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CLIMAX - For even those who love to play sports video games, the numbers that Providence Grove High School softball player Makayla McClain has produced might be hard to believe. For those who do insert themselves into the video game, the numbers recorded are usually astronomical with no live player literally having the ability to enjoy that type of season.

McClain is making people think maybe someone actually could.

The senior is fashioning together one of the greatest seasons any high school softball player has ever had in Randolph County. In helping lead the Patriots to a perfect 14-0 record, McClain is hitting .605 (26-for-43) with 25 runs scored, 27 RBIs, 2 doubles, 1 triple and 10 home runs. She has produced numerous key hits for the Patriots, although there have been very few games in which the Patriots needed key hits to win. But along with Edi Austin and Emma Mazarrone, McClain gives the Patriots one of the most talented top of the orders ever seen.

"She is just the most talented player I have ever coached," veteran PG coach Tim Brown said. "She can play anywhere on the field. I remember seeing Makayla when she was three or four years old at the batting center swinging a bat. I never really thought about it back then. She has worked hard and really is the best player I have ever coached."

McClain made quite a name for herself not only on the softball field but on the baseball diamond when she was young. She was a pitcher and shortstop for the Northeastern Randolph Middle School team. In middle school, softball is in the fall and baseball in the spring, so she participated in both.

"My dad owned the Batting Center in Climax, so I have been swinging a bat since I was very young," McClain said. "I love baseball. I was the only girl playing."

McClain didn't begin playing softball until seventh grade.

"It's two different games, but the swings are pretty similar," she said.

Her swing in softball has produced extraordinary results throughout her high school career. Even though her sophomore year was cut short due to Covid and teams played a reduced number of



*Senior Makayla McClain. Photo by P J Ward-Brown Photography.*

contests her junior year, she has put together numbers any four-year starter would be proud of. Unofficially, in 52 games, she is hitting .562 (90-for-160), with 72 runs scored, 81 RBIs, 19 doubles, 10 triples and 19 home runs, including 10 this year.



*McClain is at the top of most of the Patriots batting statistics. Photo by P J Ward-Brown Photography.*

"I am very thankful for everything I have accomplished, but I have put in the work," said McClain, who will play for Campbell in the fall.

The clutch hits have been there throughout her career. The last time the Patriots faced Southwestern Randolph, PG trailed until the sixth inning when it scored four times. Breaking the tie was a hard-hit, line drive home run to center field that barely cleared the height of the fence.

"She came up to me and told me she was going to hit one out that time," Brown said. "You can't doubt her."

She added her 10th home run Thursday night in a 5-0 win over East Davidson.

"If you hit line drives, home runs will come," McClain said.

Because she records so many extra-base hits, Brown said a lot of people don't realize how fast she is.

"When she gets on base, she's gonna steal second and third," Brown said. "She doesn't get to show her speed off because she's hitting extra-base hits."

Her numbers are impressive enough, but perhaps even more impressive is her admiration for her teammates. Though McClain, Mazzarone and Austin have been the catalysts, McClain said the success the Patriots are enjoying is because of the entire team.

"We go out and try and play our best every game," McClain said. If Edi, or Emma or I don't get something started, we know someone else will. It's everyone on our team."

While closing in on a Piedmont Athletic Conference championship, McClain said the team has bigger goals.

"All the way, we're going to go all the way," she said.

No one can argue with that right now.



*Providence Grove coach Tim Brown with senior Makayla McClain. Photo by P J Ward-Brown Photography.*