

SDSU Softball Quick Facts



SDSU SOFTBALL

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY QUICK FACTS

Location San Diego, Calif.
Founded 1897
Enrollment 34,174
President Dr. Stephen Weber
Athletics Director Jeff Schemmel
Senior Woman Administrator Kathy Van Wyk
Nickname Aztecs
Colors Scarlet and Black
Conference Mountain West
Home Field (Capacity) SDSU Softball Stadium (1,000)

SAN DIEGO STATE SOFTBALL QUICK FACTS

Head Coach Kathy Van Wyk (CS Fullerton, 1983)
Record at SDSU 298-237-1 (.557), 10th season
Overall Record Same
Softball Office Phone (619) 594-5853
Associate Head Coach Kelly Warren (UCLA, 1996)
Assistant Coach Miranda Bleisch (Point Loma Nazarene, 2004)
Athletic Trainer Carolyn Peters
First Year of Division I Softball 1977
All-time Record 698-806-6 (.464), 30th season
NCAA Division I Tournament Appearances Two (2001, 2003)
2005 Record 27-30
2005 MWC Record (Finish) 4-16 (Sixth)
2005 MWC Tournament Record (Finish) 1-2 (Sixth)
Letterwinners Returning/Lost 13/4
Starters Returning/Lost 7/3
Newcomers 9
Top Returners Kristen Carranza (So., OF, .294 avg., 18 R, 1 HR, 22 RBI)
Allison Smith (So., IF, .285 avg., 12 R, 1 HR, 15 RBI)
Celena Velasquez (Sr., P, 14-12, 1.19 ERA, 10 SHO, 211 K)
Key Losses Cori Janelli (P, 10-16, 2.05 ERA, 3 SHO, 156 K)
Erin Mahoney (OF, .301 avg., 16 R, 10 SB, 8 RBI)

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ON THE COVER

(Clockwise from top left) Seniors Celena Velasquez, Jamie Burton, Bree Boyer and Meagan Hartung.

MEDIA GUIDE CREDITS

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Broadcast Roster



SDSU SOFTBALL

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COACHES/STAFF

PLAYERS

REVIEW

HISTORY

OFFICERS

UNIVERSITY FACILITIES



00 **Bree Boyer**
Sr • OF • 5-4 • R/R
Huntington Beach, Calif.



1 **Kasey Mytinger**
Fr • OF • 5-4 • R/R
San Diego, Calif.



2 **Kristen Carranza**
So • OF • 5-6 • L/L
San Mateo, Calif.



3 **Alysha Daigle**
Fr • OF • 5-1 • R/R
San Diego, Calif.



4 **Celena Velasquez**
Sr • P • 5-6 • R/R
Tucson, Ariz.



6 **Katie Cochran**
Jr • P • 5-9 • R/R
San Jose, Calif.



7 **Allison Smith**
So • IF • 5-11 • R/R
Burlingame, Calif.



8 **Dani Sidoti**
So • OF • 5-10 • L/R
Scottsdale, Ariz.



9 **Monica Alnes**
Fr • IF/P • 5-7 • R/R
Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.



10 **Christina Ross**
So • P • 5-7 • R/L
Santa Clarita, Calif.



11 **Chrissie Markham**
So • IF • 5-5 • R/R
Phoenix, Ariz.



14 **Taryn Casillas**
So • IF • 5-7 • R/R
San Diego, Calif.



16 **Danielle Bryan**
Fr • IF • 5-6 • R/R
San Diego, Calif.



17 **Tamani Wells**
So • OF • 5-5 • L/R
Concord, Calif.



18 **Jamie Burton**
Sr • C • 5-5 • R/R
Carlsbad, Calif.



19 **Megan Hartung**
Sr • OF/IF • 5-6 • L/R
San Diego, Calif.



20 **Megan McDonald**
So • C • 5-7 • R/R
Glendale, Ariz.



21 **Christy Hollingshead**
RS-Jr • UT • 5-5 • R/R
San Jose, Calif.



22 **Sydney Fleming**
Fr • C • 5-8 • R/R
Oakland, Calif.



23 **Melissa Owens**
Fr • P/IF • 5-10 • R/R
San Diego, Calif.



24 **Amanda Beasley**
Jr • UT • 5-4 • R/R
Spring Valley, Calif.



44 **Erin Floros**
Fr • C/IF • 5-7 • R/R
San Diego, Calif.



