

Taylor's Evans twirling records; TU chasing IWU

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Taylor junior Maddi Evans recently became the all-time leader for strikeouts in a season. Evans, a Madison-Grant alum and Fairmount native, could etch her name on some other records as she helps the RV Trojans pursue No. 7 Indiana Wesleyan in the Crossroads League standings.

[Provided by Taylor Athletics](#)

Taylor's Maddi Evans is putting together a memorable and history-making campaign in the pitchers circle, and it's helped the RV Trojans stay in the chase for the Crossroads League championship as the season reaches its homestretch.

Indiana Wesleyan, which ascended to the No. 7 slot in the latest NAIA rankings, leads No. 11 Marian by one game with eight games remaining for both. The Wildcats (34-6, 23-5 in CL) slid around the Knights (33-11, 22-6) in the standings after sweeping a doubleheader on April 17 in Marion by scores of 3-0 and 5-0.

Meanwhile, the Trojans are riding a six-game win streak heading into Friday's home doubleheader against Goshen at 4 p.m. Taylor (30-12, 16-8) currently trails IWU by five games and Marian by four, but along with fourth place, Mt. Vernon Nazarene (17-9, 15-9), have 12 games remaining.

Evans, a junior and former Madison-Grant standout, has started in 21 of her 22 appearances in the circle this season and stands among the league and NAIA's leaders in several statistical categories.

Evans has also etched her name in the Taylor softball record book, and could potentially reach even more before the season concludes.

In Taylor's 8-1 win at IWU on April 9, Evans struck out 13 Wildcats, which set a new program record for most strikeouts in a season. The Fairmount-native bested the previous mark of 161 set in 2010 by Holly Tomaszewski.

Evans now has 185 strikeouts for the season, tops in the Crossroads League and the sixth most in the NAIA. She has fanned double-digit opponents in nine games. Her season-high of 16 came on March 27 when she faced only 20 batters in twirling a no-hitter at Goshen.

In her next outing against Marian, Evans added 15 strikeouts in 10 scoreless innings, but didn't factor into a decision after the Knights won, 1-0, in 11 innings in Upland.

Evans is averaging 10.5 strikeouts per game, most in the league and ninth best in the country. Her 123.1 innings pitched so far this season is third most in the Crossroads and leaves her only six innings from breaking into the top 10 at TU.

Currently, Evans has a 2.21 earned run average, which would rank her third in Taylor history if the season were to end today.

Opponents are batting a paltry 0.191 against Evans for the season, which ranks second best in the CL and inside the top 25 in the country. She is on pace to set a program record in opponents' batting average, a mark of 0.217 currently held by Hannah Robbins (2014).

Evans also ranks second in the Crossroads League with a 4.71 hits allowed per game average.

Most importantly for Taylor, Evans holds a 14-3 win-loss record. The 14 wins currently ties her with Marian junior Sydney Wilson for second in the CL and 21st in the NAIA. The duo trails only IWU freshman Alyssa Wagner, who has 17 wins.

Evans is currently tied for fifth with two former Trojans for most wins in a single season and needs one more to tie senior teammate Lauren Kanai (2018) for third. Hannah Robbins holds the Taylor record with 18 wins, and reached that total in both 2014 and 2017.

At the plate, Evans is batting 0.311 and leads Taylor with 12 doubles and 32 RBI, marks that rank fifth and sixth, respectively, in the Crossroads League. She also has five home runs this season.

Indiana Wesleyan starts its season-ending stretch of eight-straight road games with a trip to Fort Wayne to face Saint Francis on Friday then makes the short drive to Huntington for a pair of games against the Foresters on Saturday.

The Wildcats are currently ranked inside the top 30 in the NAIA in 20 separate statistical categories, including first with 121 stolen bases and seventh with a team batting average of 0.361.

Sophomore Miranda Wehrle has slugged an NAIA-leading 15 home runs and ranks fifth in the country with 47 RBI to lead IWU. Freshman Jenna Yost has collected the fifth most stolen bases in the NAIA with 30.

Collectively, Wildcat pitchers are holding opponents to a 0.203 batting average and allow only 1.910 earned runs per game, which ranks 11th and 12th nationally.

Wagner has twirled 109 innings and struck out 143 batters in accumulating a 17-2 record. She holds an opponents batting average of 0.163 and a 1.28 ERA.

Both Indiana Wesleyan and Taylor will host Crossroads League tournament games, but a determination won't be made until after the final season standings are set. The CL tournament will run from May 5-7.

The league's regular season and tournament champions each earn an automatic bid into the NAIA National Tournament, which starts May 17 at on-campus sites around the country.