



**For Immediate Release:** February 3, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist tops USA South Athletic Conference preseason softball poll**

**WILLIAMSBURG, Va.** – The USA South Athletic Conference has announced the results of its 2004 softball pre-season poll and Methodist has been picked to finish first this season.

The Monarchs are coming off their best season in school history in 2003. Methodist won the Dixie Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Tournament in 2003, and advanced to the finals of the NCAA Division III South Region Tournament. They finished the year 38-10, including 9-3 in conference action. Head coach Ron Simpson returns nine of 10 position players from last season and the top three pitchers from last season.

Christopher Newport has been predicted to finish second in 2004. The Captains split last year's regular season title with Chowan after finishing 30-7-1 overall and 12-2 in the Conference. The Braves have been predicted to finish third this season, followed by Ferrum, Averett, Greensboro, Peace, North Carolina Wesleyan and Shenandoah. The poll is voted on by the softball coach at each school. Each school was not allowed to vote for its own team. Methodist received seven first-place votes, while Christopher Newport received the remaining two.

Methodist opens the 2004 season on March 2 at Averett. The Monarchs play their home opener on March 4 at Monarch field against York.

The 2004 USA South Softball preseason poll follows (first place votes):

1. Methodist	63 (7)
2. Christopher Newport	57 (2)
3. Chowan	50
4. Ferrum	37
5. Averett	32
5. Greensboro	32
7. Peace	25
8. N.C. Wesleyan	20
9. Shenandoah	8



**For Immediate Release:** February 12, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist softball ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in preseason NCAA Division III Top 25 poll**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team is enjoying its highest NCAA Division III ranking in program history as the Monarchs are ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the NCAA Division III Top 25 poll. The poll, sponsored by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association, was released on Wednesday.

Methodist, which had its best season in school history last season with a 38-10 mark, received 97 points in the poll. The Monarchs finished last season ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the final NCAA Division III Top 25 poll for the season. Methodist was the only team from the USA South Athletic Conference to ranked in the preseason poll.

Salisbury was voted as the top-ranked team in the poll, followed closely by Central and Emory. Muskingum and Illinois Wesleyan round out the Top Five.

The 2004 season could be another banner year for Methodist. Head coach Ron Simpson returns 10 of 11 starters, plus the top three pitchers from last season. The Monarchs were the preseason favorite to win the USA South Athletic Conference.

Methodist opens the 2004 season on March 2 at Averett.



**For Immediate Release:** March 4, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist opens 2004 softball season with doubleheader sweep over York**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – The start to the 2004 softball season may have been delayed by a few days, but that didn't stop the Methodist Monarchs from starting the season off on a winning track. The Monarchs, ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in NCAA Division III, pulled off a 3-0, 6-3 doubleheader sweep over visiting York on Thursday at Monarch Field.

Five Monarch pitchers combined for a three-hitter in game one as Tanya Fischer picked up the victory and Jennifer Sorensen recorded the save. Sorensen, who tied the NCAA Division III record last season with nine, finished with four strikeouts and struck out the side in the sixth inning.

Two-time All-American Kristen Wallace accounted for all three Monarch runs in the first game.

Methodist scored its first run in the opening inning as Kristen Wallace scored when York left fielder Gabby Reckendork dropped a fly ball by the Monarchs' Jennifer Patrick. The Monarchs added a run in third as Wallace scored on a sacrifice fly by Lindsay Leitao, and their last run in the fifth when Leitao's RBI single scored Wallace from third.

Wallace went a perfect 4-for-4 for Methodist, while Patrick went 2-for-3.

Game two wasn't the most flawless as the two teams combined for nine errors.

Methodist took a 5-1 lead in the first three innings with a run each in the first and third innings, and three runs in the second. Wallace gave the Monarchs a 1-0 lead in the first when she scored on an RBI double by Leitao. Amy Faucette gave Methodist a 4-1 lead in the second with a two-run double, and Wendy Heath's RBI single in the third scored Ashley Abrams.

Methodist added a single run in the fourth on an RBI single by Kim McCall.

Wallace went 3-for-4 for Methodist in game two, while Abrams was a perfect 2-for-2. Laura Shaw went 3-for-4 with an RBI for York.

Methodist plays host to the Early Bird Invitational this weekend at Veteran's Park. The Monarchs play St. Josephs on Friday at 10 a.m., Frostburg State at 12 p.m. and Lynchburg at 4 p.m.



**For Immediate Release:** March 5, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist records four-game split in opening day of Early Bird Invitational**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – Methodist's nationally-ranked Monarch softball team took it on the chin on Friday with a four-game split in the 2004 Early Bird Invitational at Veteran's Park. The Monarchs opened strong with a 12-2 victory over St. Joseph's and a 9-1 victory over Frostburg State. However, in the nightcaps, Methodist dropped a 2-1 decision against Lynchburg in eight innings and a 2-0 decision against Emory & Henry.

Now 4-2 overall, 12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist will play Edinboro for third place in the Early Bird Invitational at 10 a.m. on Saturday at Veteran's Park.

Methodist had its offensive working in the first two games, pounding out 10 hits against St. Joseph's and 11 hits against Frostburg State.

The Monarchs broke open a close game against St. Joseph's with seven runs in the third inning and four more in the fourth. Highlighting the third inning onslaught was a two-run double by Wendy Heath and an RBI double by Ashley Adams. Meagan Newman then laced a two-run triple in the fourth.

Adams and Jennifer Patrick each had two hits for the Monarchs against St. Joseph's, while Jennifer Sorensen gained the victory with seven strikeouts in four innings.

