Dear Colleagues:

Imagine my pride when I saw the front page of the Sunday Sports section of The Reporter. The bold headline read: “Falcons go flying into postseason at No. 1” and a terrific photo of our All-State Team shortstop, Britney Taglieri, dominated the page. I am reprinting the article below for all to read:

Solano College softball hopes to continue dominance in postseason

*By Tim Roe/The Reporter, Vacaville/\nPOSTED: 04/27/2014 12:57:40 AM PDT*

Even Terri Pearson-Bloom admits the statistics are eye-popping. She also knows there is no carryover.

Pearson-Bloom has had plenty of banner seasons during her run as Solano College's softball head coach, but this may be the most impressive yet.

Of course, impressive will have a lot more meaning if her Falcons, ranked No. 1 in the state, make a deep run in the Northern California playoffs.

Solano drew the Nor Cal’s No. 2 seed during a seeding meeting on Saturday. The Falcons will host No. 15 Butte College in their playoff opening series beginning on Saturday.

"Now we all start over," Pearson-Bloom said. "Now it's survive and advance, just like the NCAA tournament. All your numbers did is get you a seeding."

And they were very big numbers indeed.

The Falcons were second in the entire state in runs scored with 352, even though many of their games were stopped after five innings because of the college eight-run rule.

They also were third in the state with a .411 team batting average, second in RBIs (330), third in total base hits (433), fourth in shutouts (10), and first in both stolen bases (119) and triples (36).
"We don't have a single starter who is batting under .300 ... the depth on this team is just unbelievable," Pearson-Bloom said. "We've had some great teams before, but this one is different ... unique. There is individual talent, but there is also depth, and this team works really well together."

The some may be greater than the parts, but the parts are pretty solid as well.

Aleyna Benipayo, a freshman from Concord, was named the Bay Valley Conference player of the year on Thursday. She led the Falcons in batting average (.552), hits (64) and runs scored (63), and is tied for the team lead with 53 RBI.

She also has a team-high 33 stolen bases.

"She can drop it down, and she can rip it," Pearson-Bloom said.

Benipayo's stats are amazing, but she isn't alone.

Vacaville High School graduate Britney Taglieri is batting .463, and is second to Benipayo in base hits (56) and runs scored (44). Vanden product Stefanie Chainurux (.408, 46 RBI), Will C. Wood graduate Amber Takeda (.434, nine home runs) and Fairfield's Emily Goode (.430, 53 RBI) all would be team leaders on other teams.

In fact, Shannon Mestas is the only Falcon in the top six in the batting order who isn't batting over .400. But Mestas is close at .378, with 40 RBI and 32 runs scored.

And Pearson-Bloom would have Mestas on the field even if she couldn't hit at all. The freshman from Clayton Valley won the BVC's pitcher of the year award after posting a 21-1 record with a 1.13 ERA. She has struck out 172 batters in 124.1 innings.

There's more. Mestas has had plenty of defensive help. Chainurux has played all 37 of the Falcons' contested games (they won one game by forfeit) at second base, and hasn't committed an error this season. She has fielded 103 total chances, with 68 putouts and 35 assists.

"She has a 1.000 fielding percentage. That just doesn't happen for a second baseman," Pearson-Bloom said. "That's one of the most incredible stats I've seen in my college career. I don't know if I'll ever see that again."

Chainurux, Taglieri, Takeda, Goode and Wood product Haley Wink -- who is batting .358 and playing a solid left field -- all are sophomores, and their shoes may be hard to fill.

Then again ... Pearson-Bloom just won her ninth straight BVC crown, and doesn't plan on letting up any time soon.

"It's been a great run. It's a great college, an incredible place to play, and we get incredible talent year-in and year-out," she said. "I have four assistant coaches, and that's a big factor ... the girls get a lot of attention, and we develop them for the next level. We have all the tools to create a great program."

And maintain one.
But for now, the reloading can wait. Pearson-Bloom and company want to make some postseason noise.

"Now we all start over," she repeated.

She hopes the second start is as good as the first.

Coach Pearson-Bloom reports that SCC softball is having their best season ever and has a shot at making it to the state tournament….and possibly winning a state title. She told me that a season like this “sometimes happens only once in a career,” particularly at a small school like Solano College. She is, of course, pleased with the amount of press coverage both locally and regionally. On top of that, she reports that she has had visits and phone calls from many four-year colleges who are trying to recruit our athletes (…what talent and what a team)!

Let’s hear it, then, one and all: GO, FALCONS!

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