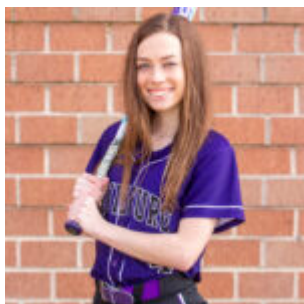


2020 Senior Spotlight: Gabby Dugger



Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.

Gabby Dugger wasn't a member of last season's regional championship team, but that doesn't mean she didn't have high expectations for this year's Louisburg softball squad.

Dugger watched as the Lady Cats recorded back-to-back upsets to capture their first regional crown since 2014 and she wanted to be a part of that atmosphere. She was even more excited to see Nick Chapman take over the program in his first year as varsity head coach.

"Coach Chapman showed this team the importance of being a family within the first day of tryouts," Dugger said. "He emphasized encouragement and positivity, which is what a team feeds off of. Coach Chapman genuinely wants the best for not only the team, but for each individual player. Whether it was on the field or in the hallways, coach was always there for us.

"This season, we wanted that state title. Last year was a landmark season for Louisburg softball, and with the team we had this year, we had a good shot at state again."

Dugger was all set to compete for a starting spot in the

outfield and Chapman liked what he saw from her through the first couple weeks of practice.

“From the get-go, she was all in and a great addition to the team,” Chapman said. “She was great in the outfield; very quick and read balls off the bat very well. Gabby would have made a great impact on our team this year. I thank her for her commitment and passion she brought every day.”

As well as practice had been going, all the players’ work going into the season was ended due to the spread of COVID-19 as spring sports around the country was canceled.

It was a decision that was tough to handle for Dugger and the rest of her teammates, but she has tried to put things in perspective.

“The cancellation of my senior year has hit pretty hard,” Dugger said. “All the things that were promised to me since I was in kindergarten were ripped away from me. Although this has been difficult, I think about all the healthcare workers who are risking their lives, the families who have lost loved ones, and the government officials who work tirelessly every day to keep us safe. Understanding the seriousness of this situation, and knowing that I am not going through this alone, helps me every day.”

Although Dugger found herself on the varsity team for the first time this season, softball is not a sport that is new to her – in fact – she has spent most of her life around it.

Softball and baseball are big parts of her family and that is how she grew up in the game.

“I have played softball since I was 7-years-old,” Dugger said. “I remember when I caught my first pop-fly at shortstop, I couldn’t stop smiling. Baseball/softball is a tradition in my family. My grandpa taught me how to play catch when I was really little, and my dad played Little League Baseball when

he was younger. My entire childhood consisted of playing catch in the backyard, my dad critiquing my swings, and tournaments every weekend. Every scorching hot tournament and every freezing cold practice made me the player I am today.

“I made countless lifelong friendships through this game. I am so thankful that my parents supported my love for the game and let me compete in this amazing sport. Softball is my passion, and I hope one day I can teach my kids the game.”

As much as she misses her teammates and coaches, Dugger has a lot of great memories with her team – even if it was just a short time.

“My favorite memory playing for Louisburg softball would have to be the team bonding,” she said. “Going out to dinner, or just having cookouts, gave a team connection on and off the field. There was never a dull moment with this team.”

Other than softball, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Gabby on how she has been coping with an early end to her senior year and some of her other interests. Here are her responses from the rest of our Q&A.

LSZ: What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

GD: During this time, I am really missing my friends. This is supposed to be a memorable time for seniors with prom, sports and graduation, but these things are not going to happen. I wish I could have known on March 13, that it was the last time I would walk out of my high school. I miss seeing my teachers every day, being able to go eat out and just being a teenager.

LSZ: What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

GD: My most memorable moment as an athlete has definitely been

the kids who come out to every game and look up to us. Those kids cheer us on and are just so supportive of our team. I know exactly how those kids feel, because I was one of those kids! It is just an amazing feeling to know that your community has your back.

LSZ: What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

GD: My favorite thing to do outside of sports is definitely working out or spending time with friends.

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

GD: After graduation, I will be attending the University of Kansas to study Nursing.

LSZ: What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

GD: Outside of sports, an accomplishment I am proud of is my dedication to maintaining a good GPA.

LSZ: What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

GD: One thing people probably don't know about me is that I'm surprisingly really good at NBA 2K basketball. My family refuses to play with me anymore because they think I cheat, but it's just a hidden talent I guess.

Gabby's Favorites

Pro athlete: Kelly Oubre

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: Kansas

Movie: Waterboy

TV Show: Grey's Anatomy

Song: Anything by Luke Combs

Band/Musician: Luke Combs or Parker McCollum

Pregame meal/snack: I've always had a bagel and Gatorade since I was little.

Class/subject: Biology

Teacher and why: Mr. Wright, he knew how to teach in a way that kept kids engaged.

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer