

Warming up with teammates

# athlete of the

Meet Chandler Bjork

By Michelle Nicoud | Action Shots by Barry Bowden



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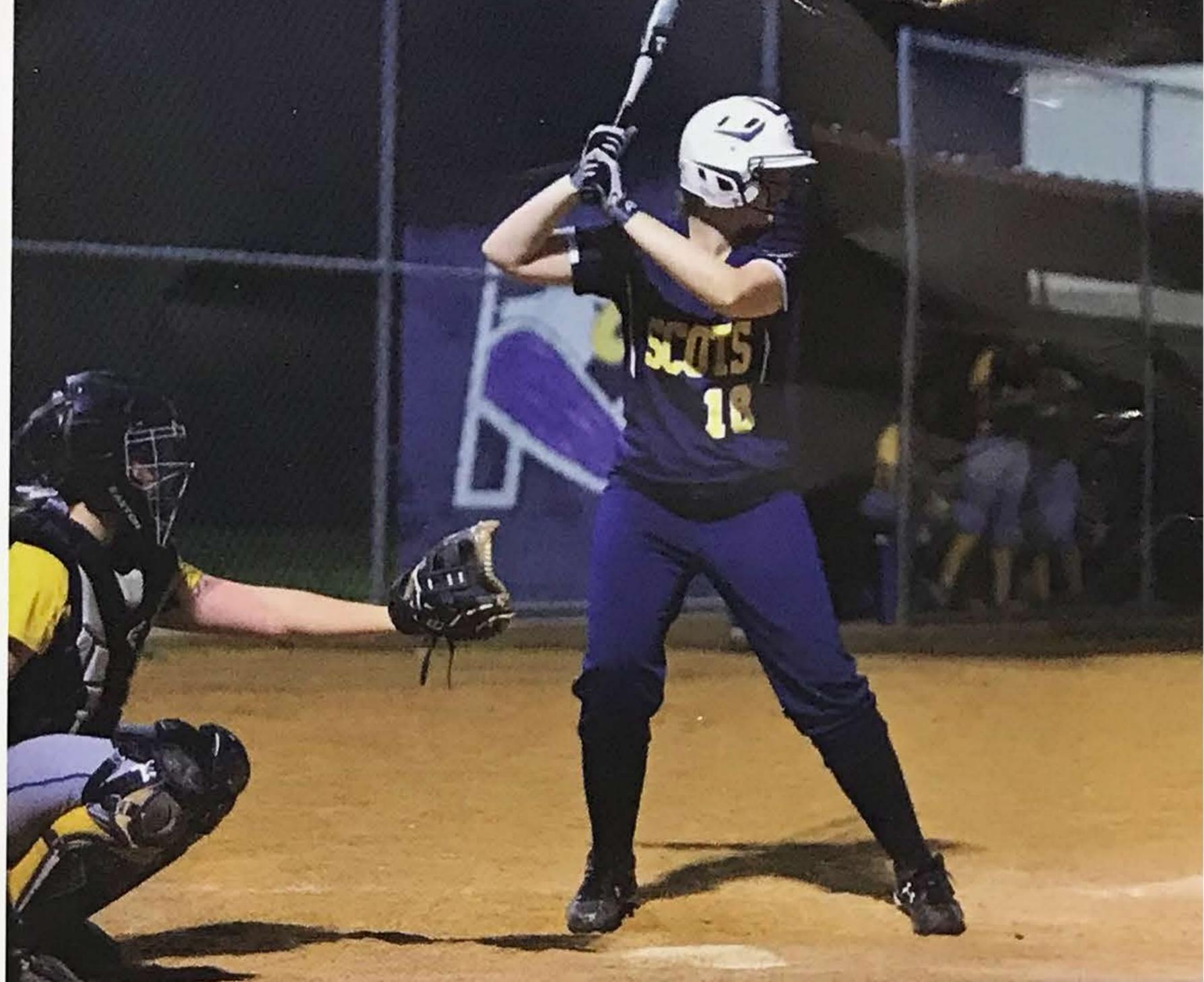
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Preparing to swing



Chandler Bjork loves her teammates on the Highland Park softball team.

"Some of them I have played softball with since kindergarten; some I've met just in the past few years, and they're all great," the senior corner infielder said. "Individually, we are a mix of weird, talented, smart, funny people, and when we are all together it's just an awesome dynamic."

The team's playoff run last season has everyone eyeing another district championship.