Kathy Van Wyk
Head Coach - 10th Year
CS Fullerton - 1983



Kelly Warren
Assoc. Head Coach - Sixth Year
UCLA - 1996



Miranda Bleisch
Assistant Coach - First Year
Point Loma Nazarene - 2004

Aztec Roster



SDSU SOFTBALL

► ROSTER BREAKDOWN

BY POSITION

Outfielders (7) Boyer, Carranza, Daigle, Hartung, Mytinger, Sidoti, Wells

Infielders (8) Alnes, Bryan, Casillas, Floros, Hartung, Markham, Owens, Smith

Catchers (4) Burton, Fleming, Floros, McDonald

Pitchers (5) Alnes, Cochran, Owens, Ross, Velasquez

Utility (2) Beasley, Hollingshead

BY BATTING STANCE

Right-handed (18) Alnes, Beasley, Boyer, Bryan, Burton, Casillas, Cochran, Daigle, Fleming, Floros, Hollingshead, Markham, McDonald, Mytinger, Owens, Ross, Smith, Velasquez

Left-handed (4) Carranza, Hartung, Sidoti, Wells

BY THROWING ARM

Right-handed (20) Alnes, Beasley, Boyer, Bryan, Burton, Casillas, Cochran, Daigle, Fleming, Floros, Hartung, Hollingshead, Markham, McDonald, Mytinger, Owens, Sidoti, Smith, Velasquez, Wells

Left-handed (2) Carranza, Ross

BY CLASS

Seniors (4) Boyer, Burton, Hartung, Velasquez

Juniors (3) Beasley, Cochran, Hollingshead

Sophomores (8) Carranza, Casillas, Markham, McDonald, Ross, Sidoti, Smith, Wells

Freshmen (7) Alnes, Bryan, Daigle, Fleming, Floros, Mytinger, Owens

BY EXPERIENCE

3L (4) Boyer, Burton, Hartung, Velasquez

2L (1) Beasley

1L (8) Carranza, Casillas, Cochran, Markham, McDonald, Sidoti, Smith, Wells

RS (1) Hollingshead

TR (1) Ross

HS (7) Alnes, Bryan, Daigle, Fleming, Floros, Mytinger, Owens

BY STATE

California (18) Alnes, Beasley, Boyer, Bryan, Burton, Carranza, Casillas, Cochran, Daigle, Fleming, Floros, Hartung, Hollingshead, Mytinger, Owens, Ross, Smith, Wells

Arizona (4) Markham, McDonald, Sidoti, Velasquez

ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

#	NAME	POS.	HT.	B/T	YR.-EXP.	HOMETOWN (LAST SCHOOL)
9	Monica Alnes	IF/P	5-7	R/R	Fr.-HS	Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif. (P.V. Peninsula HS)
24	Amanda Beasley	UTIL	5-4	R/R	Jr.-2L	Spring Valley, Calif. (Mount Miguel HS)
00	Bree Boyer	OF	5-4	R/R	Sr.-3L	Huntington Beach, Calif. (Marina HS)
16	Danielle Bryan	IF	5-6	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Patrick Henry HS)
18	Jamie Burton	C	5-5	R/R	Sr.-3L	Carlsbad, Calif. (Carlsbad HS)
2	Kristen Carranza	OF	5-6	L/L	So.-1L	San Mateo, Calif. (Burlingame HS)
14	Taryin Casillas	IF	5-7	R/R	So.-1L	San Diego, Calif. (Grossmont HS)
6	Katie Cochran	P	5-9	R/R	Jr.-1L	San Jose, Calif. (San Jose CC)
3	Alysha Daigle	OF	5-1	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Monte Vista HS)
22	Sydney Fleming	C	5-8	R/R	Fr.-HS	Oakland, Calif. (Bishop O'Dowd HS)
44	Erin Floros	C/IF	5-7	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Mt. Carmel HS)
19	Meagan Hartung	OF/IF	5-6	L/R	Sr.-3L	San Diego, Calif. (Granite Hills HS)
21	Christy Hollingshead	UTIL	5-5	R/R	Jr.-RS	San Jose, Calif. (West Valley College)
11	Chrissie Markham	IF	5-5	R/R	So.-1L	Phoenix, Ariz. (Mountain Ridge HS)
20	Megan McDonald	C	5-7	R/R	So.-1L	Glendale, Ariz. (Cactus HS)
1	Kasey Mytinger	OF	5-4	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (West Hills HS)
23	Melissa Owens	P/IF	5-10	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Christian HS)
10	Christina Ross	P	5-7	R/L	So.-TR	Santa Clarita, Calif. (Univ. of Kansas)
8	Dani Sidoti	OF	5-10	L/R	So.-1L	Scottsdale, Ariz. (Salpointe Catholic HS)
7	Allison Smith	IF	5-11	R/R	So.-1L	Burlingame, Calif. (Burlingame HS)
4	Celena Velasquez	P	5-6	R/R	Sr.-3L	Tucson, Ariz. (University HS)
17	Tamani Wells	OF	5-5	L/R	So.-1L	Concord, Calif. (Holy Names HS)

