



Lee-Davis pitcher, Kelly Heinz, is player of the year

Credit: CHARLIE LEFFLER/MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE

Kelly Heinz had a spectacular junior season for Lee-Davis in 2011, going 22-1 with a 0.09 ERA. She struck out 292 in 151 innings.

Kelly Heinz whiffed Battlefield's Kat Palmer for the final out of the Group AAA softball tournament championship game and turned her attention to onrushing Lee-Davis teammates converging to celebrate the state title they had just won. Softball pitchers, especially the good ones, are the center of attention in any game. Heinz, a junior, had been brilliant again. She struck out 16 in the final and drove in the only run. She allowed five hits, two more than she had given up in the previous five games. Her teammates' defense, which had faltered and contributed to a loss in the 2010 state final, was nearly perfect through the region and state tournaments. The celebration at the back of the circle was a celebration of team. "We really grew toward the end of the season. They always supported me and showed me they were there, and that I didn't have to do it on my own," Heinz said. Said shortstop Taylor Melton, a senior: "We have

confidence in (Kelly's) ability, but we have to make the plays to keep us ahead." The day before the state semifinal game against Grassfield (Chesapeake), Heinz was named the Virginia Gatorade player of the year. Postseason honors had come Heinz's way before, but all had been for pitching. She was the Capital District pitcher of the year the past two seasons and was the pitcher of the year in the Central Region and for The Times-Dispatch All-Metro team as a sophomore. The Gatorade award and the 2011 Times-Dispatch player of the year honor, for which Heinz is the recipient, recognize her for more than pitching. She can hit (.455 batting average, 5 home runs, 26 RBIs), and as coach Jackie Davis points out, "She fields her position very, very well. She knows what to do with the ball when it's hit to her." Heinz, who has committed to Virginia Tech, wants to be an all-around player. "I don't want to be seen as the girl who can only pitch. That doesn't make you a softball player," she said. What position, then, would she play if she weren't pitching? "Wherever the coaches needed me; probably first base or the outfield," she said. "It would take some getting used to, but it's always a good thing to play another position." Heinz won't be moving to a new position. She finished this year 22-1 with a 0.09 ERA. She struck out 292 in 151 innings. High school pitchers threw from 43 feet this season. In previous years, the distance was 40 feet. Whereas batters got a little extra time to see a pitch, some pitchers, Heinz among them, benefited from the longer distance. Heinz pitched from 43 feet in travel ball before the 2010 high school season and had to re-adjust to the shorter distance. This year, she didn't have to make the adjustment. Hanover coach Chris Pace was quoted in the Gatorade press release as saying, "She can throw it into a shoebox at 60 miles per hour from 43 feet." He can revise that speed to 67-68 mph. "She kept telling me last year that it was going to help her to move to 43 feet, and I think it really did," Davis said. "It allowed her ball the extra time to move. Her ball movement this year was way above what it was last year, and she's by far the fastest pitcher in the area. No one is close."

2011 Times-Dispatch All-Metro softball team



Rachael Walters - School: Powhatan
- Year: Junior **- Position:** Pitcher

The skinny: The Southside District pitcher of the year for the second consecutive season, Walters added Region I pitcher of the year to this

season's honors. She was 19-2, had a 0.49 earned run average in 142 innings and struck out 156. Walters also hit .373 with 31 hits and 23 RBIs. She scored 22 runs. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I absolutely hate Buffalo chicken wings to the point where I can't even smell them."



Taylor Hall - School: Cosby **- Year:** Senior **- Position:** Catcher

The skinny: Hall has been a staple on the All-Metro team. She is a three-time first-team selection and was named to the second team as a freshman. Hall was the

Dominion District and Central Region player of the year after hitting .635. Of her 33 hits, 20 were for extra bases, including 12 doubles and five home runs. She walked 21 times, scored 30 runs and contributed 13 RBIs. She struck out once. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "(Center fielder) Meagan Jones, (pitcher) Kelly Higbie and I have played on the same travel team since we were 11."



Brooke Blankenship - School: Deep Run **- Year:** Senior **- Position:** Infield

The skinny: A first-team all-Colonial District and all-Central Region selection who hit .516 in her final season. She had 33 hits, including 10

doubles and three home runs, and drove in 29 runs. She had a .945 fielding percentage. A four-year starter as a pitcher and shortstop, she set school career records for hits (105), runs (72), RBIs (86) and doubles (33). **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I know how to solve Rubik's Cube." It takes her 80 seconds.



