

Democrat & Chronicle

SPORTS

Section V softball: Top tournament seeds, standout hitters and a memorable championship



Marquel Slaughter

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

Published 8:35 a.m. ET May 20, 2022 | Updated 8:05 p.m. ET May 20, 2022

The School of the Arts and East High softball teams were anxious to play in the league championship game at St. John Fisher College.

When those plans fell through, the Rochester City Athletic Conference final appeared to be headed back to Cobbs Hill.

Yet, RCAC coaches and representatives were adamant in giving the girls a unique experience.

So in the 11th hour, school officials, including SOTA athletic director Dave Michaelson and East superintendent Shaun Nelms, worked diligently with St. John Fisher to secure the college softball field for Wednesday.

Jump to: [Top seeds for tournament](#) | [Top offensive players](#) | [Pittsford rivalry](#) | [Churchville-Chili potential](#) | [Webster softball](#)

Their persistence was successful and the result was a captivating, high-scoring RCAC championship game. SOTA defeated East 16-6 Wednesday night at SJF.

"I love all the support we get at East for athletics, and for the girls to experience this, which is like no other," Vann said.

More: [Section V softball scores](#)

SOTA senior **Natalie Buzzell** was named MVP after going 4-for-4 with four RBIs. Her Silver Hawks had a six-run second inning that gave them a comfortable lead the rest of the

way.

"It's our game not there's. We were going to do our best no matter what," SOTA's sophomore second baseman Amiei Hall said.

Wednesday marked the first time an RCAC final was played SJF. Well over 100 spectators passed through. The city final used to be played at Monroe Community College and in recent years it's been hosted at Cobbs Hills or the higher seed.

The coaches and the girls just wanted something a little extra special. Coaches wanted to play in a memorable final.

"It gives everybody else in the city a drive," said Diaz, whose Silver Hawks won their third straight RCAC title. "That's the goal, 'Let's play at Fisher.' ... Our joy as coaches is to see them come out on the field, throw their gloves, and have that background be here."

'On to the next'

Buzzell was the easy choice for MVP.

She was perfect at the plate and her defense at shortstop was just as impressive. She sparked a 6-3-5 double play with **Keira Ackley** and **Ada Reddington** in the third.

"Not only this team, but this program has come a really long way, and we're only going up right now," Buzzell said. "Definitely just proud of where we are, ready to keep moving forward. That's like our mantra, 'On to the next!'"

Hall made the all-tournament team after going 3-for-4 with two doubles and two RBIs from the leadoff spot.

Pitcher **Shannon Conner**'s effective inside pitch helped her strikeout six batters to make the all-tourney team. COVID sidelined her midseason, and she wasn't the same when she returned. Diaz thanked his "awesome" assistant coach for helping Conner return to normal.

"I think I can speak for all three of us when I say the relationship we have together is the best I've ever experienced on a team before," Conner said.

Catcher **Ella French** and pitcher **Johelys Alicea** made the all-tourney team for East.

The Eagles (6-10) didn't go out without a fight, picking up "small wins", like their three-run third inning to get within 8-4.

The season isn't quite over, but Vann said her seniors French, **Karlie Shelley**, **Alexis Scott**, will be missed. Scott, who joined team this season, smacked an RBI-double despite being nervous to pinch hit. **Jessica Conrow** and **Taiasia Gibson** played well at the top of the lineup and are expected to step up even more next season.

"We're definitely going to miss the seniors, but we have a lot of potential coming up," Vann said.

French, who will study at the University of Rochester on a full academic scholarship, thanked Vann for being an "amazing coach" throughout her five-year varsity career.

"I'm proud that we kept the energy up the whole game. We didn't get down or quiet. I'm very proud of them for that," French said.

Pittsford celebrates softball

Pittsford Little League softball players watched the rival schools play during the annual Pittsford celebrates softball game.

"They still remember what it's like to play little league and how important it is to grow the game," Jake Lyons, vice president of PLL softball, said. "We have great coaches like Scott Parson and (Mike) Scialo who are invested in keeping this sport alive."

On May 13, **Lilly Hajec**'s two-run homer lifted Mendon over Sutherland 3-1. The Vikings struggled to get balls past pitcher **Maddy Ward**'s defense until the sixth inning, when Hajec's home run plated herself and **Lilly Goldberg** to ultimately win the game.

"I knew I had to kill it. When I hit it, I knew it was gone," Hajec said.

"We knew eventually hits would fall. ... Hajec hitting the bomb was huge," Mendon coach Parsons said.

The contest doubled as **Mary Ciaccio**'s senior game.

"You want to win your senior game, and I picked the hardest team possible for a reason," Ciaccio said.

