

Junior achievement puts Hunt on top

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Pitching, hitting talent earns Grafton standout NSC Player of Year award

Most area softball fans probably expected Grafton's Amanda Hunt to be one of the top pitchers in the North Shore Conference this spring.

How many were sure the junior would win Player of the Year honors in a league traditionally dominated by senior talent is another question.



Hunt eliminated all doubt, though, by excelling with her arm and bat on the way to the NSC's top individual award in a vote of coaches.

Coming off all-league second-team honors last year, Hunt became a first-team pitcher this season. She posted a 7-3 record with a microscopic 0.64 earned-run average in NSC play.

In 66 innings, Hunt struck out 73 and walked 16.

At the plate, Hunt was nearly as impressive. She batted .419 with a .605 slugging average, had a homer, triple and three doubles and led Grafton with 15 runs batted in.

"Amanda had a solid season," Grafton coach Ken Hunt said of his daughter.

"As a pitcher, she really improved her control. She was always around the dish with her pitches."

Amanda Hunt's leadership was crucial to the Black Hawks, whose 10-4 league record was good for second place.

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Champion Germantown (14-0) grabbed the lion's share of the postseason honors by having three players named to the All-NSC first team and two selected for the second team.

In addition to Hunt, local players named to the top squad were Port Washington's Mikayla Hilton and Grafton's Emmy Kabitzke.

Among the second-team honorees were Grafton's Sarah Fischer, Lauren Lennon and Sann Maglio.

Hilton, a senior, received first-team recognition for the second straight season.

One of the league's top power hitters, Hilton batted .326 with a .478 slugging average and had 11 RBI. She also stole 11 bases.

"Mikayla had an outstanding season. She was one of our leaders again," said Port coach Steve Schmidt, whose team finished fourth with a 7-7 conference record.



"She could hit for power, and she was also very smart and aggressive on the bases."

Kabitzke, a junior, received a first-team nod as a utility player for her work as a pitcher and third baseman.

Named Grafton's most valuable player, she hit .362 and had a .412 on-base percentage. She drove in 12 runs, scored 11 runs and had three doubles.

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As a pitcher, Kabitzke posted a 3-1 record and 2.12 ERA. She struck out 22 in 29-2/3 innings.

"Emily pitched well and made a lot of nice plays for us at third base," coach Hunt said. "It's really nice to have a player like that handling an infield position when she's not pitching."

Underscoring the Black Hawks' depth this year is their trio of second-team selections.

Fischer, a senior, earned recognition as a catcher. She batted .292, had a .382 on-base percentage, led Grafton with six doubles and drew six walks.

"Sarah did a great job as our leadoff hitter," coach Hunt said. "She was small and tough to strike out.

"Behind the plate, she gave us excellent leadership. I let her call the game."

Lennon, a senior center fielder, received second-team honors despite missing six games due to an ankle injury.

She batted .333, had a .412 on-base percentage and drove in seven runs.

An outstanding defensive player, she committed no errors and had 10 putouts and two assists.

"It says something about Lauren to have the coaches vote for her even though she missed that many games," coach Hunt said.

Maglio, a junior left fielder, was named Grafton's top defensive player. She committed only one error and had 13 putouts, including "at least four diving catches," her coach said.

Maglio more than held her own at the plate, batting .333 with a .480 on-base percentage. She drew 10 walks, stole 14 bases and scored 11 runs.

Receiving honorable mention in the coaches' balloting were Grafton's Katie Hunt and Port's Maggie Schmit, Kelsey Brockman, Taylor Miller, Stephanie Volesky and Sam Wagner.

Katie Hunt, a freshman infielder, hit .317, had a .417 on-base percentage, scored 13 runs and drove in five.

Schmit, a sophomore pitcher, won seven games and had a 3.32 ERA in NSC play. She struck out 68 in 69-2/3 innings.

Schmit also hit .380 and stole 13 bases.

Brockman, a junior shortstop, batted .286 and led the Pirates' infield with 34 putouts.

Miller, a senior infielder, hit .262 after being slowed by injuries in previous seasons. She had 31 putouts.

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Volesky, a first baseman/pitcher, batted .359 and had 32 defensive assists.

Wagner, a senior outfielder, hit .311 and led the Pirates with a .578 slugging percentage. She had 12 RBI, scored 15 runs and stole eight bases.

GRAFTON PITCHER Amanda Hunt (top) and Port Washington catcher Mikayla Hilton (below) were chosen for the All-North Shore Conference first team in a recent vote of softball coaches. Also named to the first team was Grafton's Emmy Kabitzke. Photos by Sam Arendt