NUMERICAL ROSTER

#	NAME	POS.	HT.	B/T	YR.-EXP.	HOMETOWN (LAST SCHOOL)
00	Bree Boyer	OF	5-4	R/R	Sr.-3L	Huntington Beach, Calif. (Marina HS)
1	Kasey Mytinger	OF	5-4	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (West Hills HS)
2	Kristen Carranza	OF	5-6	L/L	So.-1L	San Mateo, Calif. (Burlingame HS)
3	Alysha Daigle	OF	5-1	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Monte Vista HS)
4	Celena Velasquez	P	5-6	R/R	Sr.-3L	Tucson, Ariz. (University HS)
6	Katie Cochran	P	5-9	R/R	Jr.-1L	San Jose, Calif. (San Jose CC)
7	Allison Smith	IF	5-11	R/R	So.-1L	Burlingame, Calif. (Burlingame HS)
8	Dani Sidoti	OF	5-10	L/R	So.-1L	Scottsdale, Ariz. (Salpointe Catholic HS)
9	Monica Alnes	IF/P	5-7	R/R	Fr.-HS	Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif. (P.V. Peninsula HS)
10	Christina Ross	P	5-7	R/L	So.-TR	Santa Clarita, Calif. (Univ. of Kansas)
11	Chrissie Markham	IF	5-5	R/R	So.-1L	Phoenix, Ariz. (Mountain Ridge HS)
14	Taryin Casillas	IF	5-7	R/R	So.-1L	San Diego, Calif. (Grossmont HS)
16	Danielle Bryan	IF	5-6	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Patrick Henry HS)
17	Tamani Wells	OF	5-5	L/R	So.-1L	Concord, Calif. (Holy Names HS)
18	Jamie Burton	C	5-5	R/R	Sr.-3L	Carlsbad, Calif. (Carlsbad HS)
19	Meagan Hartung	OF/IF	5-6	L/R	Sr.-3L	San Diego, Calif. (Granite Hills HS)
20	Megan McDonald	C	5-7	R/R	So.-1L	Glendale, Ariz. (Cactus HS)
21	Christy Hollingshead	UTIL	5-5	R/R	Jr.-RS	San Jose, Calif. (West Valley College)
22	Sydney Fleming	C	5-8	R/R	Fr.-HS	Oakland, Calif. (Bishop O'Dowd HS)
23	Melissa Owens	P/IF	5-10	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Christian HS)
24	Amanda Beasley	UTIL	5-4	R/R	Jr.-2L	Spring Valley, Calif. (Mount Miguel HS)
44	Erin Floros	C/IF	5-7	R/R	Fr.-HS	San Diego, Calif. (Mt. Carmel HS)

HEAD COACH: Kathy Van Wyk (CS Fullerton, 1983), 10th season

ASSOCIATE HEAD COACH: Kelly Warren (UCLA, 1996), sixth season

ASSISTANT COACH: Miranda Bleisch (Point Loma Nazarene, 2004), first season

► PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Alnes	ALL-nes	Markham	Mark-UM
Beasley	BEES-lee	Mytinger	my-TIN-GUR
Bleisch	BLY-sch	Dani Sidoti	Danny seh-DOTEE
Carranza	CAH-ranza	Tamani	TOM-ini
Taryin Casillas	TAIR-in ca-SEE-es	Van Wyk	van WIKE
Daigle	DAY-gull	Velasquez	vuh-LASS-kez

Aztec Roster by Position



SDSU SOFTBALL

OUTFIELDERS

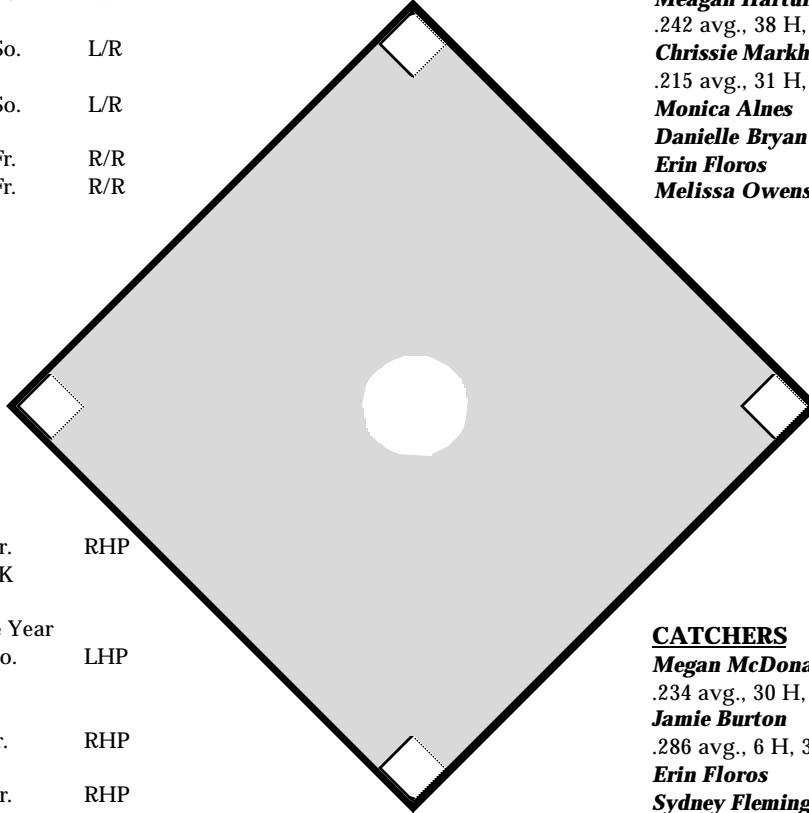
Meagan Hartung	Sr.	L/R
.242 avg., 38 H, 17 R, 7 RBI		
Kristen Carranza	So.	L/L
.294 avg., 45 H, 18 R, 22 RBI		
Bree Boyer	Sr.	R/R
.267 avg., 32 H, 9 SH		
Tamani Wells	So.	L/R
.230 avg., 14 H, 13 R		
Dani Sidoti	So.	L/R
.200 avg., 12 H, 8 R		
Alysha Daigle	Fr.	R/R
Kasey Mytinger	Fr.	R/R

