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After striking out 187 batters and going 18-3 last season as a junior, Stadium's Jordyn Kurtz is 5-0 with more than 30 strikeouts this season for the 6-0 Tigers.

## Stadium senior Kurtz schools 'em on softball mound

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In a game built around intimidating pitchers, Jordyn Kurtz doesn't immediately strike fear into the hearts of opponents.

If you meet the Stadium senior outside the pitching circle, the bubbly redhead with an infectious giggle might even win you over to her side.

But the moment you step into batter's box to face Kurtz, her demeanor changes.

She racked up 187 strikeouts and an 18-3 won-lost record as a junior.

And if you do manage to get a hit off her – Kurtz's 0.24 earned run average in 2007 gives batters a hint of hope – she might not even flinch.

"She hates to lose, but you're never going to see it," Stadium coach Lynn Batchelder said. "She'll have the same expression at the beginning and end of a game, but she burns inside."

The 5-foot-5 senior hasn't had much to burn about so far this season, as the Tigers have opened with a 6-0 record, including a 10-0 victory over North Kitsap on Wednesday.

Kurtz is 5-0 and has already struck out 30-plus batters. The leaders of the Narrows League's Bay Division face their biggest rival, Bridge Division leader Wilson (6-0), in a 3:30 p.m. game Friday at Wilson.

The crossover game is the only regular-season contest between the top two programs in the Tacoma School District. It's a game with bragging rights and possible league title implications on the line, and Kurtz wouldn't miss it for the world.

"I like being in control of the game and setting the pace," Kurtz said. "Striking people out is always fun, too."

“She puts all her heart and soul into pitching,” said senior Sarah Glennon, who has been Kurtz’s catcher at Stadium since the two were freshmen. “It makes me feel like I have to give everything just to help her out. ... My one goal as a catcher is to make the pitcher look the best out of us two. She works hard and gets the job done.”

The older of two Kurtz girls – her younger sister is a freshman at Stadium – isn’t only about the competitive edge of softball, although her sister did stop playing softball with her after Jordyn offered one too many tips during a laidback afternoon.

Kurtz, who plays on the [Washington Sidewinders travel team](#), finds moments in her limited free time to coach a team composed of third, fourth and fifth graders, teaching them the finer points of pitching and softball at an early age.

She plans to continue her education – with designs on a future as an elementary school teacher – in Ashland, Ore., pitching for Southern Oregon in the NAIA ranks.

“I really liked the town, the team and the coach,” Kurtz said of her visit. “It was just a really perfect fit for me. I really felt like I could live down there.”

But while she has taken her official visit and is excited about her future in Oregon, Kurtz has a few more weeks to focus on her fellow Tigers and enjoy the ride.

Among the Tigers’ goals for this spring are improving on their 2007 state tournament finish.

Stadium finished one game away from a trophy, losing to third-place Inglemoor in a 1-0, eight-inning consolation semifinal. In 2006, Kurtz and the Tigers finished fourth at state.

“We have a really good team and an awesome group of girls this year, I would just really like to place higher,” Kurtz said. “We’ve been so close the last two years, so it would be awesome to be top three this year.”

Glennon and senior Sam Miller join Kurtz as the team leaders, while a young group fills out the roster. But Kurtz is the catalyst, with four shutouts, a plus-.500 batting average and three home runs six games into the season.

“She’s great,” Batchelder said. “There is nothing not to like as a coach. There are certain kids that make it worth coming for and she’s one of those.”