



File Photo

Jadyn Dawson leads the team in home runs and has been key in the circle for the Lady Panthers early season success.



File Photo

Marli Kennedy has been a key player early in the season for the Plano East offense as they start 9-2.

Plano East softball soaring through 2023

By Seth Dowdle
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Plano East softball won eight games last year. They've already surpassed that number less than a month into the 2023 season.

Coming into the season, new head coach and former Plano East Lady Panther Lauren Peterson expressed her desire for the team to be "proud to play here and wear EAST across their chest." The Lady Panthers have accomplished that goal, and more.

"They [the players] impress me every day with how hard

they are willing to work," Peterson said. "They are never satisfied with the last rep. Every one of my kids has a 'one-more' mentality and always asks for 'one more' ball until they are satisfied with the result."

Plano East is 9-4-1 so far in 2023. They've competed in a difficult non-district schedule, traveling to College Station, Allen and McKinney to play in tournaments.

Peterson believes East's non-district schedule will do a good job of preparing them for the second half of the season.

"I think the pitching in our district has to be some of the

best in the state," she said. "So, I think with our preseason schedule, my kids have gotten to see a variety of pitching. I think seeing all the different pitching we have seen has helped us become better hitters. It has helped my kids work on pitch selection, and I feel like we are seeing the ball really well."

In their trip to College Station, Plano East went 6-1 over the course of three days, beating San Marcos, Eastlake, Klein Cain, Willis and Lovejoy. In Allen, Plano East was undefeated, with one tie being their only non-win. There they defeated

fellow Metroplex schools like Frisco Memorial, Arlington Martin, Prosper, Bells and John Paul II.

Three of Plano East's four losses came in their previous tournament in McKinney against Mount Vernon, Abilene and Rockwall-Heath.

"Each kid on my team has stood out to me in their own way, and I am so proud of what they have all contributed thus far," she said.

The offense has been particularly strong for the Lady Panthers, with multiple players showing off their power via the long ball. Jadyn Dawson and

Victoria Jackson-Sears both have four home runs to their name. Marli Kennedy has contributed two home runs to the total, one of those being a grand slam.

It's not just the power that's popping out to Peterson, however. She's also impressed with her team's ability to get on base consistently, particularly Cassandra Lupo, who leads the team in on-base percentage.

"I am excited to see who is going to continue to step up during district!" Peterson said.

Plano East will open district play on March 7 against rival Plano on the road. The first dis-

trict home game will come on March 10 against Hebron.

"This program is very special to me," Peterson said. "Playing here, and now getting to coach here has been the coolest experience. The atmosphere that the parents and fans provide during games makes these kids feel loved and supported; the atmosphere in the locker room and in the dugout is so encouraging; and seeing these kids proud to play here and wear EAST across their chest is just the best. I am extremely blessed to get to wear my old colors and work with these kids every day!"

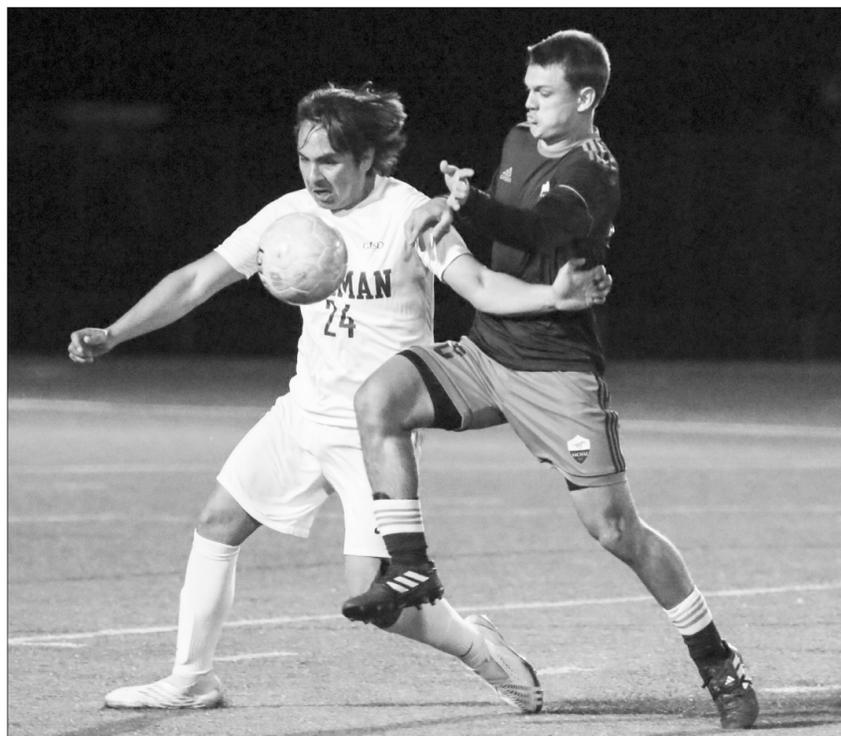
Sachse Boys Soccer

Mustangs lose on penalty kicks



Maddie Smith/C&S Media

Tanner Tea rips a volley from distance in Sachse's 3-2 loss to Naaman Forest on Feb. 28.



Maddie Smith/C&S Media

Cooper Tea fights to win the ball for the Sachse offense against the Naaman Forest defensive player.



Maddie Smith/C&S Media

Erick Martins leaps up to win the header for the Sachse free kick attempt.



Maddie Smith/C&S Media

Teagan Schnurr controls the ball for the Sachse Mustangs defense in their match against Naaman Forest on Feb. 28.