

Katelyn Stanley Gives Bulldogs Pinpoint Precision



Carolyn J. Yaschur | Kitsap Sun - March 19, 2008

North Mason senior Katelyn Stanley will lead the defending Class 2A state champions into the 2008 season. Stanley's ability to locate her pitches, as well as the movement on all five of her pitches, is just one reason the Bulldogs could make it a repeat.

In real estate, it's all about location, location, location.

The same thing can be said for pitching, especially at the high-school level where so many pitchers are trying to dominate with speed.

And then there's North Mason pitcher Katelyn Stanley, whose pinpoint accuracy has helped the Bulldogs continue their state tourney run, which is now at eight straight years.

Stanley is the Bulldogs' prime waterfront. The one house on the block every home buyer wants to own.

Stanley, who is talkative and expressive off the mound, is the confident senior leader and calm ace of the defending Class 2A state champion Bulldogs.

Her real estate extends from the rubber to home plate where catcher Anna Heitstuman snags strike after strike as batters either walk away bewildered or strike the ground with their bat in frustration.

Stanley can paint the strike zone like no other pitcher in the area. She can control all of her five pitches — a riseball, dropball, curveball, screwball and changeup — to within inches of where coach Paula Grande calls for them.

"Definitely her strength is her location and her movement on the ball," she said. "If I ask for it three inches off the plate, or if I ask for it eight inches off the plate, she's going to do that."

And Stanley is more than happy to do what Grande asks of her.

"Paula is an amazing pitch-caller, so she usually does most of it," she said. "And she usually calls the right stuff. I don't know how she does it. It just works.

"I just go out there and throw whatever she calls. That's my job."

Grande appreciates Stanley's attitude.

"She believes in me and I believe in her," Grande said. "When I ask her to throw something, she doesn't second-guess me, she throws it."

North Mason's all-league infielder Molly Coppinger said facing Stanley during hitting practice is daunting.

"She's not the fastest, but she has all these pitches to watch out for," she said. "When she gets two strikes on you she pretty much owns you."

She's added to her repertoire as she is throwing her riseball again.

"It's one of my new pitches, just something different," she said.

Stanley said that her pitching is centered around her ball movement and enjoys it when batters get frustrated.

"I just move my ball around and hope that works for me," she said.

Along with Stanley's skill is her calm on-the-field demeanor, which is an asset in big games.

"To have somebody out there that's a leader, that's confident, that's got great composure — she really sets a tone out there," said Grande. "She's positive, she's encouraging. She's a great leader."

Stanley said she is taking the same approach to this season as last year as the Bulldogs try to repeat as state champs.

"We all know how it goes and we just need to teach the underclassmen how it goes," she said.

But Stanley admits there's more pressure on the team this year.

"Everybody's kind of out to get us," she said. "That's how it goes."

But the senior likes the role.

"A little, yeah, I'm not going to lie," she laughed. "It's a pretty good one to sit on."

Stanley said she's looking forward to enjoying the season with her teammates and getting to state, but she is ready to move on from high school and into college. The right-hander is looking at several junior

colleges in Florida, Texas and Kansas. Also Southern Illinois, Colorado State and Southern Oregon. Stanley said she'll be going on recruiting trips next month.

Detractors might wonder if Stanley is such a terrific pitcher, why isn't she playing at a higher level.

The answer is simple. Junior colleges in Florida have very talented softball programs, they can offer full-ride scholarships and they prepare athletes to play at Division I or Division II schools. Tallahassee CC has sent several players to Florida State, Virginia Tech, Georgia, Auburn and Tennessee, just to name a few.

"A community college down there is the same as a (Division I) or (Division II) school up here," Grande said. "It's a great level of play down there."

Stanley has a career earned run average of 0.85, with a record of 60-6, 449 strikeouts, 58 walks and 32 shutouts.

She's also an excellent batter and has been the team's leading hitter the past three seasons. Stanley has a career .401 batting average, with 60 RBI, 19 doubles, six triples and five home runs. Stanley credits much of that to hitting guru Mark Anderton of the Anderton Sports Academy of Redmond.

"I practice everyday on my hitting," she said. "I usually go to (Mark) every Sunday. He's also my pitching coach. He picks little things out, I fix 'em and the pitch is good. I don't even know how he does it."

Stanley went 22-3 last year for the Bulldogs, including a 0.99 ERA during the Olympic League season, and pitched a 3-0 shutout against Centralia in the title game. She also faced several of her Washington Sidewinder 18 Gold select teammates that play for Centralia High School.

"We go to practice and we joke about it," she said. "They're like 'We're going to get you this year.'"