

## **Inland Sports CIF-SS Softball Playoffs Team Preview: Ramona Rams**

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Ramona High School softball has won back to back River Valley League championships. However after last year's first round defeat to Sierra Canyon the Rams are looking to still surpass their furthest run of the MaxPreps era, a 2016 run to the division four quarterfinals. Monday afternoon while at the Ambassador League golf prelims I had the opportunity to chat with head coach Laura Shinar along with players Bri Lopez, Raya Valencia, and Aaliyah Rebolledo via phone.

On Thursday afternoon at home the Rams will put an eleven game winning streak on the line against Troy from Fullerton. Shinar remarked about the streak "What's been impressive to see is that different parts of our order have contributed on different days and how we've responded when faced with adversity. We're really starting to hit our stride at the right time."

When I asked what the strength of this group has been their coach remarked "These ladies are super coachable, have a great team chemistry and aren't phased by anything on that field." Aaliyah Rebolledo said "We're like a family and will fight until the final out."

Girls basketball made school history with a semifinal run in sectional play & a runner-up finish in the state tournament. Both Bri Lopez & Raya Valenzuela agreed it was motivation saying "It's definitely motivation to be better and show we're capable of doing the things they did. We also want to keep the school spirit and pride that run generated going."

Experience can be a key factor in postseason runs especially for teams trying to erase the sour taste of an early exit one year ago. When I asked coach Shinar about how her team was different from the team that fell to Sierra Canyon last year she remarked "We're a year older with two seniors, it was our starting pitcher's first playoff experience, and more confident this year. Thursday and the next couple of weeks are our chance to show what we've learned in these last twelve months."

With a high seed comes expectations and pressure but those things do not seem to phase the Rams. Rebolledo said "We know what we're getting ourselves into, work well together, and are confident in each other to get things done this year." Further expanding on those comments Valenzuela added "There's always going to be pressure but we will practice and be ready for whatever is thrown at us."

Arlington moves to the River Valley League in 2020-2021 and coach Shinar commented about that change "We're excited for Arlington to join the league in a couple of years. They're right down the street and it's a competitive, fun-natured matchup for us."

### Extra Innings:

I read the players a series of nine descriptions and asked them to name the player which best fits that superlative.

\*Team Prankster? Alabama Wong

\*Most likely to be on a game or reality show & which one? Aaliyah Rebolledo

\*Best Karaoke Performer? Celene Alvarez

\*Most organized? Courtney Ball

\*Best cook? Raya Valenzuela

\*Most studious? Bri Lopez

\*Most likely to be an anchor on ESPN or CBS Sports in five years? Ebony Marquez

\*Worst Driver? Raya Valenzuela

\*Most likely to empty the water jug on coach Shinar if you reach the finals? Alexis Rodriguez

### Getting to know the Rams:

Next I asked the players a series of nine questions to better get to know them.

\*Favorite Ice Cream flavor?

RV>>Vanilla

BL>>Cotton Candy

AR>>Butter Pecan

\*Strangest thing you've ever eaten at the ballpark?

RV>>Gnats

BL>>Dirt

AR>>Dirt

\*Best & Worst subjects in school?

RV>>Best-Science Worst-Math

BL>>Best-Math Worst-History

AR>>Best-Math Worst-Biology

\*If you could play another sport competitively what would it be?

RV>>Basketball

BL>>Basketball

AR>>Boxing/Martial Arts

\*Dream school?

RV>>Cal

BL>>University of Washington

AR>>California Baptist University

\*Favorite college softball players?

RV>>Sydney Romero

BL>>Sis Bates

AR>>Leena Reellevo

\*Last book you read?

RV>>Brain on Fire

BL>>Cooking book

AR>>Great Gatsby

\*Random fact?

RV>>I love ketchup

BL>>Mom a Ramona alum who played catcher

AR>>I'm a country music fan

\*Celebrity crush?

RV>>Michael B. Jordan

BL>>Cole Sprouse

AR>>Bruno Mars