Methodist jumped on Frostburg State with four runs in the first inning and three more in the third to take a 7-0 lead. Patrick drilled a two-run triple in the first inning, and Kristie Kennedy added an RBI single. In the third, Lisa Strittmatter nailed an RBI single, scoring Lindsay Leitao, and Abrams smashed a solo home run.

Patrick went 3-for-4 with three RBIs, while Strittmatter went 2-for-2 and Abrams went 2-for-3.

In the final two games, however, strong pitching got the better of the Monarchs. Lynchburg right-hander Jen Overstreet scattered five Methodist hits to gain the victory, while Emory & Henry combination of Sarah Caldwell and Julia Molnear limited Methodist to two hits.

Lynchburg took the lead in the eighth when Danielle DiFranco scored on a wild pitch, while Emory & Henry scored two runs in the second inning by the aid of two Methodist errors. Patrick went 2-for-2 for Methodist in the game against Lynchburg.



**For Immediate Release:** March 6, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist finishes third in Early Bird Invitational with 7-3 victory over Edinboro**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – Following two disappointing defeats in pool play on Friday, the Methodist Monarch softball team rebounded nicely on Saturday with a 7-3 victory over Edinboro in the consolation final of the 2004 Early Bird Invitational at Veteran's Park.

Methodist, ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation in NCAA Division III, is now 5-2 overall. Emory & Henry won the tournament with a 4-0 victory over Lynchburg.

The Monarchs fell behind 2-0 in the first inning, but answered with two runs in the first, one in the second and three more in the third to take a 6-2 lead. Jennifer Patrick's RBI single scored Kristen Wallace, and Ashley Abrams scored on an error in the first, while Abrams gave Methodist a 3-2 lead in the second with an RBI single.

Methodist broke it open in the third as Kim McCall delivered an RBI triple. Lindsey Leitao accounted for the Monarchs' final run in the sixth on an RBI single.

Abrams went 3-for-3 with an RBI, while Leitao went 1-for-3 with two RBIs. Mara Brown was the winning pitcher for Methodist.

The Monarchs play host to Emory & Henry on Monday at 12 p.m. at Monarch Field.



**For Immediate Release:** March 8, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist, Emory & Henry record split in matinee softball doubleheader**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – Fresh off finishing third in this weekend's Early Bird Invitational, the Methodist Monarch softball team aimed to sweep Early Bird champion Emory & Henry on Monday at Monarch Field. The Monarchs succeeded in game one with a 3-2 victory in extra innings, but the visiting Wasps scored two unearned runs in the seventh to win game two 5-4.

Both teams are now 6-3 overall on the 2004 season.

Methodist led 2-1 in game one with two runs in the fourth inning. Ashley Abrams' RBI triple scored Jennifer Patrick, and Abrams then scored on a squeeze bunt by Kim McCall. However, Emory & Henry tied the game in the sixth on an RBI single by Rue Atkins.

In the eighth inning, however, Methodist loaded the bases with one out, and Lindsey Leitao's RBI single to left field scored Amy Faucette scored the game-winning run. Patrick went 3-for-4 for the Monarchs and Leitao went 2-for-3, while Jennifer Sorensen picked up the victory in relief.

Five errors in game two proved costly for the Monarchs. Four of Emory & Henry's five runs were unearned. The Wasps scored twice in the fourth and another in the fifth to take a 3-1 lead. But Methodist rallied with three runs in the sixth to take a 4-3 lead. McCall's two-run double tied the game 3-3, and then McCall scored on Leitao's sacrifice fly.

But in the seventh, the Methodist defense buckled. Following Sarah Cordill's infield single, Rue Atkins reached on a throwing error by Methodist third baseman Lisa Strittmatter. Cordill scored on the error, and then Atkins advanced to third on a throwing error by Leitao. Atkins then scored the go-ahead run on a sacrifice fly by Shannon Pharis.

McCall went 2-for-3 and Kristen Wallace went 2-for-4, while Caryn Moreland was the losing pitcher in relief. Julia Molenar was the winning pitcher for Emory & Henry.

Methodist plays in the NFCA Leadoff Classic this weekend at LaGrange.



**For Immediate Release:** March 10, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs' Abrams, Brown selected USA South Player, Rookie Pitcher of the Week in softball**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – The USA South Athletic Conference released its first set of weekly softball honors on Tuesday, and the Methodist Monarchs had two representatives selected. Ashley Abrams was selected USA South Player of the Week, while Mara Brown was USA South Rookie Pitcher of the Week.

Abrams, a junior outfielder from Mooresville, N.C., hit .667 in the Monarchs' first seven games of the season, going 10-for-15 with a home run and three RBIs. She went 2-for-3 with two doubles in a 12-2 victory over St. Joseph's on Friday, and 2-for-3 with a home run in Friday's 9-1 victory over Frostburg State. Abrams' best game, however, was a 3-for-3 performance with an RBI and two runs scored in Saturday's 7-3 victory over Edinboro.

Brown recorded her first collegiate victory in Saturday's 7-3 victory over Edinboro. The freshman from Sanbournville, N.H., pitched four innings, allowing two runs on one hit with two strikeouts.

12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist plays this weekend in the NFCA Leadoff Classic at LaGrange.



**For Immediate Release:** March 12, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs open NFCA Leadoff Classic with victories over two Top 25 opponents**

**LaGRANGE, Ga.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team had a successful first day of the NFCA Leadoff Classic with two victories over fellow NCAA Division III Top 25 teams. The 12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Monarchs defeated 26<sup>th</sup>-ranked St. Thomas 2-1 in the first game, followed by a 5-0 victory over 25<sup>th</sup>-ranked Western Connecticut State in the second game.

