SUNY Cortland Softball Team Ranked Seventh in Pre-Season Division III Poll

The SUNY Cortland softball team is ranked seventh in the 2004 National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Division III pre-season poll. The top 25 teams are voted on by eight NCAA Division III head coaches representing the eight NCAA regions.

Tenth-year head coach Julie Lenhart's Red Dragons finished last season with a 42-8-1 record, establishing a new school mark for wins in a season, and ended the season tied for fifth nationally. Cortland captured the SUNYAC title and posted a 3-0 record in their NCAA regional to advance to the World Series for the first time since 1998 and the third time overall.

Cortland returns a pitching staff that features sophomore Stephanie Adamshick (Milton/Marlboro) (18-5 record, 1.62 ERA, 135 K), who was selected to the NCAA Div. III Regional all-tournament team, and senior Lara Almansberger (Fairport) (15-1, 2.02, 67 K), who earned All-ECAC Upstate New York and All-SUNYAC honors.

Top offensive returners include senior shortstop Lara Stone (.373, 7 HR, 42 RBI), a second team All-American and first team all-region outfielder last season who is making the move to the infield this spring. Senior first baseman Carin Piacente (Putnam Valley/Walter Panas) (.356, 3 HR, 33 RBI) was a first team all-region and first team All-ECAC Upstate New York pick. Sophomore outfielder Jen Rockwell (Scotia) (.331, 23 RBI, 11 SB) earned a place on the all-region second team and was an ECAC all star.

Cortland will open its season March 7-12 with 10 games at the Rebel Spring Games in Orlando, Florida. Among Cortland's opponents in Florida will be fourth-ranked Muskingum College and 22th-ranked Simpson College. The Red Dragons start conference play at home against Brockport on March 31.

NFCA 2004 Division III Softball Poll
(2003 record in parentheses)

1. Salisbury (Md.) (45-6-1) 16. Chicago (23-10)
2. Central (Iowa) (31-4-1) 17. Keene St. (N.H.) (27-14)
3. Emory (Ga.) (38-6) 18. William Paterson (N.J.) (29-12-1)
5. Illinois Wesleyan (38-8) 20. Union (26-7)
7. CORTLAND (42-8-1) 22. Simpson (Iowa) (31-4-1)
8. Wartburg (Iowa) (38-10) 23. Tufts (Mass.) (26-13)
10. Moravian (Pa.) (32-10) 25. Western Conn. St. (24-9)
11. Alma (Mich.) (32-6) Others receiving votes: St. Thomas (Minn.), Linfield (Ore.),
12. Methodist (N.C.) (38-10) Bethany (W. Va.), Louisiana College, California St.-Hayward, Cabrini
13. Montclair St. (N.J.) (36-9) (Pa.), Chapman (Calif.), East Texas Baptist, Wisconsin-Whitewater,
14. Ithaca (30-10) Lake Forest (Ill.), Wittenberg (Ohio)
15. California Lutheran (24-20)

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