UTILITY

Amanda Beasley	Jr.	R/R
.250 avg., 8 H		
Christina Hollingshead	Jr.	R/R

INFIELDERS

Allison Smith	So.	R/R
.285 avg., 39 H, 12 R, 15 RBI		
Taryin Casillas	So.	R/R
.254 avg., 31 H, 4 HR, 16 RBI		
Meagan Hartung	Sr.	L/R
.242 avg., 38 H, 17 R, 7 RBI		
Chrissie Markham	So.	R/R
.215 avg., 31 H, 2 HR, 13 RBI		
Monica Alnes	Fr.	R/R
Danielle Bryan	Fr.	R/R
Erin Floros	Fr.	R/R
Melissa Owens	Fr.	R/R



PITCHERS

Celena Velasquez	Sr.	RHP
14-12, 1.19 ERA, 10 SHO, 211 K		
Three-time all-MWC selection		
Two-time MWC Pitcher of the Year		
Christina Ross	So.	LHP
*12-9, 1.93 ERA, 3 SHO, 111 K		
(*at Kansas)		
Katie Cochran	Jr.	RHP
3-2, 3.27 ERA, 24 K		
Melissa Owens	Fr.	RHP
Monica Alnes	Fr.	RHP

CATCHERS

Megan McDonald	So.	R/R
.234 avg., 30 H, 4 HR, 19 RBI		
Jamie Burton	Sr.	R/R
.286 avg., 6 H, 3 RBI		
Erin Floros	Fr.	R/R
Sydney Fleming	Fr.	R/R



INTRODUCTION

COACHES/STAFF

PLAYERS

REVIEW

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UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