Methodist is now 8-3 overall on the 2004 season.

In game one, the Monarchs trailed 1-0 through 5-0 innings, but scored the two runs that proved to be the game-winnners in the sixth. Jennifer Patrick tied it with an RBI double, and then scored the game-winner on Ashley Abrams' RBI single. Tanya Fischer picked up the win for Methodist, allowing only five hits with five strikeouts in the complete game.

Methodist jumped out early against Western Connecticut State with two runs in the second inning. Kim McCall drilled a solo home run to give the Monarchs a 1-0 lead, and then Kristen Wallace nailed an RBI single with the bases loaded. Methodist added three more runs in the sixth on an RBI single by Diane Etheridge and a two-run single by Lindsey Leitao.

McCall went 2-for-3 for Methodist, while Audra Gustafson improved to 3-0 with the victory and Jessica Hutzel recorded the save.

Methodist concludes pool play on Saturday at 10 a.m. against Williamette.



**For Immediate Release:** March 13, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Eighth-ranked Moravian sinks 12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Monarchs 11-3 in Gold Bracket of NFCA Leadoff Classic**

**LaGRANGE, Ga.** – What started with a no-hitter on Saturday morning finished ugly for the 12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist Monarch softball team in the NFCA Leadoff Classic. The Monarchs finished off pool play with a 4-0 victory over Williamette as Jennifer Sorensen fired a no-hitter, but in the Gold Bracket championship round, Methodist dropped an 11-3 decision against eighth-ranked Moravian.

Methodist is now 9-4 overall on the 2004 season.

Sorensen, who set the NCAA Division III record last season with nine saves, struck out seven in her no-hitter to improve to 3-1 on the season. Methodist, meanwhile, scored two runs in the third inning on a two-run home run by Kim McCall. Lisa Strittmatter added a solo home run in the seventh.

McCall, Strittmatter and Jennifer Patrick each went 2-for-3 for Methodist.

Moravian took advantage of sixth Methodist errors. The Greyhounds scored four runs in the first inning against Monarch starter Tanya Fischer, followed by four runs in the fourth and three in the fifth. The game was stopped due to the eight-run mercy rule.

McCall added another two-run home run for Methodist, while Lindsey Leitao went 2-for-2 with a double.

Methodist plays Muskingum at 8 a.m. on Sunday.



**For Immediate Release:** March 14, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Monarchs finish seventh in 24-team NFCA Leadoff Classic**

**LaGRANGE, Ga.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team backed up its national ranking on Sunday by finishing seventh in the 24-team NFCA Leadoff Classic. The 12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Monarchs fell to fourth-ranked Muskingum 4-0 on Sunday morning, but rebounded to defeat La Verne 6-1 in the final game.

Methodist is now 10-5 overall on the 2004 season.

Muskingum sophomore Erica Hoyt held Methodist to three hits in the first game, while the Muskies' Jen Shay went 3-for-3 with an RBI and Lindsey Bramhall went 2-for-3 with a double. Jennifer Sorensen was the losing pitcher for Methodist, falling to 3-2 on the season.

Jessica Hutzell improved to 2-1 with the victory against La Verne, and Tanya Fischer garnered the save. The Monarchs scored twice in the third and four runs in the fifth to put the game away.

Caryn Moreland went 2-for-3 with a double, a home run and three RBIs, while Kim McCall and Ashley Abrams each went 1-for-2 with a double and Amy Faucette went 2-for-3 with a double. McCall, who went 7-for-17 in the Classic, was selected to the All-Tournament team.

Methodist travels on Tuesday to Guilford at 2 p.m.



**For Immediate Release:** March 19, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **12th-ranked Monarchs drop two of three games on first day of East Coast Collegiate Classic**

**SALEM, Va.** - The breaks didn't go the way of the Methodist Monarch softball team on Friday in the East Coast Collegiate Classic. 12th-ranked Methodist dropped two of its three pool play games, defeating York 4-3 but losing to Roanoke 9-8 and Meredith 3-2.

The Monarchs are now 11-7 on the 2004 season.

Methodist had a 4-0 lead in game one against York, but had to fight a late rally as York scored one run in the sixth and two in the seventh. Tanya Fischer improved to 2-1 overall with the victory, while Kate Roth went 2-for-3 with two RBIs and Wendy Heath went 2-for-3 with an RBI. Ashley Abrams also went 2-for-3 for Methodist.

Methodist trailed 6-4 after three innings in a barn-burner against Roanoke. However, the Monarchs took a 7-6 lead with three runs in the third and tied it 8-8 with a run in the fifth. But Roanoke took the lead for good with the go-ahead run in the sixth.

Audra Gustafson fell to 3-1 with the defeat in relief for Methodist. Caryn Moreland went 2-for-3 for the Monarchs with an RBI, while Lindsey Leitao went 2-for-4 with an RBI and Abrams also went 2-for-4.

Methodist's Jessica Hutzler had a no-hitter against Meredith for the first four innings as the Monarchs led 1-0. However, Meredith scored three runs in the fifth on two walks, an infield hit and a throwing error. Methodist cut the lead to 3-2 in the seventh, but could get no closer.

The Monarchs will play in the Bronze Bracket on Saturday with games at 10 a.m. and 12 p.m.



