

2007 Baseball/Softball Preview

Southern Choctaw

BASEBALL

Last Year
Did not make the playoffs

Graduated

Brad Terry, Cody Clarke, John Pascaley, Dexter Williamson, Eric Chapman, Corbett Hollister, Brigham Young

Outlook

The Indians won their first game in over four years last season, but with most of that bunch gone and a young nucleus of seventh and eighth graders on the roster, another win might take awhile.

PREVIEW

When coaches say their team is young, they usually mean that they have a few ninth and tenth graders scattered among the upperclassmen. But when Southern Choctaw's Jeremy Noland says his team is young, it could be construed as the understatement of the year.

"I start all seventh and eighth graders," Noland said candidly. "I've got an eleventh grade catcher, but the rest are all junior high kids."

The is basically a junior varsity squad playing a varsity schedule. In fact, the

Indians are so young that more than half of the starters are seventh graders. The rest are eighth graders, with lone upperclassman, junior Patrick Chapman behind the plate.

The good news, however, is that these greenies were all standouts in youth league baseball, which most of them were still playing as recently as last year. All-stars like eighth graders **Tori Adams**, **Seth Doggett** and **Andrew Philon**, dot the Indians' starting line-up with equally green seventh graders **Crimson Lewis**, **Shaq Pearson**, **Tyler Johnson** and **Justin Allen**. These guys are just a year or two removed from shining on summer league diamonds with 12- and 13-year-olds.

This is the varsity Indians, mind you.

Although the youth movement at Southern Choctaw is sure to go through some growing pains this season, it certainly makes the future of Indian baseball shine a bit brighter in the eyes of Coach Noland.

"Sure we are going to take some lumps this year," Noland admitted, acknowledging that his squad has already taken some beatings via the ten-run rule. "But in two years, if this group will stay together, we WILL win some games."

Noland had determination and confidence in his voice when he finished that last sentence. He even reiterated, "not



might, but WILL, win some games."

His confidence in these mighty-mites is based on the fact that, despite their age and size, these kids can really play.

Start with **Tori Adams**. He could play anywhere, but right now he is the team's first baseman and one of the top starting pitchers. **Tori**, who was listed on last year's football roster at 5'4", 100 pounds, has all the makings of a great baseball player, he just needs the physique to start dominating at the high school level.

The same can be said of second baseman **Crimson Lewis**. **Lewis**, who is the same size as **Adams**, minus a pound or two, is a hard-nosed player that many think - with a few more slices of cornbread sticking to his ribs - will be special. He already bats in the top of the line-up where he regularly puts the ball in play. He is also becoming automatic on routine grounders at second base.

Another young one destined for greatness is **Andrew Philon**. At 5'6", 160 pounds, **Philon** actually has enough power at the plate to do some damage. He also possess a strong enough arm to get the ball from his shortstop position to first base,

a throw that challenges many upperclassmen. **Philon's** another that can and will play any position, including pitcher.

Probably the team's top pitcher, however, and most versatile player is **Tyler Johnson**. When not on the mound, **Johnson** plays shortstop, center field or catcher. **Johnson** is just one more reason things are looking up at Southern Choctaw.

Rounding out these wonder-kids is **Seth Doggett**, **Justin Allen** and **Shaq Pearson**.

Seth Doggett is another player that has the skills to play any position. Right now, however, he has been used at first,

outfield and as a starting pitcher.

Justin Allen has been getting the call in the outfield, while **Shaq Pearson** is manning third base. All are future stars just weighting for some size and experience to come their way.

The old man of the bunch is junior **Patrick Chapman**. The younger brother of Eric Chapman, who caught for last year's team that broke a four-year losing streak with two wins over Fruitdale, **Patrick** possess the toughness and know-how to manage a game with this young pitching staff. As expected, he is also the Indians' most accom-

plished batter. He has a good cut that produces base hits and gappers. **Patrick** might also see playing time in the outfield.

As with all of these young players, no one is really sure exactly where they will end up playing. Most of these guys have five or six years in front of them, so a position change or two is almost inevitable.

Sure, all these junior high players starting on the varsity doesn't bode well for the Indians' chances of winning lots of games this year, but in the years to come, a much needed renaissance now seems certain.

