

Athlete of the Week: Samantha Baltrusaitis

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On Thursday, May 26, Lackawanna Trail freshman Samantha Baltrusaitis had two of her team's four hits, including a two-run home run, to help lead the Lady Lions to a 3-1 victory over Blue Ridge in the District 2 Class A semifinals. Baltrusaitis also finished the regular season tied for second in Division IV in RBIs (16) and home runs (3). For her accomplishments, Baltrusaitis has been named the Wyoming County Press Examiner's Athlete of the Week.

Grade, age, hometown: Freshman, 15, Factoryville

Family: Clarence, father; Shawnee, mother; Tyler, brother, 17.

Other sports I play: Field hockey and basketball

Athletes I admire: Jennie Finch.

Favorite Movie: "Remember the Titans"

Favorite TV show: "How I Met Your Mother"

Favorite band/artist: Sam Hunt

Favorite food: Lasagna

Favorite school subject: History

Three people I'd like to have dinner with: "My grandfather, the Florida State softball team and Jennifer Aniston."

Biggest role model: "My mom because she pushes me to be the best and knows my potential."

Superstitions or rituals: "I can't eat right before my games or tournaments."

What were some of your goals for this year? "I really wanted us to make it to the district finals because we have in the previous years and not won. Individually, I just wanted to show my potential and make the team better."

What is your approach at the plate? "I try to be aggressive, but I talk to myself and think a base hit is all you need."

Have you felt any pressure hitting in the heart of the lineup? "There's always pressure before every game because I'm a freshman, so I have to prove myself more than anyone else. My team does help me boost my confidence when I approach the plate or field."

What did it mean to be one of the top hitters in the division? "It was such a great feeling, but my teammates have put me where I am now. Without them, I wouldn't be as confident."

Did the first-round bye help you better prepare for Blue Ridge? "It definitely did help because we got more time to practice and work on different things. By the time we were about to play, we were all just so excited."

Tell me about your two-run home run. "My mind set was just to get the runner to score and put a little pressure on them because we were down at that point. When I hit it, I didn't even know it was out until I got around first base and saw the umpire. It was just a great feeling to see my teammates smiling at the plate."

Was there any added pressure playing centerfield in such a tight game? "It's very nerve-wracking, but I know my pitcher knows what she's doing and can hit her spots, so I just try to stay focused for every batter so I know what to do if it's hit to me. I'm always talking out there to help my teammates and pitcher out."

How have you been preparing for the district final game against Old Forge? "We've really been working on our hitting and just the simple plays like where to go and what to do. I think it's helped a lot."

What do you think the team needs to do to win the title? "One big key is to play as a team. When we do that, we do great. Hitting is a big deal, too. If you don't, you have to pull your weight on defense."

What would it mean to win the district title? "It would mean so much to me, but so much more for my coaches and teammates. I know they want it so badly and I would just like to give the seniors a win for their last game."

What's been your favorite part of being on the team? "I think the girls really make it a lot better. They just put a smile on my face, even if I strike out or something, and that's what a team is supposed to be like."