**For Immediate Release:** March 20, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs split to finish second in Bronze bracket of East Coast Collegiate Classic**

**SALEM, Va.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team finished second in the Bronze Bracket of the East Coast Collegiate Classic on Saturday. 12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist opened with a 6-2 victory over USA South Athletic Conference rival Averett 6-2, but dropped a 7-4 decision against top-ranked Salisbury in the second game.

Methodist is now 12-8 overall on the 2004 season.

The Monarchs overcame a 2-1 deficit against Averett with two runs in the fourth and three more in the seventh. Jennifer Patrick went 2-for-4 with an RBI, while Lisa Strittmatter went 2-for-2 with a double and an RBI and Wendy Heath had a double and two RBIs. Tanya Fischer was the winning pitcher.

Methodist held a 3-2 lead after three innings against Salisbury, but couldn't hold it. Salisbury scored three runs in the fourth, followed by one each in the fifth and sixth. Fischer was the losing pitcher in this game for Methodist, which was held to only three hits. Ashley Abrams went 1-for-3 with a double and an RBI for the Monarchs.

Methodist officially opens USA South play on Tuesday at 2 p.m. against North Carolina Wesleyan.



**For Immediate Release:** March 23, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist opens USA South Athletic Conference play with doubleheader sweep over North Carolina Wesleyan**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – It was “better late than never” for the Methodist Monarch softball team in terms of playing its first game in the USA South Athletic Conference, but it finally happened on Tuesday. The result was what Methodist needed as the Monarchs swept rival North Carolina Wesleyan 5-2 and 8-3 at Monarch Field.

12<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist improves to 14-8 overall and 2-0 in the USA South, while North Carolina Wesleyan is now 4-14 and 0-4 in the USA South.

Both games were similar in the fact Methodist trailed early. The Monarchs fell behind 2-1 in game one, but scored four runs in the fifth to pull out the victory. In game two, Methodist trailed 3-2 in the third, but tied it at 3-3 in the third and scored two in the fourth and three in the fifth.

Lindsey Leitao smashed a two-run triple and Wendy Heath added an RBI single in the four-run fifth inning rally in game one, while Jennifer Patrick had an RBI single in the first inning. Heath, Patrick and Kristen Wallace each had two hits for Methodist in game one, while Jennifer Sorensen recorded four strikeouts in three innings to record the victory.

Methodist dodged a bullet in game two in the second inning. North Carolina Wesleyan had taken a 3-2 on consecutive RBI singles by Heather Petrillo and Courtney Tucker, and appeared to have increased the lead to four runs on a two-run double. However, the Bishops were batting out of order, wiping out the additional hit.

Methodist countered with six runs over the next three innings. Wallace’s RBI single tied the game in the third, and then Patrick gave Methodist a 4-3 lead with a solo home run leading off the fourth. Caryn Moreland and Ashley Abrams added RBI singles in the fifth.

Abrams went 3-for-4 with three RBIs for Methodist, while Patrick, Moreland, Wallace and Kristen Kennedy each had two hits. Sorensen again garnered the victory with six strikeouts in four innings of relief. Tucker went 3-for-4 for North Carolina Wesleyan and Petrillo went 2-for-4.

Methodist plays at USA South newcomer Peace on Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.



**For Immediate Release:** March 23, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs make it four straight, sweep Peace 3-0 and 5-0**

**RALEIGH, N.C.** - The start of USA South Athletic Conference play may have been just what the Methodist Monarch softball team needed. After opening with a sweep on Tuesday against North Carolina Wesleyan, the Monarchs made it four straight in conference play on Wednesday with a 3-0, 5-0 sweep at Peace.

Methodist, ranked 12th in NCAA Division III, is now 16-8 overall and 4-0 in the conference.

Monarch pitchers Caryn Moreland and Jennifer Sorensen combined for the shutout in game one, despite the fact Peace belted 12 hits. Moreland scattered eight hits and recorded three strikeouts in three-and-a-third innings, while Sorensen recorded the victory with four strikeouts in three-and-two-thirds innings.

Methodist opened with two runs in the first and another in the second. Ashley Abrams had an RBI single and Lindsey Leitao an RBI double in the first, and then Jennifer Patrick walked with the bases loaded in the second, scoring Kristen Kennedy.

Abrams went 2-for-4 for the Monarchs in game one.

Tanya Fischer and Sorensen combined for a four-hitter in game two as Fischer improved to 4-1 on the season, and Sorensen recorded her third season. Fischer recorded four strikeouts, while Sorensen had two strikeouts, and neither pitcher recorded a walk.

The game was scoreless until the fourth inning when Methodist broke through with three runs. Patrick scored on Kim McCall's sacrifice fly, and then Abrams scored on Lisa Strittmatter's RBI double. Strittmatter then advanced to third and scored on an error. The Monarchs added another run in the fifth on an RBI single by Abrams and the final run in the seventh on Abrams' second RBI single.

Patrick went a perfect 4-for-4 for Methodist, while Abrams went 2-for-4 with two RBIs.

Methodist off until March 31 when it plays host to Chowan in a huge USA South showdown at Monarch Field at 3 p.m.



**For Immediate Release:** March 31, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **15<sup>th</sup>-ranked Monarchs record doubleheader split against Chowan**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team's hold on first place in the USA South Athletic Conference ended on Wednesday with a doubleheader split against visiting Chowan. Methodist succeeded in game one as the Monarchs rolled 8-2. Chowan, however, returned the favor in game two with a 9-2 victory.

Methodist is now 17-9 overall and 5-1 in the USA South Athletic Conference. Chowan is now 19-11 and 6-6 in the USA South.