Riley Gonzalez, Tia Lehtonen and Julianna Lyons are some of Sutherland's best bats.

Anna Bello homers again

Anna Bello hit her third homer in the regular season finale.

She's come a long way since her first varsity season in 2021.

"Last year I hit two. This year I'm at three and I hope to keep progressing," said Bello, who drives in her twin sister, Emma, on most of her RBIs.

Assistant coach Stephanie Zimmerman witnessed Anna Bello's growth firsthand.

"She's more confident now," Zimmerman said. "She feels she can be a leader on and off the field."

Maddie Hicks, who hit her first homer of the year May 12, made it sound easy to collect extra base hits.

"I just clear my mind and try to help the team out," she said.

Mary Marrapese typically bats in the middle of the lineup. She said the entire team can hit.

"My batting average is representative of our team as a whole. Our team can hit consistently all throughout the lineup," Marrapese said.

Thomas (15-5) enters the postseason on a three-game winning streak, thanks to strong defense and pitcher Rose Nicastro's strong play.

"She wanted to establish herself, and that's what she did. We're happy to hand her the ball," coach Emily Castro said.

Schroeder hits throughout the lineup

No wonder Webster Schroeder is riding a seven-game winning streak.

Madison Spakoski thanked her "great" hitting coach Mike Hebert for her improvements, but said everyone's bats are hot.

"From 1-9, everyone is very strong. Everyone's out there giving their best," Spakoski said.

Mikayla Bengsch bats leadoff at Schroeder. She gave a glimpse into her mind set as the table setter.

"I like going into it blind, and telling the team about the pitches," Bengsch said. "Everybody can hit. Everyone is running through the bases as fast as possible."

Young Saints have potential

Churchville-Chili (2-17) has had tough breaks with a young team.

After a couple wins and some close losses, the future is bright with sophomores Grace Stella and Alexa Briggs.

Stella has been hitting well with multiple different bats.

"I've changed my bats for different pitchers. That seems to be working," Stella said.

Briggs is the leadoff hitter, working walks to get on base. Stella typically bats her home.

"I like having Grace backing me up. It's motivating. She's good at hitting lines drives, so I can score easier," Briggs said.

With two eighth-grade pitchers and another one at first, coach Brian Briggs is optimistic of the future with Stella and Briggs leading the way.

"We were counting on them to be cornerstones for us this year," coach Briggs said.

Section V softball tournament top seeds

The seeding meeting for the Section V playoffs occurred Thursday. The postseason begins Friday. Here are the tournament's No. 1 seeds:

Class AA: Fairport (15-5).

Class A1: Webster Schroeder (15-5).

Class A2: Pittsford Mendon (14-4).

Class B1: Batavia (12-7).

Class B2: Wellsville (16-3).

Class C1: Avon (15-1).

Class C2: Oakfield-Alabama (11-4).

Class C3: Lyndonville (18-0).

Class D1: Honeoye (15-4).

Section V softball's top offensive players

Here's a glimpse at some of the area's top RBI-hitters and run scorers entering sectionals.

Nicole Allen, Fairport: Sophomore has 14 runs scored for the Red Raiders.

Malayna Ayers, Bolivar-Richburg: Batting .333 average with 20 RBIs and 19 runs.

Aly Ball, Byron-Bergen: "Aggressive" junior is batting .420 with 21 hits, 15 RBIs, six 2Bs and three 3Bs.

Anna Bello, Webster Thomas: Junior has 23 RBIs on 31 hits with three HRs, six 3Bs, four 2Bs, and scored 21 runs while batting .470.

Emma Bello, Thomas: Junior has 23 hits and 20 runs scored, batting .397 with four 2Bs, two 3Bs and eight RBIs.

Mikayla Bengsch, Webster Schroeder: Scored 24 runs and has 12 RBIs at leadoff.

Kailey Besio, Irondequoit: Sophomore scored 19 runs for the Eagles.

Alexa Briggs, Churchville-Chili: Sophomore is hitting .395 with a .405 SLG and scored nine runs.

Marlayna Cartagena, Irondequoit: Junior drove in 16 runs with four HRs, scored 26 runs.

Ellie Casler, HFL: Junior has collected a pair of 3Bs and a 2B.

Mary Ciaccio, Pittsford Mendon: Senior has 10 2Bs and three HRs with a .426 average.

Krislyn Clement, Schroeder: Senior drove in 22 runs and scored 17 runs.

Julie Coble: Senior hit over .400 with 30 RBIs on 28 hits, eight 2Bs, three 3Bs, a HR and score 35 runs.

Madison Coots, Bath-Haverling: Sophomore has 20 hits, 15 RBIs, seven 2Bs, three 3Bs, two HRs and 22 runs on a .426 batting average.