2006 Schedule



SDSU SOFTBALL

Date	Day	Opponent	Site	Time	Note
Feb. 9	Thur	~ CAL POLY	SDSU Stadium	5 p.m. PT	Cal Poly has won 3 of last 4 meetings
Feb. 10	Fri	~ CALIFORNIA	SDSU Stadium	7 p.m. PT	'05 WCWS; Final RPI of No. 3
Feb. 11	Sat	~ MASSACHUSETTS	SDSU Stadium	11 a.m. PT	'05 NCAA Regionals @ 37-16-1; Last met in '01
Feb. 11	Sat	~ OKLAHOMA STATE	SDSU Stadium	3 p.m. PT	'05 NCAA Regional final; SDSU 4-0 all-time
Feb. 12	Sun	~ UCLA	SDSU Stadium	1 p.m. PT	'05 NCAA Runner-up; UCLA 43-0 vs. SDSU
Feb. 15	Wed	SAN DIEGO	SDSU Stadium	6 p.m. PT	USD won for first time in 41 meetings in 2005
Feb. 17	Fri	! vs. Rider	Santa Barbara, Calif.	9 a.m. PT	SDSU def. Rider, 1-0, in only meeting in 2003
Feb. 17	Fri	! at UC Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara, Calif.	11:30 a.m. PT	Home team has won 7 of last 9 meetings
Feb. 18	Sat	! vs. CS Northridge	Santa Barbara, Calif.	11:30 a.m. PT	1 of 2 meetings in '06; CSUN leads, 33-12-1
Feb. 18	Sat	! vs. Long Beach State	Santa Barbara, Calif.	2 p.m. PT	3rd straight BWC opp.; SD won 2 of 3 in '05
Feb. 19	Sun	! vs. Tulsa	Santa Barbara, Calif.	9 a.m. PT	SDSU won, 5-4, in last meeting in 1999
Feb. 23	Thur	@ WESTERN KENTUCKY	SDSU Stadium	3 p.m. PT	First-ever meeting with the Hilltoppers
Feb. 23	Thur	@ LONG BEACH STATE	SDSU Stadium	5 p.m. PT	LBSU 44-19 all-time vs. SDSU; Lost 3 con. in SD
Feb. 24	Fri	@ WAGNER	SDSU Stadium	7 p.m. PT	SD has won 7 straight vs. 1st-time opponents
Feb. 25	Sat	@ KENTUCKY	SDSU Stadium	3 p.m. PT	Casillas, Hartung; HRs in 4-3 win in '05
Feb. 26	Sun	@ INDIANA STATE	SDSU Stadium	11 a.m. PT	1st-ever meeting; SD 4-2 vs. Indiana schools
March 1	Wed	at San Diego	San Diego, Calif.	6 p.m. PT	Aztecs 22-0 all time at USD
March 3	Fri	# OREGON	SDSU Stadium	2 p.m. PT	1 of 2 meetings; Ducks lead series, 10-5,
March 3	Fri	# CS NORTHBRIDGE	SDSU Stadium	7 p.m. PT	Matadors have won 3 of last 4 meetings
March 4	Sat	# LOYOLA MARYMOUNT	SDSU Stadium	2 p.m. PT	SDSU won last 6 and is 19-2 all-time
March 4	Sat	# FRESNO STATE	SDSU Stadium	4:30 p.m. PT	49-12, advanced to NCAA Regional in 2005
March 5	Sun	# OREGON	SDSU Stadium	11:30 a.m. PT	Oregon has won 5 of last 6 meetings
March 10	Fri	CS FULLERTON (Gm. 1)	SDSU Stadium	4 p.m. PT	55th meeting; 2nd-most of non-conf. opponent
March 10	Fri	CS FULLERTON (Gm. 2)	SDSU Stadium	6 p.m. PT	CSUF leads all-time series, 45-10
March 11	Sat	VIRGINIA (Gm. 1)	SDSU Stadium	1 p.m. PT	Last met March 1, 1998 (Virginia 4, SDSU 2)
March 11	Sat	VIRGINIA (Gm. 2)	SDSU Stadium	3 p.m. PT	SDSU 48-15 since 3/15/02 at SDSU vs. non-conf.
March 16	Thur	\$ vs. Oklahoma State	Honolulu, Hawaii	3 p.m. HT	Aztecs 10-11 all-time vs. Oklahoma schools
March 16	Thur	\$ at Hawai'i	Honolulu, Hawaii	7 p.m. HT	Rainbow Wahine lead series, 28-12
March 17	Fri	\$ vs. Longwood	Honolulu, Hawaii	4 p.m. HT	SDSU won (10-1) first-ever meeting in '05
March 18	Sat	\$ vs. Northwestern	Honolulu, Hawaii	10 a.m. HT	Wildcats went 42-18 in 2005; return 8 starters
March 19	Sun	\$ vs. Kansas	Honolulu, Hawaii	11 a.m. HT	1st meeting for Christina Ross vs. former school
March 31	Fri	*at Brigham Young (Gm. 1)	Provo, Utah	5 p.m. MT	24th meeting; Aztecs lead, 12-11
March 31	Fri	*at Brigham Young (Gm. 2)	Provo, Utah	7 p.m. MT	SDSU 6-5 all-time in Provo
April 1	Sat	*at Utah (Gm. 1)	Salt Lake City, Utah	Noon PT	Utah's won 5 of last 7 meetings; 41-21 overall
April 1	Sat	*at Utah (Gm. 2)	Salt Lake City, Utah	2 p.m. MT	Aztecs 61-61 against Utah schools
April 7	Fri	*NEW MEXICO (Gm. 1)	SDSU Stadium	5 p.m. PT	Meeting for 65th time; Most of any SDSU opp.
April 7	Fri	*NEW MEXICO (Gm. 2)	SDSU Stadium	7 p.m. PT	Aztecs lead series, 40-25
April 9	Sun	*COLORADO STATE (Gm. 1)	SDSU Stadium	Noon PT	Won last three meetings against Rams in 2005
April 9	Sun	*COLORADO STATE (Gm. 2)	SDSU Stadium	2 p.m. PT	Aztecs 24-12 since 2000 vs. Colorado State
April 15	Sat	*UNLV (Gm. 1)	SDSU Stadium	1 p.m. PT	Series is tied, 31-31; Rebels won all 5 in '05
April 15	Sat	*UNLV (Gm. 2)	SDSU Stadium	3 p.m. PT	18 games in series have been decided by 1 run
April 21	Fri	*at Colorado State (Gm. 1)	Fort Collins, Colo.	1 p.m. MT	Aztecs 14-15 all-time in Fort Collins
April 21	Fri	*at Colorado State (Gm. 2)	Fort Collins, Colo.	3 p.m. MT	SDSU 3-8 in 2nd game of doubleheaders in '05
April 23	Sun	*at New Mexico (Gm. 1)	Albuquerque, N.M.	Noon MT	Aztecs 28-13 vs. Lobos in MWC play
April 23	Sun	*at New Mexico (Gm. 2)	Albuquerque, N.M.	2 p.m. MT	SDSU 5-7 in Albuquerque since 1999
April 29	Sat	*at UNLV (Gm. 1)	Las Vegas, Nev.	5 p.m. PT	31 games in series decided by 2 runs or less
April 29	Sat	*at UNLV (Gm. 2)	Las Vegas, Nev.	7 p.m. PT	Aztecs 20-22 all-time in the state of Nevada
May 4	Thur	*Brigham Young (Gm. 1)	SDSU Stadium	5 p.m. PT	Cougars have won last 4 meetings at SDSU
May 4	Thur	*Brigham Young (Gm. 2)	SDSU Stadium	7 p.m. PT	SD or BYU has won MWC 4 of last 5 years
May 7	Sun	*UTAH (Gm. 1)	SDSU Stadium	1 p.m. PT	Utah is 20-15, since 2000 vs. SDSU
May 7	Sun	*UTAH (Gm. 2)	SDSU Stadium	3 p.m. PT	SD 7-19 all-time in final regular season game
May 11	Thur	at MWC Championships	Las Vegas, Nev.	All Day	Aztecs look to reach NCAAs for third time
May 12	Fri	at MWC Championships	Las Vegas, Nev.	All Day	
May 13	Sat	at MWC Championships	Las Vegas, Nev.	All Day	

