



Monday, May 6, 2002

## Softball team earns NCAA Tournament berth

Oakland University's **softball team** earned its first-ever NCAA Tournament berth by defeating UMKC in the Mid-Continent Conference Championship on May 4.

Oakland's softball team is the third team to qualify for an NCAA post-season tournament since the university moved to Division I athletics three years ago. All three NCAA Tournament appearances by OU teams came during the 2001-02 school year. Last November, the women's soccer team became the first OU team to achieve this milestone, while the women's basketball team accomplished this goal in March.

Tournament seedings and match-ups for the first round of the NCAA Softball Tournament will be announced live on ESPN during the 2002 Softball Selection Show on Sunday, May 12, at 9 p.m. Forty-eight teams compete in the national tournament, with six teams competing at each of eight regional sites. The regional competitions take place May 16-19. The eight regional winners go on to play in the Women's College World Series May 23-27 at the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City.

Oakland came into the Mid-Con Tournament as the second seed behind top-ranked UMKC. Going into the championship round, Oakland had a 2-1 record, while UMKC was a perfect 2-0. The **Golden Grizzlies** had to defeat UMKC twice to prevent the Kangaroos from advancing to the NCAA Tournament.

Oakland claimed a 2-1 victory in the first game, forcing a second championship game. The Golden Grizzlies then won the title game in eight innings by the score of 1-0 to give OU its first-ever Mid-Con Tournament victory along with its first NCAA Tournament berth in the program's history.

Leading the team was junior third baseman Ericka Burns (Clinton, Ontario, Canada), who was named the tournament MVP. Burns was 5-16 from the plate with two home runs, two doubles, three RBI and two runs scored. Burns led the team this past season with a .363 batting average, 65 hits and 19 RBI. Burns also was named to the all-conference first team last week.

Joining Burns on the all-conference first team was freshman Nicole Marzano (McHenry, Illinois) and sophomore Jaymie Voss (Kalamazoo). Megan Piar (Lancaster, Ohio) and Lauren Seffens (Ortonville) were named to the all-conference second team.

Marzano leads the team with a 1.63 ERA and 145.2 innings pitched so far in the 2002 season. The left-handed pitcher also recorded two no-hitters as she blanked IPFW and Mid-Con foe Valparaiso.

Voss was named to the first team as an outfielder and stands fourth on the team with a .280 batting average and second with 17 RBI. Piar, the Golden Grizzlies' catcher, batted .258 and is second on the team with 222 putouts. Seffens is third on the team with a .282 batting average and with 15 RBI.

Oakland led the conference with five players named to the All-Tournament Team. Joining Burns and Piar on the team were juniors Nina Catanzaro (Shelby Township), Linnea Utecht (Oshkosh, Wisconsin) and Juile Anderson (Portland).

### SUMMARY

Oakland University's softball team earned its first-ever NCAA Tournament berth by defeating UMKC in the Mid-Continent Conference Championship on May 5. Oakland's softball team is the third team to qualify for an NCAA post-season tournament since the university moved to Division I athletics three years ago. All three NCAA Tournament appearances by OU teams came during the 2001-02 school year.

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