Whitton owns a T-shirt that declares there’s nothing soft about it. True enough: her batting feats aren’t accomplished in 10-miles-per-hour “slow pitch” softball; college softball is a “fast-pitch” game with hurlers zipping them in at 65 miles per hour and throwing curves, knucklers, and rising fastballs. Whitton’s repertoire included all of the above when she was on the mound; until giving up the position this season, she was a fine left-handed pitcher who posted a 2.48 earned-run average and struck out 88 in 96 innings two years ago. She also plays outfield and first (the roster lists her as a “utility” player). “With most good pitchers, all they do is pitch,” says Allard. “They don’t play defense. Tiffany had the gift to throw, but she is talented in so many areas. Pitching is not the thing she loved most. When she pitches, she doesn’t hit as well, and if there’s one thing she loves to do, it’s to hit the ball.”

Whitton doesn’t disagree. “One of the greatest feelings in the world is really connecting with a ball,” she says. “When I come up, I’m thinking I’m going to hit the ball. I don’t want to walk. I’m going to take cuts. Lots of my hits are pitches out of the strike zone. No one is going to throw you a fastball down the middle; looking for a perfect strike is pointless. I don’t look at pitches as strikes and balls—I look at them as ‘This is something I can hit,’ or not hit.” Allard observes, “Tiffany’s always aggressive. She doesn’t react to the pitch; she is always ready to hit any pitch, and at the last second she peels off if she doesn’t like it. If it’s close, I’ll want her to swing.”

Even with her attacking style, Whitton rarely strikes out; as a sophomore, she fanned just 10 times in 144 at-bats. And when she makes contact, “All her power is