CAPS - home games

~ - Campbell/Cartier Classic

! - UC Santa Barbara Tournament

@ - Aztec Invitational

- Aztec Classic

\$ - Hawai'i Tournament

* - Mountain West Conference Game

Season Outlook



SDSU SOFTBALL

UNIVERSITY FACILITIES | UFFUNEMENT | HISTORY | REVIEW | PLAYERS | COACHES/STAFF | INTRODUCTION

Sometimes a problem can be a good thing. With 13 letterwinners and seven starters returning, and the addition of nine newcomers to the 2006 San Diego State softball team, 10th year head coach Kathy Van Wyk and the rest of the Aztec coaching staff face a major obstacle - how to find enough playing time for all of the talented players?

Coming off a disappointing season in which SDSU won only four games in the Mountain West Conference, its fewest in the six-year history of the league, coach Van Wyk is eager to get the 2006 season underway.

"The month of April was disappointing," Van Wyk said. "We started out fantastic (in February) - probably better than anybody anticipated because of all our newcomers. Maybe I put too much pressure on (the players) for the conference season.

"One thing is for certain about last year, we gained a lot of experience. We learned a tremendous amount and made the best of a bad situation. We finished strong and that was encouraging heading into this season."

The Aztecs return senior Celena Velasquez, a two-time MWC Pitcher of the Year and arguably the best pitcher ever to wear an Aztec jersey, and classmate Megan Hartung, a 2004 all-MWC selection. Throw in seven sophomores who saw action in at least 36 games last year and an immediate impact in transfer Christina Ross, one can see why Van Wyk would be so excited for the upcoming campaign.

"That sophomore class will be the heart and soul of our team this year," Van Wyk said. "Not only that, but we added another sophomore in Christina Ross who has a ton of Division I experience under her belt after playing at Kansas last year. The experience they received in 2005 is huge for us this year."

Another bonus for the Aztecs in 2006 will be being able to practice at SDSU Softball Stadium, something they didn't get to do before their first game of the 2005 campaign.

"Last year was also tough for us because it almost felt like we didn't have a home field," Van Wyk said. "We didn't feel comfortable with some

things like the way the balls bounced and the direction of the wind. We spent a lot of time in (the stadium) in the fall and now we finally feel like we've regained our home field advantage."

Pitchers

The pitching staff will once again be the strong point of this year's squad and Van Wyk thinks that this season's staff could be one of the best ever at SDSU.

"There aren't a lot of teams who can boast two really strong starting pitchers," Van Wyk said. "We've been fortunate enough to have that the past couple of years with Celena and Cori Janelli. I think it is a luxury when your starter can go into the fifth or sixth inning every game and this year we have three or four of those starters."

Velasquez, a three-time all-MWC selection and 10-time MWC Pitcher of the Week, will once again be the ace of the pitching staff. Statistically, she is coming off her most successful season on The Mesa.

In 2005, Velasquez went 14-12 in 188.2 innings with a 1.19 ERA, 26th lowest in the nation. She ranked first in the MWC in ERA, opponent batting average (.174), strikeouts (211) and saves (6). Velasquez also set Aztec single-season records in combined shutouts (12), solo shutouts (10), strikeout-to-walk ratio (10.05), strikeouts, saves and opponent batting average. In her three years at SDSU, she is ranked among the all-time career leaders in all 16 pitching categories, including first in saves (11), strikeout to walk ratio (7.147) and solo shutouts (19). Velasquez is also second in wins (45), win percentage (.643), strikeouts (436) and opponent average (.203).