Methodist trailed 2-0 in game one, but took control with four runs in the fourth and three more in the fifth.

Lindsey Leitao's RBI double plated the Monarchs first run in the fourth, followed by Kristen Kennedy's run on a throwing error by Chowan pitcher Jessica Stauty. Kristen Wallace then walked with the bases loaded, and Kennedy scored on an error by Chowan second baseman Kayla Meacom.

In the fifth, Lisa Strittmatter delivered an RBI double, while Kennedy and Wendy Heath each had RBI singles. Kim McCall then scored Methodist's last run in the sixth on a wild pitch.

Kennedy, Strittmatter and Leitao each had two hits in game one for the Monarchs, while Jennifer Sorensen improved to 7-2 with the victory in relief of starter Jessica Hutzel. Meryah Breeden went 3-for-3 with two doubles for Chowan.

Chowan pounded Methodist pitching for 13 hits in game two. The Braves took a 3-0 lead in the second on an RBI single by Marianne Weir and a two-run double by Christina Eteuati. Methodist trimmed the lead to 3-2 in the third as Sorensen scored on a fielder's choice and then Amy Faucette scored on Ashley Abrams' groundout to first base.

After that, it was all Braves. Chowan scored a run each in the fourth and the sixth, and then broke it open with four runs in the seventh.

Ashley Rountree had an RBI single in the fourth, and then Weir scored on a throwing error in the sixth by Monarch shortstop Kim McCall. Chowan took advantage of two Methodist errors in the seventh.

Strittmatter had two hits for Methodist, while Tanya Fischer fell to 4-2 with the defeat. For Chowan, Meacom was stellar both at the plate and on the mound. She went 3-for-4 with doubles, while gaining the victory by scattering six hits in six innings. Weir, Bennett and Priscilla Weidner each had two hits for Chowan.

Methodist plays host to non-conference rival Meredith at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday.



**For Immediate Release:** April 1, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Sorensen pitches Methodist to doubleheader sweep over Meredith**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – As the Methodist Monarch softball team enters the stretch run of the 2004 season, Jennifer Sorensen is emerging as the team's top pitcher. She proved that on Thursday by garnering both victories as Methodist swept non-conference rival Meredith 2-0 and 5-1 at Monarch Field.

Ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the latest Division III Top 25 poll, Methodist (19-9) has won seven of its last eight games.

Sorensen fired a three-hit shutout in game one with no walks and four strikeouts. She had a perfect game for five innings before Katy Jo Haywood singled to left field. The Angels added two more hits in the seventh, but couldn't capitalize.

Catcher Wendy Heath accounted for both Methodist runs on RBI doubles. She drove in Kim McCall for the first Monarch run in the fourth and Diane Etheridge in the sixth. Heath and Kristen Wallace each went 2-for-3 in game one.

Meredith took a 1-0 lead in the first inning of game two on RBI double by Jill Nester. Methodist, however, took control with two runs in the third and three in the fourth.

Lisa Strittmatter accounted for both runs in the third on a two-run single. In the fourth, Sorensen's RBI single scored Amy Faucette, and then Wallace scored on a Meredith error and Strittmatter added another RBI single.

Strittmatter went 3-for-4 with three RBIs, while Sorensen and Wallace each went 2-for-3 with two runs scored. Sorensen also improved to 9-2 overall with one-and-two-third innings of no-hit ball in relief.

Methodist plays host to USA South Athletic Conference rival Shenandoah at 12 p.m. on Saturday.



**For Immediate Release:** April 1, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in first in-season Division III softball Top 25 poll**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team virtually held steady in the first in-season Division III Top 25 poll, which was released on Wednesday. Methodist dropped only three spots from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> in the new poll, which is sponsored by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA).

Methodist received 82 points for this poll. The Monarchs hold a four-point lead on Augustana and a five-point lead over La Verne. Methodist trails 14<sup>th</sup>-ranked Rowan by two points and 13<sup>th</sup>-ranked Wheaton by three points. Moravian, a team that defeated Methodist at the NFCA Leadoff Classic on March 12, is the new top-ranked team in the nation.

Other nationally-ranked teams that Methodist has played this season includes Salisbury (sixth), Muskingum (11<sup>th</sup>) and LaVerne (17<sup>th</sup>). The Monarchs are one of two USA South Athletic Conference teams that are ranked. Christopher Newport started the season unranked, but catapulted to sixth with a 24-4 start.



**For Immediate Release:** April 3, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Simpson wins 175<sup>th</sup> as 15<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist sweeps Shenandoah 11-8, 14-1**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – Methodist head softball coach Ron Simpson reached a milestone with his 175<sup>th</sup> victory at Methodist on Saturday as the 15<sup>th</sup>-ranked Monarchs swept a doubleheader over visiting Shenandoah, 11-8 and 14-1 in USA South Athletic Conference action. Methodist (21-9, 7-1 USA South) has now won four straight games.

Simpson, in his sixth season at Methodist, is now 176-79-1 at Methodist.

The Monarchs overcame a six-run second inning by Shenandoah with five runs in the bottom of the second inning. Shenandoah trimmed the Monarch lead to 8-7 with a run in the fourth, but the Monarchs answered with two runs in the bottom of the fourth. The two teams traded runs again in the sixth.

Lindsey Leitao went 3-for-4 with three RBIs for Methodist, while Kristen Wallace went 3-for-5 with two runs scored and Kim McCall went 2-for-4 with two RBIs and two runs scored. Jennifer Sorensen improved to 10-2 on the season with four strikeouts in four-and-two thirds innings of relief in place of starter Audra Gustafson.

