

Spring previews continue next week

Previews for the spring-season sports will continue in next week's edition of The Bee with previews for the boys and girls lacrosse squads. Previews for the remaining spring sports will follow over the following week. As always, a complete schedule will appear with each preview story.

## Plimpton, South want another state title

by PATRICK J. NAGY  
Reporter



Williamsville South senior Chelsea Plimpton has a chance to break more New York State pitching records this spring.

Photo by Joe Eberle  
Purchase color photos at [www.BeeNews.com](http://www.BeeNews.com)

The Williamsville South softball team's ultimate goal this season is to defend its New York State Class "A" Championship and with senior pitcher Chelsea Plimpton, it's a strong possibility.

Plimpton, the reigning New York State Class "A" Player of the Year, was the winning pitcher on South's 2004 and 2006 state championship teams and has already signed a National Letter of Intent to play in the Big East with St. John's University on a full academic and athletic scholarship.

South coach Gerry Gentner calls Plimpton "a once in a lifetime pitcher" and looking at her incredible statistics, it's easy to see why. She holds every South pitching record by a landslide including 1,020 strikeouts ('02 graduate Hilary South is second with 377), 60 shutouts (closest is '01 grad Kara Eyre with 17), 12 no-hitters (Eyre and '98 grad Elisa Brinkworth each had three) and nine perfect games ('01 grad Kara Eye had one).

Plimpton has a career record of 83-5, which included a 50-game winning streak through her freshman and sophomore seasons.

Last season, Plimpton set a single-season state record for most strikeouts in a season with 411 and came one strikeout short of tying her 2005 record for most strikeouts in a single game of 23 with 22. In total, she is in the state record books in 11 different categories, including career shutouts, perfect games, no-hitters, strikeouts, ERA, and wins, and should break most of them

this season, if not place in the top three.

She's also twice been named a National Louisville Slugger All-American (second team in 2006, third team in 2004), as well as a three-time All-State first team, Western New York Pitcher

of the Year, All-Western New York first team and All-ECIC first team selection.

With these kinds of mind-boggling stats, what does Plimpton have left to prove?

"Probably win states again," said Plimpton. "If we go again and

we don't win, I'll be devastated. The personal awards don't really mean anything."

Plimpton doesn't over power batters but what makes her stand out is unbelievable control. She's only walked 33 out of 2,053 batters.

"She blows them away without overpowering," said Gentner. "There are a reasonable number of girls around Western New York who are as fast as her but she has the best movement of anybody around and a total command of her change, drop, screw, curve, and rise ball in any particular situation."

Plimpton can't explain her mental toughness other than saying she's a very competitive person. But once she gets on the mound and her competitive juices flow, she transforms from a sweet 5-foot-7 happy-go-lucky high school senior into a feared pitcher.

"If I do lose, I get very upset," said Plimpton. "I want to win. I could be friends with players on other teams but when we play them, I don't like them. Winning is the only option."

She's also improved her game the last three years through her travel team, TC Tremors Gold, out of Binghamton, which have gone to showcases for college scouts all over the country. St. John's picked Plimpton after seeing her play in Colorado.

Gentner also said Plimpton will probably be the team's top hitter as well.

Plimpton is one three South captains. The other two captains are senior shortstop/catcher Lisa Fronczak, a four-year starter, and

junior second baseman Lauren Falzone, a three-year starter, who Gentner thinks have All-WNY potential.

Fronczak, the team's co-defensive player of the year, was second in batting average (.409) and was named to the All-ECIC first team. Gentner thinks Fronczak, the team's unsung hero, is a quiet leader with outstanding offensive skills. Falzone, a lefty slap hitter with great speed, batted .327 and was an All-ECIC first team selection.

Other returning players include seniors Claire Gerlach (outfield), Nicolette Neenos (outfielder/infielder), Robin Donovan (catcher/outfielder), Elena Hozdic (outfielder/infielder), junior Carolyn Schaus (third base), and sophomores Sam Strapason (first base) and Devon Powers (infield/outfield).

Gerlach, an ECIC Division III all-star, set a career South record last season with nine RBIs in one game which is second all-time in the state. She's also a strong defensive player.

"I'm looking for her to have an outstanding senior year," said Gentner.

Neenos, who batted .298 last year, has the ability to make a major contribution as a starter, said Gentner.

Donovan, an ECIC III second team selection, batted .286. Hozdic hit .229. Schaus, a two-year starter, hit .318 and was named an ECIC III all-star.

"She has the talent to be All-Western New York," said Gentner of Schaus. "She plays third base with great courage. She's a

(Please turn to page 15)

## Class 'A' crown appears reachable for Billies



Scott Steimer is a co-captain and one of two returning All-Western New York players for Williamsville South.

Photo by John Rusac  
Purchase color photos at [www.BeeNews.com](http://www.BeeNews.com)

by PATRICK J. NAGY  
Reporter

Some of the players have changed but the goal still remains for the Williamsville South baseball team — win a New York State title.

The Billies lost 1-0 in the Class "A" finals last year to Section I's Our Lady of Lourdes, marking the furthest any Williamsville baseball had ever gone in the postseason.

"We want to get back again and I think we've got the team to do it," said senior co-captain Frank Pieri. "It's the goal and it's reachable."

"We have a lot of guys returning that saw what it takes, not just talent wise but playing together," added senior co-captain Scott Steimer. "I think we'll pull it out this year."

If South, 22-5 last year, is to return to the state final, they have to replace the middle of its defense (catcher, shortstop, second, center field) and compete in a higher ECIC division (III to II).

"We lost some key components so we're going to have to have people step up," said South coach Brian Hansen.

The Billies return 10 seniors, including its outstanding pitching in Pieri, Steimer and Dan Lynch.

Pieri, an All-Western New York first team selection and ECIC Division III's Player of the Year, threw three no-hitters, one of which came in the Billies' 3-0 shutout over Section X's Massena in the state semifinals. He also threw no-hitters against Depew and Maryvale during the regular season. Between the regular season and sectionals, he was 9-0 with a 0.64 ERA. In 55 innings, he threw 62 strikeouts and

allowed only 23 hits against 228 batters. His fielding percentage as pitcher and first base was 1.000 with 122 putouts and 90 assists. He also had six completed games.

"He's worked on his fast ball a little bit more and getting movement," said Hansen. "He'll get the ball all of the time in key starts."

Pieri was impressive at the plate last year, hitting .400 with a .513 slugging percentage and leading the team in RBIs (25) and walks (20). He hit .394 in league games. Pieri was also named ECIC first team and South's team MVP.

When Pieri is not pitching, he can play at first base and in the outfield.

Steimer was the team's best hitter during the postseason, hitting .440. He finished with the second-highest batting average on the team overall (.411) and in league games (.453). He will be the team's third pitcher this year.

Steimer, an All-WNY honorable mention who was also an ECIC III first team selection, moves from third to shortstop, replacing Joe LaPenna, an All-WNY first team selection, who along with fellow graduate Jon LiSacchi, combined for a school-record 35 double plays.

"I definitely have some big shoes to feel but Joe made sure I got work at shortstop last year because he knew I might be playing it this year," said Steimer.

"He has a strong arm, good range, and hits the ball very well," said Hansen. "I'm expecting a lot out of him."

Lynch, the team's No. 2 thrower, was an ECIC III second team selection and finished with a 1.84 ERA

(Please turn to page 15)