"Obviously, Celena is going to be our leader again this year and I expect nothing different than what she has done the last three years," Van Wyk said. "She is a strikeout pitcher which makes it easier for the defense. The competitiveness of the other young pitchers is only going to make her better."

Ross, a lefthander, will likely be the No. 2 starter for the Aztecs in 2006 after going 12-9 with a 1.93 ERA for the University of Kansas last season, leading the Jayhawks to the NCAA Regional and their best record (31-24) since 1999.

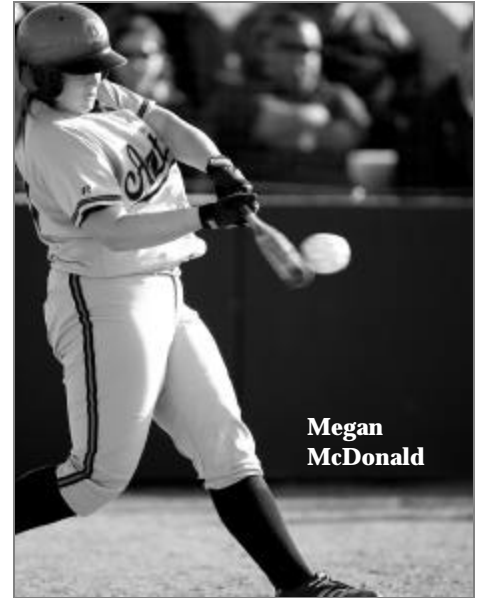
"One thing that is noticeable with Christina is that she is a real competitor," Van Wyk said. "She is tough on herself and has high expectations. When you are in that circle, you need to be tough. I am anxious to see her develop as the year goes on."

Three other pitchers are expected to log innings for SDSU including junior Katie Cochran and freshmen Melissa Owens and Monica Alnes.

Cochran went 3-2 last season with a 3.27 ERA in 17 appearances.

"I think Katie has gotten through the first season jitters and is really going to come around and pitch with more confidence for us," Van Wyk said.

"The good thing about our depth is that (Melissa) Owens and (Monica) Alnes will both get time to pitch without having that much pressure, because Celena and Christina will put in the major innings," Van Wyk added. "Owens is a power pitcher who should dominate hitters when she develops, while Alnes has the ability to keep batters off-balanced by throwing a lot of



Megan McDonald

off-speed stuff."

Catchers

The Aztecs will also be deep at the catching position with the return of sophomore Megan McDonald and the addition of freshman Erin Floros, a nationally rated recruit who was courted by such schools as Oklahoma and Washington.

"Megan and Erin have the ability to be starters at any Division I program," said Van Wyk, who is expected to have the two share playing time at the beginning of the season. "Until one of them really stands out, they'll continue to split the duties. It's such a physically demanding position and it's nice to have them both out there to back each other up."

McDonald tied for the team lead last season with four home runs. She also led the squad and was seventh in the MWC with 19 walks, just one walk shy of 10th place on the all-time single-season SDSU list.

"They both swing the bat very well," Van Wyk said. "Erin is more of a gap hitter, but has the ability to hit for power. Megan is a big swinger and a big power hitter."

Senior Jamie Burton could also see some playing time behind the plate or as a pinch hitter or runner.

"There isn't one player on the team who has a better attitude or a better work ethic than Jamie Burton," said Van Wyk.

Freshman Sydney Fleming is expected to red-shirt due to the depth at the catching spot.

Infielders

The infielders, although young with three sophomores and a freshman leading the way, will be one of the strengths on this year's squad.

Sophomores Allison Smith and Chrissie Markham are expected to start at the middle infield spots, although Van Wyk hasn't decided who will play what position.

"I haven't set who is going to be at short and who will be at second," Van Wyk said. "I like both at each position in different ways. (Allison and Chrissie) haven't blossomed yet, but when



Celena Velasquez

Season Outlook



SDSU SOFTBALL

they do, I think they are going to surprise some people."

Smith was a pleasant surprise for the Aztecs in 2005, finishing the campaign with a .285 average, third-highest on the team, and a team-leading nine doubles.

"Allison was probably the biggest surprise for us last year," Van Wyk said. "We knew she was a great defensive player, but she really came through offensively and provided some clutch hitting for us."



Chrissie Markham

Markham showed some signs of power last year as her two home runs were third-most on the team and she was one of only five SDSU players to record at least 10 RBI.

"Chrissie is a very talented player and I think the light is ready to go on anytime," Van Wyk said. "She's going to be a force for us in the near future."

The third base position is still up for grabs with sophomore Taryin Casillas being the slight favorite heading into the season, but will be facing a tough challenge from Owens.

"Taryin is going to get a run for her money at third base from Melissa Owens," Van Wyk said. "It's really going to come down to who hits the ball."