Kate Dailor, HFL: Sophomore is batting .351 with four 2Bs and three 3Bs.

Avery DeMarco, Caledonia-Mumford: Drove in 20 runs and crossed the plate 37 times on her own.

Maddy DeVore, C-M: Recorded team-highs with 34 RBIs and 46 runs.

Danica Dresser, Hammondsport: Sophomore is hitting .432 with 23 runs.

Madison Fowler, HFL: Junior is hitting .444 with four 2Bs and three 3Bs.

Alayna Garwood, Northstar Christian: Junior scored 24 Runs while batting .611 with seven 2B, one 3B, one HR and 15 RBIs.

Emma Giordano, Mendon: Registered seven RBIs, six 2Bs while hitting .400.

Lilly Goldberg, Mendon: Pitcher can hit for power, batting .451 with nine 2Bs, a HR and 18 RBIs.

Riley Gonzalez, Pittsford Sutherland: Senior missed three games but battled back from injury to average .484 with 30 hits, five 2Bs, a HR, 24 RBIs and 18 runs.

Lilly Hajec, Mendon: Drove in 13 RBIs while connecting on five 2Bs, a HR, and is batting .321.

McKinlee Harris, B-R: Hitting .490 with 13 RBIs and 22 runs.

Juliana Haus, Fairport: Senior catcher has scored 14 runs.

Maddie Hicks, Thomas: Sophomore pitcher hit 12 2Bs and a HR, drove in 26 runs on 27 hits while batting .450.

Hannah Hoerter, Hammondsport: Senior is batting .532 with 18 RBIs and 21 runs.

Morgan Kennedy, Fairport: Senior shortstop drove in 14 runs for the Red Raiders.

Montgomery Kessler, C-M: Registered 30 RBIs for the Raiders.

Shelby Kruger, Kendall: Senior hit over .500 with 35 RBIs on 30 hits, five 2Bs, six 3Bs, a HR, 35 runs and over .800 SLG.

Brooke Lander, Wayland-Cohocton: Junior had 36 RBIs, 26 runs, 25 hits, three 2Bs, three 3Bs and five HRs while batting .510 with a 1.000 SLG.

Tia Lehtonen, Sutherland: Junior is batting .371 with 26 hits, seven 2Bs, four 3Bs, one HR, 23 RBIs and 23 runs.

Julianna Lyons, Sutherland: Junior is batting .389 with 28 hits, six 2Bs, three 3Bs, one HR, 17 RBIs, 15 BBs and 31 runs.

Jessica Majot, B-R: Batting .439 with 18 RBIs and 20 runs.

Mary Marrapese, Thomas: Senior has 16 RBIs, 15 runs, six 2Bs and 23 hits while batting .411.

Leeah McNally, B-H: Senior is batting .400 with 24 hits, 23 runs, four RBIs and five 2Bs.

Lauren Pilon, Kendall: Junior hit .580 with 45 RBIs, 35 hits, eight 2Bs, six 3Bs, three HRs, 40 runs and over .900 SLG.

Kendall Phillips, B-B: "Disciplined hitter" collected 24 hits, 24 RBIs, six 2Bs, five 3Bs and a HR while batting .585 as a junior.

Abby Ras, Irondequoit: Freshman hitting well with 23 RBIs and two HRs.

Sawyer Richardson, C-M: Scored 26 runs and collected 21 RBIs.

Molly Ryan, C-M: Crossed home plate 23 times.

Ally Ray Schumacher, Greece Athena/Olympia/Odyssey: Junior shortstop is batting .679 on 36 hits, collecting 31 RBIs, 14 2Bs, seven HRs and a 1.377 SLG.

Grace Stella, Churchville-Chili: Sophomore bats .405 with 7 RBIs and a .514 SLG.

Madison Spakoski, Schroeder: Drove in 15 runs and scored 14 runs herself.

Caydence Spears, B-H: Freshman has 21 RBIs on 25 hits, 10 2Bs, a 3B and two HRs.

Madelyn Thornton, B-R: Batting .415 with 16 RBIs and 16 runs.

Sydney Wilson, Northstar: Senior has 19 RBIs, five 2Bs, two 3B, a HR and 17 runs while batting .457.

Kaili Witherell, B-H: Freshman bats .655 with 38 hits, 28 RBIs, 12 2B, six 3Bs, four HR and 29 runs with a 1.275 SLG.

Rachel Wood, Hammondsport: Junior is batting .304 with 18 RBIs.

Madison Wyskiel, C-M: Collected 17 RBIs this season.

Email Marquel Slaughter at mslaughter1@gannett.com and follow his Twitter @MarquelSports. Sign up for our high school sports newsletter.