

The 2018 NSAA Class B State Softball Tournament took place at Smith Softball Complex, in Hastings, on October 10-12. The Beatrice Lady Orange Softball Team was the third-seeded team in the state tournament and drew to play the Blair Bears, the sixth-seeded team in the first round of the tournament. The Lady O was determined to come out with a win, knowing that they should not be the third-seeded team in the tournament. Some tough losses for Beatrice in the district tournament were the reason for the seeding.

From asking some of the girls how they felt going into the state tournament, they said that they were feeling very confident, from looking at the bracket, and seeing that they had beaten most of the teams in the regular season. The Lady O showed up to the first game in the state tournament and showed no mercy, and they easily beat Blair 8-0. Winning the first game guaranteed the Lady O at least two more games, but they were hoping for only two, and that was not the case. After beating Blair, the Lady O would play the winner of Skutt Catholic the two seed, or Gross Catholic the seventh seed. Skutt defeated Gross 7-3. The following day the Lady O was set to play Skutt. Beatrice was pumped: Skutt is Beatrice's rival, and they had played each other multiple times during the season, meeting up in Beatrice once, the Lincoln Southwest Invite, and in the River Cities Conference finals. The Lady O came out on top two of the three times they had played, but Beatrice knew Skutt was out to get them. Skutt showed up all right, and they gave it to the Lady O beating them 8-5. The Lady O was very disappointed in themselves knowing that they could and should have beaten them. Asking one of the players if she felt that the team picked each other up, she said, "I thought everybody did a good job in supporting one another; if they made an error, or even if they did something good, they would give that teammate a pat on the back."

So after suffering this loss, the team dropped to the losers' bracket. The Lady O's next opponent was the Crete Cardinals, another team the Lady O had gone back and forth with all season. The Lady O lost to Crete once in the regular season and also in districts. One of Crete's players was quoted on social media as saying that the highlight of her season was beating Beatrice twice, which gave the Lady O even more motivation to beat Crete. The one thing that was holding the Lady O back was the weather: a few thunderstorms going through the Hastings area would postpone the rest of the games until Saturday. The Lady O came out with a 12-2 win against Crete.

The winner of Hastings and Gross Catholic would tell the Lady O whom their next competitor was going to be. Gross came out on top that game with a 12-11 victory over Hastings. The Lady O struggled a little bit that game, which could have been from a number of things: the weather, or just maybe that they had already beat Hastings, so they thought they already had it in the bag. The Lady O came through in the top of the seventh inning to win 7-6. The Lady O would meet up with Skutt Catholic again after they suffered a loss to the number one seed Elkhorn. The loss the Lady O suffered earlier in the week by three runs to Skutt did not matter because the game that did matter was now in the losers' bracket championship. The Lady O knew that and beat Skutt Catholic 9-6 and punched their ticket to the Class B State Championship game later that Saturday afternoon.

The Lady O was not giving up. Beatrice had previously beaten Elkhorn earlier in the season in the Columbus Invite, but that did not mean anything, because any team could be beaten on any day of the week. Unfortunately, this was true for the Lady O, and they suffered a 3-0 loss in the championship game.

All in all, the Beatrice Lady Orange Softball Team had many great team accomplishments during the 2018 season: being 2018 RCC Champions, qualifying for the Class B State Softball Tournament, earning another trip to the championship game at the state tournament, and being ranked number two in the final Class B state rankings. Coming from a few of the players and asking them what they thought the team's weaknesses were, they replied, "Our team is young and the players didn't all play on the same summer team." Asking them what the strengths of the team were, they said, "The team had a great bond, and there is a lot of athletic ability on the team." The Beatrice Lady Orange is looking forward to adding a few new players next season and working hard in the off-season.

