

Overbay signs to play softball at Bethel



Louisburg High School senior Emalee Overbay signed her letter of intent on Jan. 4 to play softball for Bethel College. Sitting next to Emalee are her parents Tom and Donna Overbay. Standing is Louisburg High School softball coach John Ozier, summer team coach Dave Boles, Bethel coach Stacy Middleton, KC Crossfire coach Dan Delana and Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry.

Softball has been a part of Emalee Overbay's life as long she could remember.

Whether it was when she first started playing T-ball in kindergarten on a Thanksgiving Day with her family or the numerous spring and summers she spent at the diamond with her school or club team – her bat and glove have always been within reach.

Even with a past filled with memories, Overbay knows there are plenty more to come in the future.

Overbay fulfilled her dream of playing collegiate softball on Jan. 4 in front of her family and friends at Louisburg High School when she signed her letter of intent to play at Bethel College. She will begin her career as a Thresher under head coach Stacy Middleton.

"It is a real surreal moment for me," Overbay said. "I never thought it would actually be happening right now. I never thought that I would be lucky enough to have a great coach like Stacy like I am going to have for college. I am excited for who I am going to be and what college is going to teach me. I have had such great support from everyone around me and I have had a great environment with team players and coaches that built me up and made me who I am today."

Overbay will join at Bethel team that is still fairly new. The Threshers started their program in 2011 and are coming off an 11-win season – the best in their history.

Several other schools recruited Overbay, including Oklahoma Wesleyan, Central Methodist, Missouri Valley and Peru State (Neb.), but her relationship with her new coach was a big factor in her decision.

"The coach was the nicest woman I have ever met, honestly. She has huge heart and she cares about the kids and she wants you to do great things," Overbay said. "I met coach Middleton at a camp this summer and instantly connected with her. She was so welcoming and spoke to me like an actual person and not just a coach and a player. The environment the school had, and the feeling that I had while I was there, made me feel like I could call this place home for the next four years."



Emalee Overbay hopes to continue her catching duties next season at Bethel College.

The Louisburg High School senior has performed well for the Lady Cats in her time with the program as she has started since she was a freshman.

Overbay earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors last season as a catcher and she performed well at the plate. She was second on the team with a .400 batting average, and recorded 32 hits with a team-high 10 doubles, five triples and a home run. She also finished with 20 RBIs and a team-high .688 slugging percentage.

After talking with the Bethel coaches, Overbay will get a chance to catch for the Threshers next season and possibly play some outfield as well as a second position.

“There is a lot that I still have to learn,” she said. “The game is going to be faster, but the coaches I have had have taught me well enough to be mentally prepared and expect things and be on my toes at all times. I am a hard worker and I will put all the effort I have to become a better player and the one coach Middleton needs me to be.”

Overbay’s new coaches believe the same thing.

“Emalee is a great addition to our campus, community and to our softball program,” Middleton said. “She brings a strong work ethic, pride in her academics and a willingness to do what is best for the team. We look forward to having her energy and competitive spirit on our team.”