Despite playing in only 41 of the Aztecs' 57 games because of various injuries, Casillas was probably SDSU's most dominating power hitter. Casillas tied McDonald with a team-leading four home runs, a mark which also tied her for the sixth-most in a single season in Aztec history. She also led the squad with a .410 slugging percentage.

"Taryin started out in the fall on fire, but she hit a patch where she had some injuries," Van Wyk said. "She came back late and was one of the main reasons we finished strong."

Owens is a power hitter who will earn some quality at-bats, but it's her speed that impresses Van Wyk the most.

"Melissa is faster than people think and she will surprise people on the base paths," Van Wyk said. "She hits the ball for power and we're really excited to have her (on our team)."

Alnes is the odds on favorite to win the starting job at first base after showing signs of brilliance there in the fall.

"One thing that I have already noticed is that Monica has taken a leadership role at first base," Van Wyk said. "She is all business on the field and you can tell that from her demeanor and her intensity. She's a born leader and being at first base is great for that."

After redshirting the 2005 season recovering from a torn rotator cuff, junior Christina Hollingshead will spend some time as the designated player.

"Christy swings the bat very well, is a power-hitter and will get many at-bats for us this year," said Van Wyk.

Junior Amanda Beasley will also be counted on for some valuable playing time because of her ability to play at both the infield and outfield positions.

"Amanda Beasley is a versatile athlete who can play numerous positions," Van Wyk said. "She is a great kid, has good work ethic and a great attitude - someone a team really can't do without."

Freshman Danielle Bryan will most likely red-shirt in her first season on The Mesa.

Outfield

The outfield is probably the most experienced group on the team with two seniors and last season's second-leading hitter returning.

Hartung looks to regain her form from 2004, when she hit .364 with 64 hits and 13 doubles, in one of the best seasons ever recorded by an Aztec. Last year, Hartung hit .242 and was second on the team with 17 runs scored.

"Meagan could see action in centerfield or she could come back up a middle infield position," Van Wyk said. "One way or another, we need her bat and we've got to get her in the lineup. She went through some disappointments and didn't handle them as well as she should have last season, but she will be that much more mentally stronger this season."

Bree Boyer, who is tied for ninth on the SDSU all-time list with 29 sacrifice hits, is the other senior who could see extensive playing time in the outfield.

"Bree has been one of the most consistent performers over her three years," Van Wyk said. "She never lets down, mentally or physically, and her work ethic is a great example for the younger players."

Sophomore Kristen Carranza, arguably the Aztecs' best hitter in 2005, will hope to pick up where she left off last season. She led the team in games played (56), games started (54), runs (18), hits (45), triples (three), RBI (22), total bases (61), HBP (six) and on-base percentage (.368).

"Kristen Carranza was probably our most consistent hitter last season," said Van Wyk. "She has a tremendous amount of confidence, can hit for power and has the ability to go the other way. She is everything you want in a No. 5 hitter."

Another sophomore who is expected to log some innings in the outfield is Tamani Wells. Wells' speed makes it hard not to find a spot for her in the lineup.

"Once Tamani gains a little bit more experience, she is going to be dangerous," Van Wyk



Kristen Carranza

said. "She is so fast, so strong and really a gifted athlete."

Freshmen Alysha Daigle and Kasey Mytinger will add depth in the SDSU outfield and both have the potential to earn some playing time this season.

"Alysha has a great deal of raw talent, but lacks experience," Van Wyk said. "Mytinger is a big-swinger with great offensive abilities."

Sophomore Dani Sodoti will most likely red-shirt after having surgery in July.

Schedule

The Aztec coaching staff certainly didn't make things easy for the young squad with a schedule that will feature several nationally prominent teams early in the season. Thirteen of the 29 opponents it plays this year advanced to the 2005 NCAA tournament, including four of the five teams it faces in the 16th Annual Campbell-Cartier Classic at SDSU Softball Stadium from Feb. 9-12.

"There's no working ourselves into the season," said Van Wyk. "Our first five games (Cal Poly, Cal, UMass, Oklahoma State and UCLA) will definitely be the hardest to start a schedule that we've ever had. It will be great for the players though. It is a great opportunity to test ourselves against some of the best teams in the country right from the get. Hopefully, we'll find out what our shortcomings are and grow as a team."

SDSU also plays host to two other tournaments - the Aztec Invitational (Feb. 23-26) and the Aztec Classic (March 3-5).

"We always tend to draw very well in our tournaments, both in state and out of state," Van Wyk said. "The beauty about running these tournaments is that we can bring in some of the best competition to San Diego and get to play the top teams in the country on our home field."

The Aztecs begin MWC play on March 31 with a doubleheader at last year's regular season and MWC tournament champion BYU.

"The Mountain West is as strong as ever," Van Wyk said. "All the teams are competitive and it's a dog fight every time you go out there."

HELPING TEAMS RE-STOCK THE TROPHY CASE



-J. SCOTT

-T. SCOTT