Alicia Sanders went 3-for-4 with three runs scored for Shenandoah, while Carrie Harris went 3-for-5 and Melissa Landon and Shea Riemenschneider each went 2-for-4.

Game two was halted in the fifth due to the eight-run mercy rule. Shenandoah jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the first, but Methodist responded with three runs in the first, five in the second, two in the third and four in the fourth.

McCall went a perfect 2-for-2 with four RBIs and two runs scored, while Sorensen went 2-for-3 with two RBIs and three runs scored. Wallace also went 2-for-3 with three runs scored, and Kristen Kennedy went 1-for-3 with two RBIs and three runs scored. Jessica Hutzler improved to 3-2 with the victory.

Methodist plays at USA South rival Ferrum on Tuesday.



**For Immediate Release:** April 6, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist records split at Ferrum as USA South race tightens**

**ROCKY MOUNT, Va.** – Needing a sweep to keep pace in the wacky USA South Athletic Conference softball race, the Methodist Monarchs instead recorded a doubleheader split on Tuesday at Ferrum. The Monarchs dropped a 5-4 decision in game one as Ferrum had a seventh-inning rally, but rebounded with a 15-4 rout in game two.

15<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist is now 22-10 overall and 8-2 in the USA South. The Monarchs trail Christopher Newport by one game in the loss column.

Methodist appeared in cruise control in game one, leading 4-2 with ace Jennifer Sorensen on the mound. However, Ferrum (22-13, 8-6) won it with a three-run rally as Trica Moore walked with the bases loaded and Kim Cox delivered the game-winning two-run single with two outs.

Sorensen fell to 10-3 with the defeat in relief for starter Jessica Hutzel. First baseman Jennifer Patrick went 4-for-4 with a triple, while catcher Wendy Heath went 2-for-4 with two RBIs.

In game two, Methodist took no prisoners. The Monarchs whacked out 11 hits and they took advantage of a whopping eight Ferrum errors. Methodist raced out to a 9-0 lead in the first three-and-a-half innings before Ferrum trimmed the lead to 9-4 in the fourth. However, the Monarchs answered with a six-run fifth to win.

Patrick once again was in a hitting zone, going 3-for-5 with two triples and three RBIs. Kristen Wallace went 2-for-5 with an RBI and two runs scored, while Ashley Abrams scored three runs and Kristen Kennedy and Kim McCall each scored two. Tanya Fischer improved to 5-2 with the victory.

Methodist turns around and plays at Greensboro on Wednesday at 3 p.m.



**For Immediate Release:** April 7, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs keep pace in USA South race with doubleheader sweep over Greensboro**

**GREENSBORO, N.C.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team kept up the pace in the race for the USA South Athletic Conference championship on Wednesday with a 10-1, 8-0 sweep at Greensboro. The victory improves the 15<sup>th</sup>-ranked Monarchs to 24-10 overall and 10-2 in the USA South, while Greensboro is 12-16-1 and 3-12-1 in the USA South.

It also sets up a much-awaited showdown between Methodist and sixth-ranked Christopher Newport on Saturday at 2 p.m. at Monarch Field.

Methodist broke open game one with six runs in the third and another three in the fourth. Lisa Strittmatter went 3-for-3 with a double and two RBIs, while Ashley Abrams went 2-for-3 with a double and two RBIs. Jennifer Patrick added a double and two RBIs, and Jessica Hutzul improved to 4-2 overall by allowing four hits in four innings.

Junior Audra Gustafson broke free from a season-long slump in game two, allowing only two hits in four innings with five strikeouts to improve to 4-2 overall. Methodist scored four runs in the third and three more in the fourth to put the game away.

Abrams with 3-for-3 with a mammoth home run in the second inning and two RBIs. Kristen Wallace went 2-for-4 with two runs scored and Kristen Kennedy went 2-for-2 with two RBIs.



**For Immediate Release:** April 10, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs drop 9-0, 7-0 softball doubleheader against Christopher Newport**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – Saturday's anticipated doubleheader of nationally-ranked teams turned out to be a nightmare for the 15<sup>th</sup>-ranked Methodist Monarch softball team as it fell to sixth-ranked Christopher 9-0 and 7-0 in a battle for the USA South Athletic Conference championship at Monarch Field.

Methodist is now 24-12 overall and 10-4 in the USA South, while Christopher Newport improved to 35-5 overall and 15-1 in the USA South, clinching the regular season championship.

The Captains rode the strong arms of Michelle Kass and Vanessa Gray, which held Methodist to a combined five hits in both games. Kass fired a two-hitter in game one with seven strikeouts, while Gray and Kass combined for a three-hitter in game two.

Meanwhile, the Christopher Newport offensive attack blistered Monarch pitching for 28 hits combined. The Captains pounded out 16 hits in game one, followed by 12 in game two.

After a scoreless first inning in game one, Christopher Newport broke out with three runs in the second, two in the third, three in the fourth and one in the fifth. Renee Sigafos went 3-for-3 with an RBI and two runs scored, while Dallas Slosjarik went 2-for-4 with two RBIs and Andrea Rohde went 2-for-4 with a run scored. Tanya Fischer was the losing pitcher for Methodist, falling to 5-3 on the season.

In game two, the Captains struck for two runs in the first, one in the third and two more in the fourth against Methodist starter Jennifer Sorensen. They added two more in the fifth against reliever Jessica Hutzel. C.J. McQueen went 2-for-4 with a triple, two RBIs and two runs scored, while Lauren Batson went 3-for-3 and Slosjarik went 2-for-3.

