a speedy with a high IQ. Petitti is a slapper who keeps defenses on their toes with her ability to bunt and drive pitches to all fields. The 2022 league co-Player of the Year also excels in the base paths, stealing 32 bases in 2022; .555 BA, nine SB in 2023.

Nevaeh Ross, Friendship/Scio

The junior pitcher is capable of batting cleanup — where her younger sister, Morghyn, currently hits — but moved to leadoff to deter teams from pitching around her. Ross has smart and aggressive base running, and can bunt or collect a base hit. Team has been "lucky" to see the batting lineup circle back to Ross to leadoff later innings too; 8-10 with a homer, triple, double and three RBIs, team-high eight runs and reached base 10 of 11 times through three games.

Kayda Schmitt, Wayne

The junior has speed, great knowledge of the game, can bunt or slap and has improved her power; .563 BA, .556 OBP, six stolen bases and seven runs in four games in 2023; .423 BA, 22 runs and 12 SBs in 2022.

Nora Schubmehl, Wayland-Cohocton

The senior is a third-year varsity player with six hits, a .471 BA and .871 OBP in 2023.