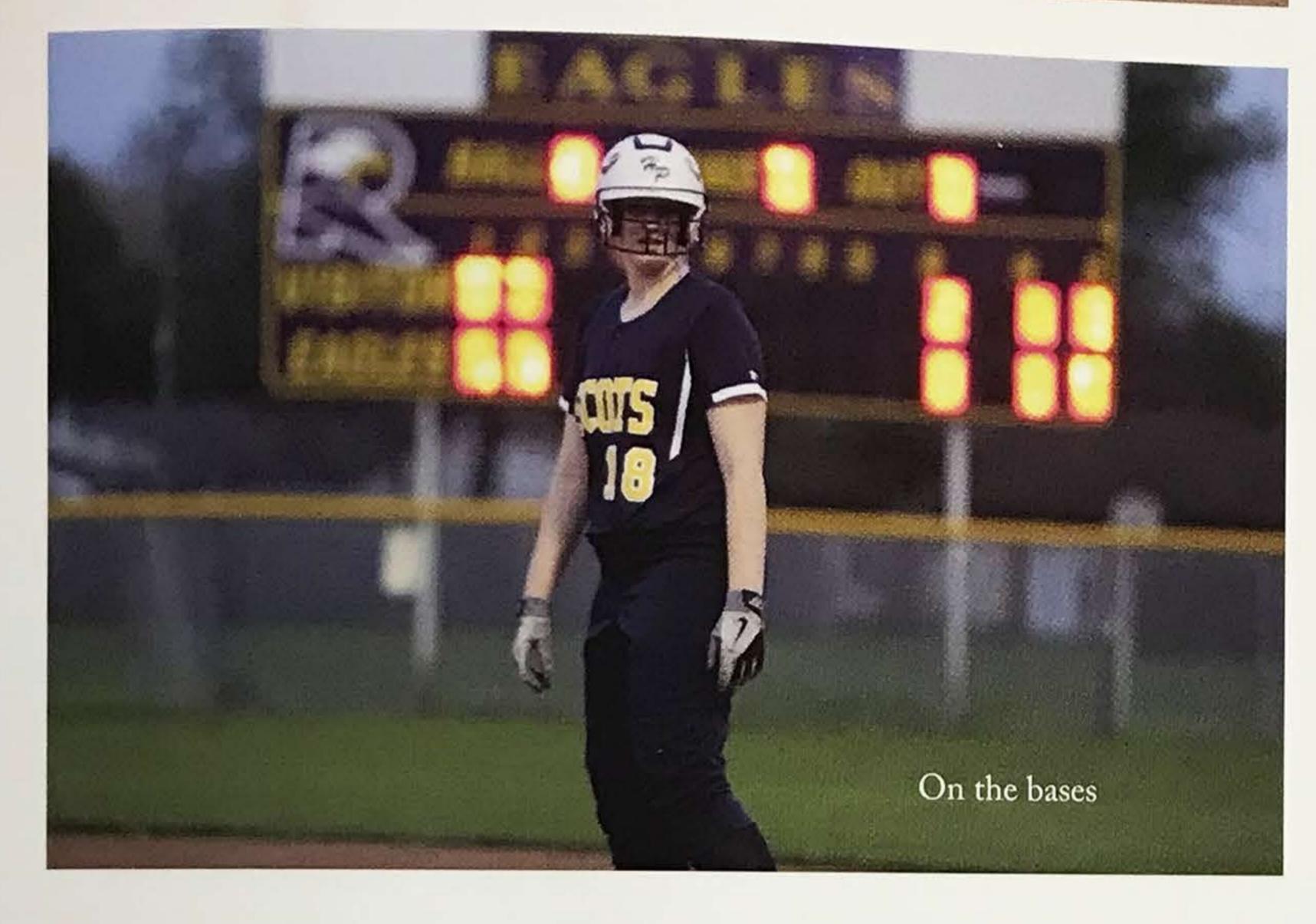
"It was such an accomplishment, and everyone on the team was so excited," Chandler said. "We were so proud of ourselves being the first team in 21 years of softball at HP to make it to the playoffs AND go on to the second round."

Being on the field is exhilarating, but her true passion is art. Chandler designed the team shirt for the postseason and the 2016 campaign, which began a few weeks ago.

Every day, practice consists of hitting, fielding and conditioning exercises on the diamond. Because the bases on a softball field are 60 feet apart as compared to 90 feet in baseball, Chandler said the game is quicker paced. "This makes it harder to make defensive plays because there is less distance for the runners to run around the bases," she said. "A lot of it has to do with timing, when to swing, how quickly to throw, when to move, where's the next play."



March University Park Life



A former basketball player, she drew last season's shirt for the hardwood also. Chandler's height allows her to make plays at first base with ease. Mentally, she said the squad treats each opponent equally. "I've also learned never to underestimate your opponent, always give it your best, and don't dwell on past mistakes—move forward and do better the next time," she said.

Her dad graduated from Auburn, and her older brother, Jack, is a sophomore on the football team, so the whole family supports the Tigers. Chandler looks to Jack as a role model, both in sports and in life.

"He has always set a great example for me academically, athletically, and morally," she said. "He puts his heart and soul into everything he does. He never gives up, and I'm so lucky and thankful to have him in my life."



Chandler's design for last season's basketball team shirt

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