Sorensen fell to 10-4 with the defeat.

Methodist plays at Averett on Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.



**For Immediate Release:** April 14, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist sweeps Averett, wraps up No. 2 seed in USA South Tournament**

**DANVILLE, Va.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team redeemed themselves from Saturday’s embarrassing doubleheader defeat against Christopher Newport with a 4-1, 6-4 doubleheader sweep at Averett on Wednesday. With the victories, Methodist (26-12, 12-4) finish second in the USA South Athletic Conference and clinch the No. 2 seed in this weekend’s USA South Tournament.

This marks the sixth straight season that Methodist has eclipsed 25 victories in a season – all under head coach Ron Simpson.

The Monarchs took a 4-0 lead in game with a run in the first inning and three in the second. After that, Methodist rode the strong arm of sophomore Jennifer Sorensen, who pitched two-hit ball for six scoreless innings with three strikeouts to improve to 11-4 on the season. Averett (16-20, 8-8) scored its lone run in the seventh.

Jennifer Patrick went 3-for-3 with a triple for Methodist, while Lisa Strittmatter went 1-for-3 with a double and two RBIs and Wendy Heath went 1-for-3 with an RBI.

In game two, Methodist clinged to a 4-3 lead before scoring twice in the sixth for some breathing room. Audra Gustafson improved to 6-2 with the victory in relief. Kristen Wallace went 3-for-4 with an RBI and run scored, while Kim McCall went 2-for-4 with a triple and an RBI.

Methodist plays North Carolina Wesleyan on Friday at 3 p.m. in the USA South Tournament at Buffaloe Road Park in Raleigh, N.C.



**For Immediate Release:** April 15, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs place five on All-USA South softball team**

**DANVILLE, Va.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team placed five players on the 2004 All-USA South Athletic Conference team on Thursday. Selected to the first team were first baseman Jennifer Patrick, third baseman Lisa Strittmatter, outfielder Kristen Wallace and utility player Ashley Abrams. Pitcher Jennifer Sorensen was a second team selection.

This marks the third straight season that Wallace has been a first team selection, while Patrick is a repeat on the first team after making the second team as a sophomore. Strittmatter, Abrams and Sorensen are being honored for the first time.

Wallace, a senior from Fayetteville, N.C., hit .361 this season with 35 runs scored and 13 stolen bases from the lead-off spot, while Patrick, a senior from Northern Cambria, Penn., led the Monarchs in hitting, batting .405 with a home run, 19 RBIs and six triples. Strittmatter, a senior from Alexandria, Va., hit .316 with a home run and 19 RBIs, and Abrams, a sophomore from Mooresville, N.C., hit .400 with two home runs and 20 RBIs and led the Monarchs in doubles with 10.

Sorensen, a sophomore from Spotsylvania, Va., went 11-4 with a 1.59 earned-run average, 17 walks and 63 strikeouts.



**For Immediate Release:** April 16, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist edges North Carolina Wesleyan 3-2 in USA South opening round**

**RALEIGH, N.C.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team took its first step in defense of its conference tournament championship on Friday with a tight 3-2 victory over North Carolina Wesleyan in the opening round of the 2004 USA South Athletic Conference Tournament at Buffalo Road Park. Methodist, winners of three straight, improve to 27-12 on the season.

The Monarchs take on Ferrum in the winners bracket semifinals on Saturday at 11 a.m.

In a pitcher's dual, the combination of Jessica Hutzul and Jennifer Sorensen combined for the victory, with Sorensen improving to 12-4 on the season in relief. The sophomore pitched no-hit ball for the final three hits with three strikeouts.

Methodist took a 1-0 lead in the third when Jennifer Patrick's RBI double scored Amy Faucette. However, North Carolina Wesleyan answered with a two-run double by Kari Supple, giving the Bishops a 2-1 lead.

But the Monarchs had the final answer with two runs in the fifth. Patrick's RBI single to centerfield scored Faucette, and then a throwing error by North Carolina Wesleyan enabled Kristen Wallace scored what proved to be the winning run.

Patrick went 2-for-3 for Methodist with two RBIs.



**For Immediate Release:** April 17, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs defeat Ferrum, fall to Averett in USA South Softball Tournament**

**RALEIGH, N.C.** – For the Methodist Monarchs to repeat as USA South Athletic Conference Tournament champions, they will have to do it the hard way.

In the second day of the 2004 USA South Tournament at Buffalo Road Park on Saturday, Methodist started strong with a 3-2 thriller over Ferrum. However, in the winners bracket final, the Monarchs dropped a 4-2 decision to Averett.

The defeat puts Methodist at 28-13 on the season, and it will have to win its way back through the losers bracket to have a chance. The Monarchs play Ferrum at 10 a.m. on Sunday, and should they win, play Averett at 1 p.m. Methodist will have to defeat Averett twice to win the championship.

Methodist spotted Ferrum a 2-0 lead in the first inning Jami Reed and Jenny Perdue scored for the Panthers. It stayed 2-0 until the fifth when the Monarchs broke through against Ferrum starter Kim Cox. Jennifer Patrick's RBI single scored Kristen Wallace to trim the deficit to one, followed by RBI single by Kristen Kennedy, scoring Diane Etheridge.

The Monarchs took the lead in the seventh when Kennedy's sacrifice fly to centerfield scored Ashley Abrams. Jennifer Sorensen was the winning pitcher in relief, improving to 13-4 on the season, while Patrick went 3-for-4 and Kennedy and Caryn Moreland each went 2-for-3.

