

Elizabethton's Simmons will slap for Holly at Milligan

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What could turn out to be a loss for King College may be turned into another gold medal for Milligan College softball coach Wes Holly on Wednesday morning as Elizabethton pitcher Kelsey Simmons inked her name on the dotted line to join Holly's Lady Buff softball program.

Simmons, who was hoping for a call to play at King, turned down an offer to play at Virginia Tech but simply couldn't live down the offer placed on the table by Holly at Milligan.

"I had Coach (Ken) Hardin contact Coach Holly," said Simmons. "He lost both of his slappers so with me being a slapper I hope to fit right in."

Simmons is no stranger to King as when she was younger she attended some of his pitch-camps and became familiar with him.

During her senior season at

Elizabethton, the fleet-footed Simmons refused to allow a shoulder injury to slow her down as she became a thorn in the flesh of opponents with her ability to lay the ball down slap bunting and beat most throws out with ease.

Once on base, Simmons was always a threat to steal a base at any given time.

According to her high school coach, Simmons will be a great asset for the Milligan program.

"Coach Holly traditionally doesn't have a lot of speed at Milligan, but Kelsey will give that to him," said Hardin. "She plays good defense in the outfield and that coupled with her speed is two great things to have in a college player."

"If you give Kelsey a chance she'll come through for you."

Simmons has played the game since she was four and saw the opportunity to play at the next level as a continuation of her love for the sport.

She credits a lot of her suc-



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Former Elizabethton Lady Cyclone softball standout Kelsey Simmons recently signed to play for Coach Wes Holly at Milligan College. Joining Simmons at the signing were front (L-R) father Melvin Simmons, Simmons, and mother Becky Simmons. In the back row is Milligan head softball coach Wes Holly.

cess to her high school coach, Hardin.

"Coach Hardin was always up front and honest on what I need-

ed to do," added Simmons. "He never sugar-coated anything and

always told me what he expected of me.

"He supported me when I played basketball as well as everything else."

Simmons knows that collegiate play will be much tougher than high school, but is looking forward to the challenge.

"I think it's going to be a really good experience for me," said Simmons. "It will be challenging organizing studies, sports and dorm life."

When looking for a role model, Simmons didn't have to do anything but look across the table and see the inspiration of her life, her mother Becky.

"My mom has always supported me and been there for me through everything," added Simmons.

Simmons has two siblings — Kristopher and Michael. She was also joined at the signing by her father Melvin and Coach Holly. Her high school coaches, Hardin, Jeff Pierce, Chris Hambrick, and Brian Moore, weren't able to be at the impromptu signing.