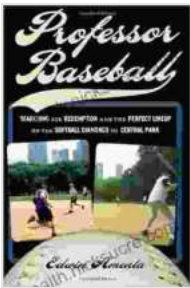


# Searching for Redemption and the Perfect Lineup on the Softball Diamonds of

The East Leyden High School softball team in Franklin Park, Illinois, had a disappointing season in 2021. They finished with a record of 10-15 and failed to make the playoffs. But this year, the Eagles are back with a vengeance.



## Professor Baseball: Searching for Redemption and the Perfect Lineup on the Softball Diamonds of Central

Park by Edwin Amenta

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Led by coach Eugene Lenti, East Leyden has started the 2022 season with a perfect record of 10-0. The Eagles have outscored their opponents by a combined score of 100-10. Lenti said he is "very proud" of his team's start to the season.

"We have a lot of talent on this team," Lenti said. "The girls are working hard and they are dedicated to winning."

One of the keys to East Leyden's success this season has been their pitching. Senior pitcher Abby Locascio has been dominant in the circle. In 10 games, Locascio has allowed just 10 runs and struck out 100 batters. Locascio said she is "feeling really confident" on the mound this season.

"I think I have a lot of control over my pitches," Locascio said. "I'm just trying to throw strikes and let my defense work behind me."

Behind Locascio, the Eagles have a strong defense. Senior shortstop Kayla Baker is a leader on the field. She is a great fielder and has a strong arm. Baker said she is "excited" about the team's potential this season.

"I think we can go all the way," Baker said. "We have the talent and the determination to win a state championship."

In addition to their pitching and defense, the Eagles also have a potent offense. Senior outfielder Emma Rodriguez is one of the best hitters in the state. Rodriguez is batting .500 this season with 10 home runs and 30 RBIs. Rodriguez said she is "just trying to help the team win."

"I'm not trying to do too much," Rodriguez said. "I'm just trying to get on base and score runs."

The Eagles also have a number of other talented hitters, including senior catcher Sarah Johnson and junior outfielder Ava Gonzalez. Johnson is batting .400 this season with 5 home runs and 20 RBIs. Gonzalez is batting .350 with 10 RBIs.

With their strong pitching, defense, and offense, the Eagles are a legitimate contender for a state championship. Lenti said he is "cautiously optimistic"

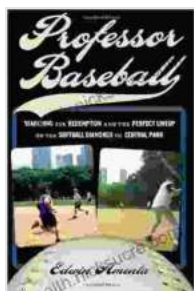
about the team's chances this season.

"We have a lot of potential," Lenti said. "But we still have a lot of work to do. We need to stay focused and we need to continue to improve."

The Eagles will face their toughest test of the season on April 29 when they play Lyons Township High School, the defending state champions. Lyons Township is ranked No. 1 in the state and has a record of 12-0. Lenti said he is "looking forward" to the challenge.

"Lyons Township is a great team," Lenti said. "But we're going to give them our best shot. We're going to go out there and play our game."

The Eagles will play their home games at East Leyden High School, 3400 N. Harlem Ave., Franklin Park, IL. For more information about the team, visit their website at [www.ea](http://www.ea)



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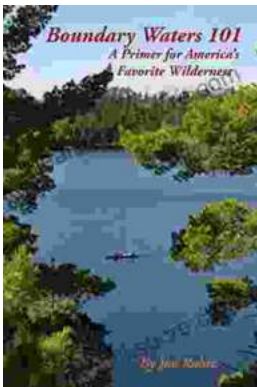
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