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NU SOFTBALL TEAM BEGINS SEASON WITH NEW HEAD COACH



Photo courtesy: NU Athletics

By Hannah Nicholson

The Northwest University women's softball season is underway with a new coach, Pam Fink, at the helm.

Prior to coming to NU, Fink led the Oklahoma Baptist University team for 25 years, where she was the winningest coach in school history and guided the team to the National Christian College Athletic Association Championship in 2017. Fink and her husband made the trek across the country from Oklahoma to Seattle to start new jobs and be closer to family.

Fink said that she is most excited about working with her new team this year, and commends the players for all the work they put in. Coming from a different program with amazing facilities, Fink said she is thoroughly impressed by the commitment of her team, who practices without their own field and is constantly hauling around all their gear.

The Lady Eagles are focused on team unity, and do not take for granted the bond they have with each other.

Senior Mikayla Wells said that she has enjoyed playing under her new coach.

"Already it has been a lot more fun, and she understands we have school, work, and lives outside of softball," Wells said.

Wells also said that she appreciates the strong bond that the team has with each other.

"I am excited because everyone on my team gets along with each other and there is no drama, and we all play for each other," she said.

Fink has come into this season with a group of players that were already established, and Wells said that her coaching has already been beneficial and is different from what she has experienced with her past coaches.

"[She] gives us the confidence that we do not see in ourselves and she takes our practice time and utilizes it," Wells said.

Fink said that that she is looking forward to coaching at NU this season with her new team in a new conference.

"I am excited to experience the season with these girls, because it is all new to me and I have no idea what to expect in [Cascade] conference play. We had our first conference series [recently] and I travelled to Oregon, which I've never been south of Portland in my life." Fink said.

Starting a season with a new team may be a different experience, but Fink said softball itself isn't all that different.

"I feel like a freshman I guess, coming out of the gate, learning as I go. Even though I have been coaching for a long time the game hasn't changed that much in terms of how to coach it. I am excited for a home field that is consistent, because in the past they have had to go here and there and cancel games," Fink said. "And finally, I am excited to see what God has for this group, I know he has something planned."

Fink said she is enthusiastic about the future of the NU softball program and said that as a coach she cares for her players deeply and desires to develop them in every part of life, not just on the pitch.

"Establishing a positive culture, that these girls want to come back to Northwest and whatever they do as young women, whatever it is: have careers, get married, have a family. That they can look back and through the hard times in life and can think about how they had to problem solve as a softball player at Northwest University," Fink said.

Fink said that she wants to help build her players' relationships as Christians in addition to coaching them athletically.

"I also want them to develop as young women and in their relationship with Christ, physically and emotionally, as there are so many more things that are more important than what happens out on the softball field," Fink said. "I want it to be a winning culture with a champion mindset, and for my team to have grit and never quit."

Fink said that she also hopes to hold an alumni game in the near future. She wants to provide consistency in the softball program, which is seven years old. Fink's dream is for the Lady Eagles to have their own facilities that would allow players to come from class to practice, without the hassle of traveling off campus and missing a meal in the Caf. Finally, she said she wants to make it to the conference tournament while producing good student athletes.

Yeawa Asabi, a junior on the softball team, has observed the resolute nature of the team under Fink's coaching, even though she is injured and unable to play currently.

"Every game is going to be a battle, because every team expects us to come in and roll over, but we kind of proved to each other that we have that grit and determination," Asabi said. "Even if it is not a 'dub' on the score board, it is about how hard we fought."

In regard to how the NU community can best support the softball team, Asabi comments on how the team appreciates seeing members of the NU community support the team.

"[the people] coming out to games and people who make signs are awesome," she said.