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## Future teacher Moeller learns how to build a softball program

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Like most college seniors, Brianne Moeller is concocting a plan that will land her a job.

The University of Illinois Springfield softball player, who will earn her degree after completing a student teaching requirement in the fall, hopes her sports background and knowledge increases her marketability. She figures a school could kill two birds with one stone by hiring someone who can teach and coach.

Moeller has been a valuable piece in the puzzle for UIS for several seasons. She also was a standout in softball, volleyball and basketball at Nashville High School.

"I think that'll help me get a teaching job," she said. "Also, I don't know how my life would be without sports. I think that will be a good transition. I'll still be a part of it in some kind of way."

With one week remaining in the season, the 6-foot-1 left-handed pitcher is savoring the final moments of her playing career and looking toward the future. The Stars end the season Wednesday on the road against Missouri Baptist.

Moeller and junior pitcher Alexandra Newbern have played for UIS longer than anyone else — they joined the squad during the 2007-08 season. Moeller had little time to get acclimated after transferring from John A. Logan in January 2008. She carried the Stars' lowest earned run average and led in innings pitched as a sophomore and junior.

### Change does her good

In 2010, Moeller has a 4.77 ERA, 4-10 pitching record and 62 strikeouts in 80.2 innings. She also has a .283 batting average and 17 RBIs.

"We (UIS coach Mat Mundell and assistant Mark Brayfield) have tried to work with her on developing some different pitches and mixing things up a little bit to batters, and she has done a great job of that," Mundell said. "In NCAA Division II, one through nine in the lineup can all hit, so it has been a little harder."

In a Great Lakes Valley Conference doubleheader Saturday against the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Moeller turned in a top-notch effort. In a 2-0 loss, she allowed three hits and struck out four in six innings. UMSL had 10 hits in the second game.

"She had a great outing, not just a good one," Mundell said. "They didn't hit a single ball out of the infield. It's probably one of her best performances of the year against a team that can really hit the ball and she shut them down. She had them guessing all day."

### Stiff competition

The Stars have an 11-29 overall record. They were 4-17 in 2009.

"I feel like we've improved so much from last year, but the competition has gone up, too," Moeller said. "If we were in the same conference, we'd probably be competing for that second or third position. These girls are here to play softball and work hard. We just got stuck in the position where we have to build a program."

UIS' move from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the American Midwest Conference to Division II and the GLVC has taken some getting used to. It's particularly challenging for a player who led Nashville to back-to-back Class A state softball tournament appearances, with a third-place finish in 2004.

"To know that you are part of the bigger picture for the program was a hard concept for me to understand at first," Moeller said. "I was like, 'I want to win and I want to win now,' but I know I'm leaving the program in a position to where it can succeed. That makes me feel better in the long run."

"It's hard thing to deal with, but the way I've been raised it's more important to help others than your own satisfaction. Maybe that's why I want to be a teacher."

### A class(room) act

Moeller, who received straight A's and achieved a 4.0 grade point average last semester, has eyed a career in education since she was in first grade.

"I've always loved going to school," she said. "I always looked forward to school supply shopping and getting everything organized."

"None of my family are teachers, but some have volunteered to coach. I've always wanted to share what I know with other people."

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