

## Warriors Open Their Season At Southern Indiana

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The Wayne State University softball team is collecting its bats and gloves and preparing for its first taste of the 2001 season in the Southern Indiana Tournament, February 24-25 in Evansville, Ind. The Warriors will play three games Saturday, Feb. 24 battling, Southern Indiana, Grand Valley State and St. Joseph's. Depending on how the Warriors fare against the three squads will determine the pairings for Sunday, Feb. 25th.

Wayne State is coming off a crazy 2000 season in which the Warriors finished with a record of 27-37. Wayne State started the season off by losing 20 of its first 24 games. After some adjustments, WSU hit a hot streak at the end of the season winning five of its last six games to advance to the finals of the GLIAC tournament. Head Coach **Gary Bryce**, who is entering his 20th season with the Warriors, is looking for his squad to get a good jumpstart in the 2001 season.

"This will be a very competitive tournament for us to begin the season," said Bryce who has 613 victories in his WSU career. "Due to the weather we haven't been able to get outside and practice as a team. We have had some quality workouts indoors, but nothing that really simulates game situations. Even though this is our first contests of the year, these are still important games because they involve teams in our region."

The 2001 softball team consists of only one senior, two juniors and 11 underclassmen. The Warrior pitching staff which consists of **Amy Thiede (Riverview, Mich.)**, **Connie Milroth (St. Clair Shores, Mich./Lakeview)** and **Tara Sheridan (Detroit, Mich./Regina)** are all sophomores. The Warriors offensively return outfielder **Kelly Kashmerick (Flushings, Mich.)**, who was Second Team All-GLIAC, infielder **Cindy Chapp (Sterling Heights, Mich./St. Clement)**, who hit .288 with 34 hits, and infielder **Betsy Kirk (Etobicoke, Ontario)**, who was third on the team with a .285 average.

"The best way to describe this team is young," said Bryce. "Our strength is that we have 14 players that can play. We have the ability to put anyone in the ball game with that person doing a solid job. Last season we struggled from the plate and that was one of our points of emphasis this offseason."

The Warriors, following their weekend in Indiana, will travel to Dallas, Texas for the Division II Opening Classic to play six contests from March 3-4. WSU will then travel to Orlando to play in the Rebel Spring Games to play 14 games from March 10-17. The Warriors will then host their annual Wayne State University Tournament, March 24-25.

“Our goal this season is to win games,” said Bryce. “I believe if you play tough competition you will have an opportunity to see where you stand. At the beginning of the season it is important to for us not to peak too early and save our best softball for the end of the season. The first few weeks will give us a good gauge on what we can do and what type of product we have on the field.