

ALL-CONFERENCE

# MALIA LISKA



SOFTBALL

## Hillsboro softball sees successful 2022 season

By ZACH RASTALL  
HSE Sports Reporter

The Hillsboro softball program endured a string of losing seasons near at the tail end of the 2010s and then, of course, saw the 2020 campaign axed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the Tigers have shown to be a team on the rise in recent years — and this spring was their biggest step forward yet.

After going 11-8 overall and 9-5 in Scenic Bluffs play in 2021, Hillsboro continued its positive momentum by going 14-6 overall and 10-4 in conference play this season.

“We’ve been more and more successful every year,” said Hillsboro head coach Lindsay Stanek. “This is my fifth year — my fourth season because of COVID — and our record has gotten better and better every year.”

The Tigers’ initial goal coming into this spring was to compete for and eventually hopefully capture a conference championship. That failed to come to fruition as the Bangor Cardinals went a perfect 14-0 in league play to comfortably win the Scenic Bluffs title.

Once it became clear that goal wasn’t going to be reached, Stanek and her team shifted focus toward the postseason, where they wound up making program history with their run.

After routing De Soto 18-4 in their playoff opener, the Tigers toppled Alma Center Lincoln 7-4 in the regional finals to capture the softball program’s very first regional title. They would proceed to lose 10-6 to an excellent Blair-Taylor team in the sectional finals, but managed to sit in a tie with the Wildcats until late in the game.

“With the regional championship for the first time here — that’s a really big deal for us,” Stanek said.

“I think these girls feel like they’ve really accomplished some major things.”

On an individual level, Hillsboro senior catcher Malia Liska was named the 2022 Scenic Bluffs Player of the Year.

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## HILLSBORO’S MALIA LISKA NAMED 2022 SBC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

By ZACH RASTALL  
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The Hillsboro Tigers enjoyed one of the best seasons in the history of their softball program in 2022. Malia Liska played an utmost pivotal role in that success.

The Hillsboro senior catcher capped off her high school softball career in style, earning herself the honor of being named the 2022 Scenic Bluffs Player of the Year.

In addition, Liska was named an all-conference first-team pick for a second consecutive season after having previously been an all-conference honorable mention as a freshman in 2019.

“As her skills increased over the years, we just pushed her harder and harder,” Hillsboro head coach Lindsay Stanek said of Liska. “She was always willing to learn and do what she needed to do.”

In addition to Liska, the Tigers had a trio of players wind up on this year’s all-conference second team: senior first baseman Chelsea Marty, junior shortstop Lily von Falkenstein and freshman third baseman Michelyn Hansen.

Last season, Marty was a first-team selection and von Falkenstein was a second-team pick.

This collection of talent helped

power Hillsboro to a stellar spring campaign, resulting in a 14-6 overall record and a 10-4 conference mark that was good enough for third in the Scenic Bluffs standings.

On top of that, the Tigers captured their first regional title in program history during a memorable postseason run.

Joining Liska on the all-conference first team for a second straight season was Wonewoc-

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