Game two looked like a runaway for Methodist as the Monarchs scored two runs in the first on a two-run single by Lisa Strittmatter. However, Averett took advantage of two costly Monarch errors in the third for three runs. Jessi Moss' two run double gave the Cougars the lead, followed by another RBI double by Jeri Hughes.

From there, Heather Mull held Methodist in check by scattering seven hits with two strikeouts and no walks. Patrick and Strittmatter each went 2-for-3 for Methodist, while Jessica Hutzul was the losing pitcher in relief.



**For Immediate Release:** April 18, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Ferrum eliminates Methodist in USA South softball losers bracket finals**

**RALEIGH, N.C.** – There will be no repeat conference championship for the Methodist Monarch softball team in 2004.

Sunday's loser bracket final of the 2004 USA South Athletic Conference Tournament between Methodist and Ferrum had plenty of dramatics, extending into extra innings. However, Ferrum's Trica Moore scored the winning run in the bottom of the 10<sup>th</sup> on a Monarch error attempting to double the Panthers' Kim Cox off at second base.

Methodist is now 28-14 on the 2004 season.

Mistakes in the field proved costly for the Monarchs in a game where there were three ties and two lead changes.

A dropped foul ball led to Ferrum's first two runs in the first inning. The Panthers added their third run in the fifth when Methodist first baseman Jennifer Patrick attempted throw out Ferrum's Jami Reed at third. However, the throw got away, enabling Reed to score.

After rallying to tie the game in the sixth, the Monarchs took a 4-3 lead in the eighth when Diane Etheridge walked the bases loaded, scoring Kristen Kennedy from third. However, Ferrum answered with a two-out rally in the bottom-half of the inning as Lindsay Etherton delivered an RBI single to centerfield.

With one out in the bottom of the 10<sup>th</sup>, Moore doubled for Ferrum, and then moved over to third when Cox reached on an error. Lindsay Hunt grounded out to third, holding Moore at third. However, when Patrick's pickoff attempt at second was off, Moore scored the winning run.

Kennedy went 2-for-4 for Methodist with two runs scored and an RBI. She smashed a monstrous solo home run in the second. Tanya Fischer was the losing pitcher in relief. Moore went 3-for-5 for Ferrum (28-14), while Hunt went 2-for-5. Cox was the winning pitcher in relief.

Methodist concludes the 2004 season on Wednesday at Guilford.



**For Immediate Release:** April 21, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Methodist closes out 2004 softball season with doubleheader sweep at Guilford**

**GREENSBORO, N.C.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team ended the 2004 season on a good note with a 7-3, 14-2 sweep at Guilford on Wednesday. The two victories gives Methodist a 30-14 record for the season. It marks the second straight 30-victory season and third 30-victory season overall for Methodist under head coach Ron Simpson.

It's the fifth 30-victory season in program history.

Diane Etheridge went 2-for-3 with two doubles and an RBI in game one for the Monarchs, while Kristen Wallace and Ashley Abrams each went 2-for-4 as the Monarchs had nine hits. Jessica Hutzul improved to 4-3 with the victory, while Jennifer Sorensen recorded her third save of the season.

In game two, the Monarchs blitzed Quaker pitching with 14 hits as the game was limited to five innings due to the mercy rule. Etheridge was tremendous, going 3-for-3 with a triple, two doubles, four RBIs and two runs scored, while Wendy Heath went 3-for-4 with two doubles and four RBIs.

In addition, Wallace finished out her brilliant Monarch career going 3-for-3 with an RBI and three runs scored, and Lisa Strittmatter went 2-for-4 with a double, two RBIs and two runs scored. Freshman Caryn Moreland recorded her first collegiate victory.



**For Immediate Release:** May 13, 2004

**Contact:** Lee Wright (910) 630-7172

## **Monarchs place four on 2004 Division III All-Atlantic South Region for softball**

**FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.** – The Methodist Monarch softball team placed four players on the 2004 Division III All-Atlantic South Region team on Thursday. First baseman Jennifer Patrick, outfielder Kristen Wallace and utility player Ashley Abrams were each selected to the second team, while sophomore pitcher Jennifer Sorensen was the third team selection.

The quartet played an instrumental role in leading Methodist to a 30-14 season overall and 12-4 mark in the USA South Athletic Conference.

Patrick, a senior from Northern Cambria, Penn., led the Monarchs in hitting this season. She batted .420 with a home run, 22 RBIs, eight doubles and six triples. Patrick finished her Monarch career with the school record for triples in her career. She was also a first team All-USA South selection for the second straight season, and a three-time All-Conference selection for her career.

Wallace, a senior from Fayetteville, N.C., hit .355 with 41 runs scored, 14 stolen bases and nine RBIs. She was a mainstay for three seasons at the top of the lineup and was a two-time All-American in centerfield. Wallace was a first-team All-USA South selection this season, and three-time All-Conference selection for her career.

Abrams, a junior from Mooresville, N.C., enjoyed a breakthrough season with a .371 average with two home runs and 22 RBIs. In addition, Abrams also scored 28 runs and led the Monarchs in doubles with 12.

A sophomore from Spotsylvania, Va., Sorensen was arguably Methodist's best pitcher this season. She went 13-4 with a 1.21 earned-run average with 80 strikeouts and 22 walks. Sorensen also recorded three saves after tying the NCAA Division III record for saves in a season last year with nine.

The highlight of Sorensen's season was a 4-0 no-hitter against Williamette in the NFCA Leadoff Classic. She was a second team All-USA South selection.