



BRIGHTON — About 35 young girls had plenty of talented softball players to learn from during Florida Gulf Coast University's clinic Dec. 2 at Ollie Jones Memorial Park in Brighton.

There was Riley Randolph, a junior left-handed pitcher who won Atlantic Sun Conference rookie and pitcher of the year awards as a freshman. Morgan White, the 2015 Florida Miss Softball, was there, too.

But the player all the girls most wanted to see was Ahnie Jumper, a Seminole who grew up on the Big Cypress Reservation, starred on state championship teams at American Heritage and has now landed as an Eagle for FGCU's NCAA Division I softball team.

For the girls at the clinic, Jumper is far more than just a freshman third baseman.

"She's a person you can look up to in all aspects of life. Good person, good softball player, good teammate. She does it all," said Jill Rodriguez, an 11th grade pitcher on the Immokalee High School team who hopes to follow in Jumper's footsteps and play college softball.

Rodriguez said she's learned from Jumper as a friend and former teammate.

"I love the attitude and the drive she has. She has a passion for the game," Rodriguez said.

Jumper's passion and her dedication to helping the Tribe haven't gone unnoticed.

"It's cool. She represents the Tribe and she's doing an awesome job," said FGCU assistant coach Jamie Kertes, who ran the clinic with fellow assistant Jaime Edwards. "She's an amazing kid. She's got a great personality. She's going to bring a lot to the team."

Jumper spent plenty of time working with the girls in small groups on their hitting, including helping with their stances and grips. During a break she said being part of the clinic on the reservation opened a new view of the impact she can have on young Seminoles.

"Being here right now changes my perspective a little in how big a role I can be to these young girls," she said. "I've been in this role for a while doing the extracurricular stuff that I do, but going from college is different."

Playing a different position on the field is also something Jumper is adapting to in her freshman season. She mostly played catcher during her career at American Heritage, but has now shifted to third base at FGCU. She began getting accustomed to playing third during the fall season.

"Not too bad. I know how to play a lot of positions, but coming from where my comfortable spot is at catching it's kind of a transition," Jumper said.

Jumper, an Early Childhood Education major, is enjoying life at FGCU.

"I love school a lot," she said.

FGCU's clinic wasn't only about softball. While Randolph and White chatted with a group of girls and stressed the importance of conditioning, they also asked the kids about their favorite subjects in school and what they want to be when they grow up.

Jumper is one of seven freshmen on the Eagles, who open their 2018 season Feb. 8 with a home game against Long Island in the FGCU Kickoff Classic that also features Ball State, Georgetown and North Carolina State.

FGCU's schedule also includes games against Ivy League's Harvard and Princeton as well as USF, UConn, FAU, FIU and a March 2nd clash against Pac-12 powerhouse Oregon.

No doubt March 3 will carry extra significance for Jumper as FGCU visits the Florida State Seminoles in the FSU Unconquered Invitational. The Eagles also have a trip to Southern California for seven games in March.



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