



Danielle Spalik

Year of Induction: **2019**

Year of Graduation: **2003**

Former manager of the New York Yankees and MLB Hall of Fame member Miller Huggins said this about catchers: "A good catcher is the quarterback, the carburetor, the lead dog, the pulse taker, the traffic cop and sometimes a lot of unprintable things, but no team gets very far without one." Although Huggins expressed this opinion nearly 100 years ago, his words are still accurate to describe the importance of the catcher, and Danielle Spalik, JCHS Class of 2003, certainly proved this quote to be timeless.

Ms. Spalik was one of Johnson City's leading female athletes of the early 2000s. She accumulated 10 varsity letters during her time at JCHS: three each in basketball and soccer and four in softball. While soccer and basketball allowed her to keep her competitive juices flowing throughout the fall and winter, it was on the softball diamond where she was a star. After being brought up to the varsity as a freshman, she immediately made an impact by hitting .300 and providing solid defense behind the plate. Spalik continued to be a leader on the team both with her play and from a vocal perspective. Her batting average went up every year from .375 as a sophomore, to .390 as a junior, and finally ending with an incredible .480 in her senior season. She was the team captain as a senior, and former coach (and JC Athletic Hall of Famer) Danielle Guccia had this to say about Ms. Spalik's leadership:

"She had an excellent work ethic, great leadership skills, and she was very motivated. I recall a situation when the game was tied and there were two outs with runners on first and third...we were on defense. This was usually a time when I would tell Dani to throw the runner out because we knew they would try to steal. However, she was battling through a slump at the plate, so I was worried that she was mentally struggling and might not be ready to make that perfect throw. I called a trick play instead of having her throw through to second. She called time and asked me to come to the mound. I told her what I was thinking, she told me that she had it and not to doubt her. We changed the play and she threw the runner out. She was so gritty and tough, but she was also so much fun. She would have the team laughing so hard we were crying! She was the player that every coach wants."

For her accomplishments as a varsity player, Ms. Spalik was voted All-Conference for three consecutive years from 2001 – 2003. In her standout senior season, she was voted 2nd team All-State. Throughout her scholastic years, Dani also played on high-level competitive travel teams each summer. Her teams regularly finished in the top 20 of national

softball tournaments that featured well over 100 teams from across the country.

Dani continued her softball career at Kutztown University. She was Kutztown's catcher for four years from 2004 – 2007, and she was named a co-captain during her senior season. She was a consistent contributor each year, and her teams enjoyed great success. Kutztown won 130 games during Dani's four years, including an amazing 43 games during her senior season.

The Johnson City Athletic Hall of Fame is proud to welcome one of the strongest softball catchers to play for the Wildcats, a true leader whose teams certainly wouldn't have gotten very far without her, Ms. Danielle Spalik, JCHS Class of 2003.