

Belhaven Blazers

Reach New Heights in 2010

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Jackson, MS: Expectations were high for the Belhaven softball team coming into the 2010 season with the ultimate goal of reaching the NAIA National Tournament. Needless to say that goal was accomplished along with many other benchmarks that Head Coach Rick Fremin set out before his ball club at the beginning of the season. The Blazers won a program best 54 games in 2010 while losing only ten contests the entire season. That equates to an amazing winning percentage of .884. Belhaven also captured the GCAC Regular Season Championship with a 13-3 record and despite bowing out of the GCAC Tournament, earned an at large bid to the NAIA National Softball Tournament. The Blazers were ranked 6th in the Final NAIA Top 25 Poll after having been tabbed as high as 5th earlier in the season.

Belhaven fought through some cold weather early in the season and jumped out of the gate at 10-0. The first loss of the season came at Delta State University, but it did not slow the Blazers' momentum. Belhaven fought back in the second game of the double header to grab a win from the Lady Statesman and notched one of many wins against quality non-conference opponents. Other key non-conference wins were against Auburn-Montgomery, Trevecca Nazarene University, Southern Nazarene University, St. Xavier University, Robert Morris College, Columbia College, and Olivet Nazarene University. Belhaven also dominated the GCAC in the regular season taking three out of four games against both William Carey University and the University of Mobile who are perennial powers in the GCAC.

Belhaven made it to the championship game of the GCAC tournament, but William Carey needing to win to keep their national tournament hopes alive, rose to the challenge and captured the tournament crown. The Blazers, based on their high ranking in the final top 25 poll, secured an at-large bid to the national tournament and after a couple of weeks to prepare, got off to a hot start in the pool play portion of the tournament. Belhaven topped Northwood University (TX), Columbia College (MO), and then blasted Dickinson State University (ND) to make it to the double elimination bracket portion of the tournament which meant the tournament field of thirty-two now stood at eight. Unfortunately, the Blazers were edged 4-2 by the eventual national champion Simon Fraser University (BC) sending Belhaven into the loser's bracket. Belhaven topped Trevecca Nazarene University the next day, but were knocked out by William Carey University in an elimination game that ended the season.

The Blazers had nothing to hang their heads about as they turned in the best season in the history of the program. Five different Blazers earned GCAC All-Conference honors for their efforts during the 2010 season. Britney Webb, Sarah



Sarah Burns



Tiffany Ansley



Christina Jaques



Head Coach Rick Fremin

Burns, Lizzy Hess, Christina Jaques, and Tiffany Ansley were all recognized for their part in helping guide the Blazers to a 54-10 overall record and GCAC regular season championship. Webb, Burns, Jaques, and Ansley were named all conference while Hess was tabbed as the GCAC Freshman of the Year. Webb, Jaques, and Burns went on to earn NAIA All American Honors and that same trio ended up being named to the National Fastpitch Coaches Association East All-Region and All American Teams. Ansley was also named to the NFCA East All Region Team. Coach Fremin was also named GCAC Coach of the Year and was the third Belhaven coach to be given this honor this past season. The Belhaven coaching staff was also named NFCA East Region staff of the year.

Belhaven broke three NAIA records during the 2010 season and two of them were turned in by Britney Webb. Webb, a senior second baseman from Mobile, AL, compiled a .435 batting average with seventeen doubles, eleven triples, four home runs and 54 RBI. The eleven triples by Webb were the second most in the NAIA this year. Earlier in the season, Webb broke the NAIA single season and career stolen base records and eventually finished 2010 with 80 steals which was tops in the league. For her career, Webb racked up a total of 213 stolen bases which is a new NAIA National record. Webb along with Jaques, who had 60 steals during the season, helped Belhaven set a new NAIA team national record for most stolen bases in 2010. Webb was also named the 2010 recipient of the NFCA Adidas Golden Shoe Award given each year to the nation's top base stealer in each of the collegiate divisions. The Blazers swiped 229 bases in 267 attempts to break the previous mark of 226 set by Culver-Stockton (MO) in 1994.

Burns, a junior pitcher from Edmond, OK, had an outstanding year in the circle for Belhaven as she pitched her way to a 30-6 record in 2010. Burns was fourth in the NAIA in wins and compiled an ERA of 1.70 with 246 strikeouts in 223 innings pitched. Burns tossed 20 complete games and also recorded a pair of saves and the 30 wins is the most in Belhaven history for a single season. Her strikeout total was third highest in school history.

Jaques, a junior infielder from Orange, TX, led the Blazers in hitting with a



Britney Webb

.480 batting average including 11 doubles, seven triples and a team high 10 home runs. Jaques had 51 runs batted in and also had a team best slugging percentage of .758. She also had 60 stolen bases and was third in the NAIA in total triples and fourth in total hits with 95.

Ansley, a senior third baseman from Miami, FL, hit .376 with nine home runs and led the team in runs batted in with 64. Ansley had 17 doubles tying Webb for the team lead in that category. Ansley was also solid defensively as she committed only eight errors in 118 chances at the hot corner.

Belhaven also posted a team batting average of .349 which is second only to the average of .351 a season ago. The Blazers had a school record 351 RBI in what was a record breaking season in more ways than one.

"This was by far the best group we have had at Belhaven in my five years of being the head coach," said Head Coach Rick Fremin. "The national tournament experience is something that we will remember forever. They just really had a passion to win and to dominate their opponent which I believe led us to breaking 47 national or school records. I really saw the favor of God upon us throughout the year."

The Belhaven coaching staff was also recognized for their efforts with the team this season. The staff led by Coach Fremin was selected as the NFCA NAIA East Region coaching staff of the year. The 2010 season was certainly a memorable season and the team is looking forward to another great year in 2011.



Katie Sanders