

CHLOE ADKISSON SIGNS TO PLAY SOFTBALL AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY MID-SOUTH

By Ron Barry

Sometimes your first choices in life don't work out.

When they don't, it's nice to know there's somebody in your corner who can relate to your situation.

That's the case with Crockett County senior Chloe Adkisson, who signed on Monday afternoon to continue her softball career as a member of the Arkansas State University Mid-South Greyhounds.

Adkisson received three offers from schools in the Arkansas State University system. The Mid-South campus (located in West Memphis) was not her first choice, as she chose ASU Mountain Home as her preference. But shortly after that decision, Adkisson got a call from the Mountain Home coach that, due to injuries and other unforeseen circumstances, that school's softball program was being discontinued.

"I'm not going to lie - I cried," Adkisson said. "I thought I'd missed my chance to play softball in college, because I'd already told the other schools that I had chosen Mountain Home."

Giving up is not one of Adkisson's character traits, as was attested to by several of the Cavalier coaches who spoke at her signing ceremony Monday. So Adkisson swallowed her pride and got back on the phone, this time dialing up Mid-South head coach Gary Cordell.

"I was driving down the road in my truck when she called," Cordell said. "Chloe said, 'Coach, I know I already told you that Mid-South wasn't my first choice, but if you still have room on the team for me, I'd like to come.' She told me what had happened with Mountain Home. Well, I knew I still wanted her all along, so it didn't take me any time to tell her that our offer was still good. Sometimes that's just the way things work out when your first choice for something goes south."

It didn't hurt that Cordell - a former draft pick of the Kansas City Royals back in 1971 - saw something of himself in Adkisson.

"Chloe's small for a softball player," Cordell said, "but I was small too when I graduated high school. I weighed 140 pounds when I signed with the Royals, and their top player that season was Freddie Patek (5'5" shortstop). When you are determined to accomplish something, and you play with purpose, nothing is going to stop you."

Cordell related that in watching recruitment videos, Adkisson showed particularly two things he needed on his team: speed and defense.

"She'll be one of the two fastest girls that we have," he said. "If she can hit the ball on the ground, with her quickness, people will have trouble throwing her out. But I also saw a really good glove. I have confidence that if Chloe can get to it, she's going to catch it. And that's important to any solid team."

Cordell played in the minors with Hall-of-Famer George Brett and perennial All-Star Frank White, so he knows the value of a good defensive infield. He also was the head baseball coach at West Memphis Christian and led a summer baseball program over 14 years with the Eagles that helped produced 50 college players.

His softball expertise was also gained from 23 years of playing fast-pitch himself, after a serious knee injury sidetracked his potential MLB catching career. He was a three-time Arkansas All-State Fast-Pitch Team selection. Cordell was named as ASUM's head softball coach in May of 2024.

The Crockett County coaches who spoke at Adkisson's signing ceremony were all complimentary of her coachability, her determination, and her dedication to cheering the success of her teammates. CCHS speakers included Duke Kail, Kayla Irvin, Spencer Bursey, and Charles Evans, who lauded Adkisson's faith as being even more important than any of her athletic traits.

"Chloe is dedicated to being a committed follower of Jesus," Evans said, "and that makes everything else she does better. And as long as she continues to do that, she's going to be a success in whatever paths she takes."

"I think that faith played a role in how this thing finally worked out," Cordell added. Adkisson plans to acquire an associate degree in Applied Science at ASUM and then train to become a paramedic, with an eventual pursuit of a bachelor's degree in Sociology, leading to a position in drug rehab counseling and abuse prevention.



Above: Chloe Adkisson -- seen here in her current in-season sport, basketball -- signed Monday to play collegiate softball at Arkansas State University Mid-South. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Chloe Adkisson, flashing the speed that helped attract the attention of ASUM coach Gary Cordell, rounds third base to score against Dyer County last season. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Chloe Adkisson -- with her family and future coach Gary Cordell looking on -- signs with Arkansas State University Mid-South. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Coaches who have been a part of Chloe Adkisson's athletic journey join in her signing celebration. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Crockett County's softball team surrounds Chloe Adkisson at her signing ceremony. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Crockett County's basketball team surrounds Chloe Adkisson as she signs to play softball at ASUM. (Photo by Ron Barry)