



## **Slugger Emily McCutcheon is the South High softball team's most dangerous weapon**

The junior in Anchorage has been one of biggest catalysts to the success of the reigning state softball champions.

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South junior Emily McCutcheon has developed into one of the most prolific sluggers in girls fast-pitch softball. She's become such a menace to opposing pitchers, some aren't even bothering to pitch to her at all.

After smashing a pair of three-run homers in the first inning of South's 13-1 win over Dimond in the first game of a doubleheader Monday, the Lynx learned their lesson. Dimond pitched around her in a later at-bat.

"That's what happened at the end of the first game," McCutcheon said. "I got four straight balls. It's really hard because you just want to hit but you know you got to be patient. If you can't swing on a pitch, you can't do anything."

McCutcheon was walked intentionally twice in the second game against Bettye Davis East High, but not before she had driven in a pair of runs with an RBI hit.

"They don't want to see her hit and it's obvious why," South head coach Joe White said.



South junior Emily McCutcheon is congratulated at home plate by teammates after hitting her second home run in the first inning during the Wolverines' 13-1 victory over the Dimond Lynx at the Chuck Albrecht Softball Complex on Monday. (Bill Roth / ADN)

The Wolverines are the reigning Division I state champions and McCutcheon was a key contributor on last year's title-winning team, finishing with 15 home runs in 2021. She already has six through 13 games during the team's 12-0-1 start to the 2022 season

"She is a Gatorade Player of the Year nominee and works on her craft year around," White said. "She was a big hitter for us last year."

The second of her two home runs Monday was the 21st of her career, which set a new program record for the most in a career.

"I didn't even realize I broke it until (teammate) Alison (Ulrich) said something about it and then I was really hype," McCutcheon said.

She reached this milestone in two seasons because her freshman season in 2020 was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



South junior Emily McCutcheon rounds the bases after hitting her second home run in the first inning during the Wolverines' 13-1 victory over the Dimond at the Chuck Albrecht Softball Complex on Monday. (Bill Roth / ADN)

She said that she wouldn't have come as far as she has as a player without the help of her father, Brandon McCutcheon, who is on the Wolverines coaching staff.



“Sometimes it’s really hard but I also think it makes it a lot better,” Emily McCutcheon said about having her dad as a formal and personal coach.

He admits it can be hard to remove the father side of him from the coach, but he’s appreciative of the entire experience.

“It’s tough but it’s also very rewarding watching her start in T-ball and come all the way through the high school level to where she is now,” Brandon McCutcheon said.

The two work on her swing on off-days and also see a private hitting coach every year.

“Her hitting coach is Jake Epstein down in Colorado,” Brandon McCutcheon said. “We go and see him every year down at [College Station](#) so she gets to have some else besides her dad coach her. He is a great guy and really knows his business with swinging.”



South junior shortstop Emily McCutcheon and teammates celebrate at the pitcher mound after an out during the Wolverines' 13-1 victory over the Dimond Lynx at the Chuck Albrecht Softball Complex on Monday, May 9, 2022. (Bill Roth / ADN)

After mostly cruising to victories by wide margins during first 12 games, the Wolverines appeared to be on the brink of losing their first game of the regular season when they found themselves down 7-4 Monday late in their game with the Thunderbirds.

Following a rally and in the top of the fifth and strong stand at the bottom of the final inning, South managed to remain undefeated by playing to a 7-7 tie.

“We battled back and I think we worked really hard to do that,” Emily McCutcheon said. “We definitely need more adversity like this to learn how to work through the struggles and come together as a team.”

## **Josh Reed**

Josh Reed is a sports reporter for the Anchorage Daily News. He's a graduate of West High School and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.