Sam Moore - School: Patrick Henry **- Year:** Junior **- Position:** Infield

The skinny: Moore is first-team All-Metro for the third consecutive season. She earned Colonial District player of the year honors for the second time. She helped

the Patriots win district regular-season and tournament titles by contributing a .475 batting average, driving in 24 runs and scoring 26. Moore had 13 extra base hits, including five home runs. She also walked 15 times. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I sing country songs in the field. Whatever is stuck in my head."



Hanna Nichols - School: Mills Godwin - **Year:** Senior - **Position:** Infield

The skinny: One of the leading hitters on this year's All-Metro team with a .542 average, Nichols had 32 hits, including two home runs, and 23

RBIs. She was a four-year starter and was named to the all-Colonial District and all-Central Region first teams this season. Nichols will play softball at Liberty University. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I've broken my left thumb four times, all in different places."



Cameryn Smith - School: Powhatan - **Year:** Junior - **Position:** Infield

The skinny: Smith was a first-team all-Southside District and Region I selection for the Indians, who won the district and region

championships. A first baseman, she hit .407 with 37 hits. She drove in 16 runs, including the game-winner against New Kent in the region tournament semifinals, and scored 35 runs. She had .935 fielding average. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I am pretty shy. It takes a lot for me to be outgoing and stand out from the crowd."



Logan Tollison - School: Thomas Dale - **Year:** Senior - **Position:** Infield

The skinny: Tollison earned first-team All-Metro honors for the second consecutive year. She was a first-team all-Central District and all-Central Region pick for the Knights, who were

unbeaten until the region tournament semifinals. Tollison hit .442 with 14 RBIs. She scored 16 runs and stole 20 bases (46 in the past two years). Dale's shortstop committed one error this season. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I danced for 10 years but gave it up in the eighth grade for softball."



Erica Barrett - School: Hanover - **Year:** Junior - **Position:** Outfield

The skinny: Barrett was named the Capital District player of the year and first-team all-Central Region. The Hawks' best hitter batted .452 with 33

hits, including five doubles, three triples and two home runs. Barrett walked 11 times, collected 21 RBIs and scored 29 times. She also had 12 stolen bases. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I have a Japanese (Akiko) middle name."

Karleigh Donovan - School: Dinwiddie - **Year:** Freshman -
Position: Outfield

The skinny: The youngest member of the All-Metro first team, Donovan was the Central District player of the year and was a first-team all-Central Region choice. She collected 31 hits, 13 for extra bases, walked 10 times and had a .517 batting average. Donovan drove in 19 runs and stole 14 bases. She played error-free ball in the field. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I always play with orange sunglasses on."



Casey Price - School: Lee-Davis -
Year: Junior - **Position:** Outfield

The skinny: Price, who started the year in left field before moving to right, produced 36 hits (six doubles, five triples) and walked 19 times. She hit .439, had 24 RBIs and scored 30 runs. Price, a first-team all-Capital District and all-Central Region pick, stroked two doubles and drove in four runs in the state semifinal victory. **One thing about you most people don't know:** "I am normal."

Second Team

Pitcher – Kelly Higbie – Cosby – Senior
Pitcher – Jessica McCabe – Matoaca – Freshman
Pitcher – Emma Mitchell – Patrick Henry – Junior
Pitcher – Renee Silver – New Kent –Senior
Catcher – Haleigh Cottrell – Lee-Davis – Sophomore
Catcher – Berkeley Driskill – Matoaca – Junior
Catcher – Madison Gilman – Patrick Henry – Junior
Infielder – Raven Baytops – St. Catherine’s – Junior
Infielder – Abby Bellows – Hanover – Junior
Infielder – Madison Bradley – LC Bird – Senior
Infielder – Katie Christopher – Prince George – Senior
Infielder – Kacey Clary – JR Tucker – Senior
Infielder – Meredith Holmes – Lee-Davis – Senior
Infielder – Peyton Larus – Midlothian – Senior
Infielder – Lindsay Maguire – Maggie Walker GS – Senior
Infielder – Melissa Skoff – Matoaca – Junior
Outfielder – Augusta Clarke – Manchester – Sophomore
Outfielder – Meagan Jones – Cosby – Junior
Outfielder – Shanley O’Day – Patrick Henry – Senior
Outfielder – Kelly Petrohovich – Mills Godwin – Sophomore
Outfielder – Dee Dee Samuels – New Kent – Senior
DP/Flex – Shannon Albright – Hanover – Sophomore
DP/Flex – Krysten Davis – Matoaca – Senior
DP/Flex – Ashley Samuels – Patrick Henry – Freshman