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## Canada Calls Kaleigh

**Ned Bekavac, Guelph**  
 (Dec 26, 2006)

Things just keep looking up for Kaleigh Rafter on the softball diamond.

After seeing her stats skyrocket with the University of Detroit Mercy in her second year - so much so that she was named Horizon League Player of The Year this past season - Rafter is now lined up to earn a chance to play for her country. The St. James high school grad is one of 40 players to be named to the 2007 athlete pool for the Canadian national softball squad.



At 20, she's one of the younger players to get an invite and therein lies an immediate challenge: "It's going to be tough just because most of them haven't seen me play. But if I play well I think I should have a shot," she says.

First on the agenda for Rafter is a trip to UNLV from Jan. 2 to 7 where Canadian coaches will evaluate talent. A team of about 15 to 18 players should be picked by September, says Rafter, who is back in Guelph from Detroit for the holidays.

Comparing her NCAA freshman numbers with her sophomore numbers is jawdropping as her average went from .239 to .359, homers from zero to 12 and RBIs from 13 to 35.

"I was pretty disappointed with my first season because I knew that the numbers didn't reflect what type of player I was," she says, adding that in the second year, "I got a lot more comfortable. The first year I was really nervous. I put a lot more time into it over the off-season for my second year. Just like, working out, hitting a lot more, things like that, and that's definitely payed off."

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