Colin's Three to Watch

Tori Adams

This seventh grader is one of the best baseball players in the county, despite his minute 5'4", 100-pound frame. **Adams** is one of the team's best pitchers, fielders, batters, you name it, he can do it.

Patrick Chapman

The veteran of the group and just a junior, **Chapman** is the lone player with the stature to make big a difference.

Seth Doggett, Tyler Johnson, Crimson Lewis, Andrew Philon, Justin Allen, Shaq Pearson

Take your pick of any of these junior high players to blossom into stars. Actually it will likely be all of them shining.

Southern Choctaw Baseball
2007 Schedule

Feb. 26	CCHS	away	4
Mar. 3	Millry (2)	away	1
Mar. 9	Bayside (2)*	away	4
Mar. 12	CCHS (JV)	away	4
Mar. 15	CCHS (JV)	away	4
Mar. 16	Leroy*	away	3:30
Mar. 17	Fruitdale Tournament	away	TBA
Mar. 20	Excel*	home	4
Mar. 22	Fruitdale	home	3:30
Mar. 23	Flomaton (2)*	away	4
Mar. 26	Millry	home	3:30
Mar. 27	Bayside*	home/Toxey	4
Mar. 29	Sweetwater	away	3
Apr. 3	Leroy*	home	4
Apr. 5	Excel*	away	4
Apr. 7	CCHS	home	4
Apr. 12	Sweetwater	home	3:30

All home games will be played at Zack Rogers in Butler unless otherwise noted

* - area games

2007 Baseball/Softball Preview

Southern Choctaw

SOFTBALL

Last Season
Did not make the playoffs

Graduated

Celeste Napier, Apryll Sims, Stephanie Turner, Lakendra Bonner

Outlook

A talent group of fresh new pitchers has these Indians thinking turn-around

PREVIEW

When head coach Charles Chaney showed up for the first practice, he was greeted with some pleasant surprises.

First, he was blessed with nearly thirty girls trying out for a team that lost the bulk of their starters from last season.

That's good news.

Next, he couldn't believe his eyes when he saw some of the pitching talent he had.

That's even better.

"We actually have

good pitching this year, but they are just young," Chaney warned. "But if we can get anything out of our defense, we can be competitive."

The young pitchers Chaney is referring to are seventh graders **Taylor Phillips** and **Haley Adams**, sophomore **Jessica Giles** and junior **Laneka Bonner**.

Although **Bonner** is an upperclassman, she is inexperienced at the varsity level with this being her first year of softball. **Giles** is another quality pitcher that hasn't logged many innings on the mound, while **Phillips** and **Adams** enter the high school ranks after years of summer league dominance.

All three are basic fastball, curveball pitchers.

Taylor Phillips is probably the most polished starter thanks to her ability to pinpoint her pitches and limit walks.

Haley Adams throws the hardest fastball of the group, while **Bonner** and **Giles** have the stuff to either start or relieve.

The fact that the Indians, a team that basically used one starter last year, have four quality pitchers, bodes well for a team looking for some much needed wins.

At first base will be eighth grader **Jennifer Carlisle**, while second is freshman **Shaniece Goings** or maybe **Bree Bonner**. Shortstop will be **Haley Adams** and, when **Adams** is pitching, look for freshman **Bionca Boone**. At third is eighth grader **Malia Sims**.

So far this season



during the Indians 0-2 start, the infield has been a major problem. In their 16-3 loss to Clarke County, Indian infielders made seven errors.

In the outfield will be **Laneka Bonner** in center with junior **Torri Bonner** in right. Right now, junior **Samantha Sims** is the right fielder, but coaches say that the position, like many, is still up for grabs.

Behind the plate will be Patrician-transfer **Jessica Giles**. **Giles** can and will be used anywhere before the season is over. She is the team's most prepared all-around player and should prove to be a major asset this season and in the years to come.

With no seniors and a bevy of junior high and underclassmen on the roster, this might be a long season for the Indians, but, according to Chaney, "the pieces are certainly here for the future."

(Ed. note: Due to lack of space, the SCHS softball schedule will appear in next issue. -CM)

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