

An extra seven players may seem like a subtle change for the varsity softball team this year, however there are many advantages to the added numbers that could make or break the teams' success at State.

Madison Grant (12), enjoys being able to put the best players on the field, while giving others an opportunity to rest until their skills are needed again.

"It's allowed us to have two complete teams and be able to move girls around," Grant said. If someone's struggling, we have people who can come in and play that position, if not be better at it," Grant said.

In addition to more players, there is also a lack of upperclassmen on the varsity team. Center Fielder Emma Veach (12) believes that it's crucial for the few seniors that are on varsity to diligently prepare the underclassmen for their leadership in the next couple years.

"That's why we have to be important leaders for the freshman so they can step up for all of the underclassmen next year," Veach said.

One of the possible reasons for the increase in freshmen is due to a camp the softball team held last summer, in attempts to recruit Olathe students going to West in the future.

Maliyah Warren (10), saw the camp as a great opportunity for recruiting, which seems to have worked.

"We have a lot of freshmen this year, and I think a lot of that has to do with last year we had a camp for the freshmen and I think we made it fun and made them wanna play this year," Warren said.

Creating a functioning environment where the team plays as a whole has been a recent task on the teams' agenda. Seniors have had to show the freshmen how high school softball operates, so that they can all be well-rounded players.

"When freshmen first come in, they don't really know the ways that our team runs," Grant said. "Us seniors have taught them and helped them learn all the things and now we're all on the same page with a lot of things so, it's made things a lot smoother."

Emma Heinemann (9), is proud to be one of the many freshmen that made varsity. Having the added players means having added skills, and she also thinks that could result in an accomplishing year of softball.

Beyond being successful as a team, Grant and other seniors are ready to enjoy their last year playing high school softball, and end the year on a great note before their transition to college softball in the fall of 2023.

"I'm excited for all that senior year will bring because we are finally the leaders and it's my last year playing with these girls, so even if the season doesn't go our way, I know I'll get to have so much fun with some of my best friends," Grant said. "This is also my last experience of high school softball and so we are hoping for a fun and successful year."