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# Diamond Ready: Seattle U Softball Preview

Bridget Lawrence, Staff Reporter



Sean Alexander



Sean Alexander

Seattle University Softball will be starting their preseason at the Black and Gold Classic in Orlando, Fla. Feb. 9. They have put a lot of work into off-season training and are ready to compete.

Head coach Geoff Hirai is more than ready to see them compete after months of training.

“Preseason is always trying to find your identity as a team. Every team is different and every team is new,” Hirai said. “We just got to figure out what we are and that’s what the preseason is for. So when they get into the conference play, then we know exactly what our identity is.”

After a 36-20 record in 2023 and a loss in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) Tournament championship, Hirai said his team is “itching at the bit to go play someone else.”

“Our expectations are pretty high this year. But, they’re always high every year. We want to win the WAC. We’re trying to go over there to be the best we can be,” Hirai said.

This year’s team has a range of experience on the roster, from transfer students to seniors. Senior pitcher Stefanie Madrigal has been a leader on the team throughout her career at Seattle U. Going into her last year of eligibility, she shared her mindset on how she’s going into this season.

“I’m going to enjoy everything and take it all in. Enjoy the little things, practices, games and traveling. I’m not going to really think about it being the last of anything because then I feel like it will put too much pressure on me to perform well,” Madrigal said.

Along with the experienced Redhawks on the roster, the team brought in Sophomore infielder Taylor Fitch and Junior pitcher Nicola Simpson, both of whom are transfers that bring other collegiate experience to the team. Fitch and Simpson are also originally from the Seattle area and now they are back in Washington competing for their home state.

“I was born and raised in Seattle, so it was really awesome coming home. It kind of made it an easier decision,” Simpson said.

Besides the location of Seattle U, the culture of the team was something that drew her in as well.

“You know a lot of people put family on a shirt and call it a day, but I really think that we embody that culture, and it’s just a team of best friends. I think a big thing in our culture is not leaving any stones unturned and going for it, and I think we really do that well,” Simpson said. “We hold each other accountable and our coaches hold us accountable, and our work ethic is really strong.”



Sean Alexander

Fitch attributed their hard offseason as being one of the reasons for the team being so close at this point.

“I feel like when you struggle through hard conditioning things together, then you kind of have a more unbreakable bond. I think that’s part of why our team chemistry is so good,” Fitch said.

With a chance to put that hard work to the test, Simpson is ready to get onto the diamond with her new teammates in Florida.

“I think it’s going to be awesome to get to compete with the girls. I mean at the end of the day that’s what it’s about, that’s why we play, because we love competing together,” Simpson said.

Madrigal is excited to compete in Florida because of the competition that they will face with teams like the University of Connecticut and the University of Central Florida.

“We’re ready for the challenge, that’s what we’re all about. Our goal is just trying to get ready for our conference which is competitive as well,” Madrigal said.

The team demonstrated a preparedness to go out and compete in Florida both mentally and physically. This season brings strong new talent this year and the same leadership that has kept the program steady as the team pursues that elusive WAC title.