CORTLAND SOFTBALL HOSTS SIX-TEAM NCAA REGIONAL

The Cortland softball team is hosting one of eight NCAA playoff regionals, Friday, May 9, through Monday, May 12, at the Dragon Field softball complex on the SUNY Cortland campus. The Red Dragons earned the top seed in the double-elimination tournament after winning the SUNYAC title last weekend. Union College (23-5) is the second seed, followed by third-seeded Ithaca College (28-9), fourth-seeded William Paterson (NJ) (27-10-1), fifth-seeded Elms College (MA) (28-5) and sixth-seeded King’s College (PA) (24-9).

Cortland (38-6-1), which set a school single-season record for victories, is ranked fifth nationally and returns to the NCAA playoffs for the first time since 1999 and the 10th time overall. The Red Dragons open play at 2 p.m. on Friday versus the winner of the 10 a.m. game between William Paterson and Elms. Ithaca faces King’s at noon on Friday, with the winner advancing to play Union at 4 p.m.

Four games, at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., are slated for Saturday and three teams will be eliminated by the end of the day. The losers’ bracket final is scheduled for Sunday at noon with the winner advancing to play the winners’ bracket finalist at 2 p.m. Should the losers’ bracket team gain a victory, a final game is scheduled for Monday at 10 a.m.

Cortland is led offensively by senior Julie Gentner (Williamsville/Williamsville South), juniors Lara Stone (Windsor) and Carin Piacente (Putnam Valley/Walter Panas) and freshman Jennifer Rockwell (Scotia). Gentner, a two-time All-American, is batting .385 with 17 doubles, eight homers and 41 RBI. Stone leads the team with a .393 average and is second with seven home runs and tied with Gentner for the team lead with 41 RBI. Piacente, Cortland’s career home run leader with 21, carries a .368 average into the regional with three round trippers and 31 RBI. Rockwell, named the SUNYAC First Year Player of the Year, is batting .333 with 12 doubles, two homers and 22 RBI. She also leads the team with 39 runs and 21 walks.

The Red Dragon pitching staff features a combination of youth and experience. Junior Lara Almansberger (Fairport) has posted a 15-1 record this spring with 65 strikeouts, a 1.94 ERA and two no-hitters. Freshman Stephanie Adamshick (Milton/Marlboro) is 14-3 with four saves, 116 strikeouts, 14 complete games and a 1.57 ERA. Classmate Maria McFeely (Hamburg/ Mt. Mercy Academy) has registered a 9-2 record with a team-leading 1.22 ERA in 14 appearances.

The winner of the regional earns a trip to the Division III Softball World Series in Salem, Virginia, May 15-19.

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