

Softball to display versatility in 2014



Devan Howard, junior outfielder (right), connects with the ball during a game during the 2013 season. Howard started all 38 games for the Lady Builders last season and hit a batting average of .362 with 47 hits and 18 RBIs. (Angel Vadillo/Collegian photographer)

By Pete Moyer
Staff reporter

After an unceremonious exit from the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Softball Championships, the Southwestern College softball team looks to rebound in 2014 by being a much more versatile team via its depth.

Starting pitcher Rachel Baker took both losses that expelled the Builders from the tournament, 7-0 and 8-0, to Kansas Wesleyan and Friends University respectively, ending their season at 15-23 (5-11).

This season, the junior ace definitely has plans on improving in a big way. Her goals for the season include “winning a KCAC championship and being the best

pitcher in the conference.”

Infielder Audrey Vonderlandwehr provided much of the offensive spark for the Builders, hitting a batting average of .427 with 44 hits and three home runs.

The Moundbuilders open the season with back-to-back double-headers at home against the University of Newman on Feb. 25 and Bacone College on Feb. 27. KCAC conference play begins on March 25 against McPherson College.

Nine new transfers and only two underclassmen have given the Lady Builders a more experienced roster. The two underclassmen are last season’s starting third basemen Megan Walentynowicz and pitcher Alison Flinn.

One sentiment that both Baker

and Blackburn share is that due to several schedule changes, it was difficult to build a level of consistency.

Blackburn believes the team has developed the mindset to “expect the unexpected and be ready to play at all times.”

The 2014 KCAC championship tournament will be held in the Great Bend from April 30 to May 3. Eight KCAC teams will play up to 15 games, with the winner of the tourney earning an automatic entry into the NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round.

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2014 Moundbuilders Softball Roster

1 Devan Howard SR/OF	19 Allison Flinn FR/P
2 Shelby Tucker JR/UT	20 Mary Reilly JR/C/IF
3 Cassie Morrison JR/P/OF	21 Rachel Baker JR/P
4 Taylor Easum JR/IF	24 Paige Rothwell JR/IF
5 Kylea Wilson JR/IF	30 Mandy Watson JR/C
9 Sara Blackburn SR/P/OF	32 Alejandra Palacios JR/OF
11 Emily Hicks JR/P	33 Audrey Vonderlandwehr JR/INF
15 Megan Walentynowicz SO/C/IF	

Final 2013 KCAC Standings

School	Conference Record	Overall Record
Friends University	18-0	43-8
Kansas Wesleyan University	14-4	35-10
Bethany College	14-4	31-18
Tabor College	11-7	18-25
Ottawa University	10-8	25-16
Southwestern College	5-11	15-23
McPherson College	5-11	9-22
University of Saint Mary	5-13	9-25
Sterling College	3-15	15-25
Bethel College	3-15	4-25

Lady Builders to keep an eye on this season



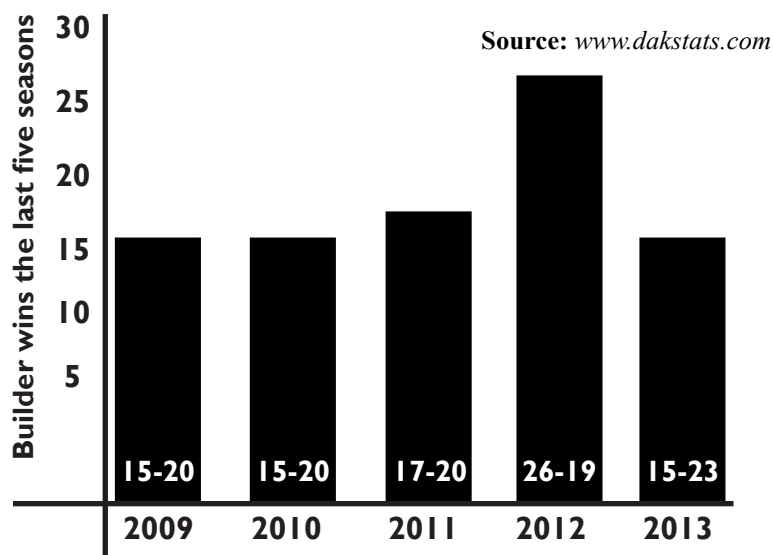
Baker

Entering her second season as a Moundbuilder is junior pitcher Rachel Baker from Edmon, Oklahoma. A former transfer from Barton Community College, she finished tenth in the KCAC in ERA with 3.55 but has to rebound from 12 losses, tying her for fourth most in the conference.

Former Garden City High School standout Sara Blackburn enters her senior season searching for her first KCAC championship. After starting 86 of the 100 games she’s played as a Moundbuilder, she converted 88 percent of her fielding opportunities last season and contributed a .210 batting average with 25 hits.



Blackburn



Quick Facts

- 88 wins over the past five seasons.
- 39 of those (88) wins have come at home.
- Longest losing streak for past four seasons was one game.
- The Lady Builders finished sixth in the KCAC in 2013.
- Every team in the KCAC ended the 2013 season with a loss.
- Finished in the top half of the conference standings, three times in last five seasons.