

Sticking together

Tracy teammates sign on with Holy Names



Friends and teammates Samantha Fisher and Katie Stutz both signed letters of intent Thursday to attend Oakland's Holy Names University next year.

Samantha Fisher and Katie Stutz have built a friendship as teammates on the softball field, and they will continue to build that bond after their senior year with Tracy High's Lady Bulldogs team.

The seniors both signed letters of intent Thursday to accept softball scholarships at Holy Names University in Oakland next year.

Stutz, who plays third base, and Fisher, who plays outfield, both visited the college in the fall as Holy Names hosted a recruiting day for softball prospects.

"We invited them to come out so we could take a look at them," Holy Names head coach Melanie Gregor said Thursday, during the formal signing ceremony in front of the trophy cases at Tracy High's Swenson Gym.

The 2008 season is Holy Names' first year with a softball team, so the two Tracy players will help determine how the team will do in future National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics play.

"Based on what we saw at the play day, we felt it would be the right fit," Gregor said. "We're trying to increase the level of play of the NAIA in Northern California, because the powerhouses are all in Southern California."

The Tracy players are up for the challenge.

"When we went to visit, we really liked it," Stutz said.

She added that she looked at some of the California State University programs but followed through on the Holy Names offer.

Fisher also figured the team would be a good fit for her.

"I knew I wanted to play softball and stay in this general area," she said. "It's exciting, because we are the new program."

The two became teammates when they were with the 10-and-under Tracy Express league and have played together through this year's varsity team, which is 9-6 in the preseason and begins San Joaquin Athletic Association play on Tuesday at Lincoln High in Stockton.

"We talked about going to college together, so it worked out," Stutz said.