

# BASEBALL PREVIEW

Stories by Alan Sloan, editor@farragutpress.com

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## FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL ADMIRALS

For a program that always reloads, even if there are several key graduation losses, the 2023 Farragut Admirals baseball team might be especially scary.

Though losing its ace pitcher, starting catcher and designated hitter, the highly touted FHS Class of 2024 is now junior-laden — and looking to lead a repeat as Class 4A state champions and add to the program's stature as having the most TSSAA baseball state crowns in state history (11).

"We're a pretty hard-working team," said FHS head coach Matt Buckner, a recent inductee into Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame who has led the Admirals to five state titles in 12 seasons (excluding 2020/COVID). "Focusing on doing great, not just in high school, but moving on after that, too."

"They're a pretty focused group, too — I don't really have to say a lot to them," he added. "The season's always going to come with highs and lows. I'm pretty confident we've put the work in. I feel good about what we've done."

From first to third base — and in the outfield — the Admirals return intact, led by TBCA Player of the Year and pre-season All-American Lukas Buckner, a third-year starting



### ROSTER

1	Jett Johnston	Sr	12	Jonathan Venero	Sr	26	Matthew Kilbey	Sr
2	Lukas Buckner	Jr	13	Ellis Gleed	Sr	27	Braxton Lewis	Jr
3	Gavin Brewer	Jr	14	Mark Underwood	Sr	28	Ben Johnson	Jr
4	Ashton Sulack	Sr	15	Ryan Wallace	Jr	30	Cole Draper	Soph
6	Landis Davila	Jr	16	Cooper Schulze	Sr	32	Stratton Scott	Jr
7	Reid Thomason	Soph	17	Brennon Seigler	Jr	34	Brodie Roberts	Soph
8	Eli Evans	Jr	18	Braydon Alexander	Soph	35	Charlie Bozeman	Jr
9	Eli Miller	Sr	20	Matt Heflin	Jr	40	Kam Sanders	Sr
10	Jake Merrick	Jr	23	Keeton Lyell	Sr	50	Griffin Mashburn	Sr
11	Braylon Hall	Jr	24	Michael Delph	Jr			

shortstop as a junior.

Infield-wise, Jett Johnston, senior who is a pre-season All-American and a future SEC player as a Texas A&M signee, returns to play third base. "He's a talented player," coach

Buckner said. "... He's got big power; had a really good post season for us last year."

Junior Jake Merrick, who turned the critical double play to get Farragut out of a bases-loaded seventh-inning jam to

beat Houston and win the 2022 state crown, returns at second base.

Junior Eli Evans, the championship game offensive hero with a two-out bases-clearing double to break a seventh-in-

### Farragut

3/21 Catholic	6:30
3/22 William Blount @Wb	6:00
3/24-3/25 Bradley Central Tourney	
3/27 HVA @ HVA	6:00
3/29 Heritage @ Heritage	6:00
3/30-4/1 Hoover Tourney	
4/3 Bearden @Bearden	6:30
4/5 Maryville @Maryville	6:00
4/6-4/8 Scott Dean Tournament	
4/10 William Blount	6:30
4/12 HVA	6:30
4/14 Combine Academy	5:30
4/15 Combine Academy	11:00
4/17 Heritage	6:30
4/19 Bearden	6:30
4/21 Hendersonville- @Hendersonville	7:00
4/22 John Pope Paul II @ JPP II	11:00
4/22 Clarksville Academy @JPP II	1:30
4/24 Maryville	6:30
4/26 CAK	6:30
4/27 Pigeon Forge (Throwback)	7:00
5/3 District Tournament	

ning 1-1 tie, will be at first base — though he played third a lot in the state tournament last season.

"Eli came on strong at the

See ADMIRALS on Page 5C

## HARDIN VALLEY ACADEMY HAWKS

Already having built one of the top high school baseball programs in East Tennessee, Tyler Roach and his Hardin Valley Academy Hawks are looking to take the next step.

There's enough talent and experience returning to certainly keep that reputation intact.

Can these Hawks contend for a high state tournament finish?

Returning "the majority of our line-up," Roach said, "it's been fun to watch the maturity happen. I mean, we were a young team last year. We were real close to making it out of the district again."

Now, a year later, "Like in practice, I'll say, 'this is what we're doing today,' ... but then, they're the ones who are coaching each other and getting on each other," he added about players taking charge, being motivated to succeed. "And the confidence is coming out as well, because now they have that experience. ... Just play loose."

"We saw that (recently) in a scrimmage — and for a first scrimmage, I'll take that all day."

**Returning field/DH starters**  
Senior catcher Ty Denton,



Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Wiggs

### ROSTER

Carson Hoffmeister	Jacob Dillon	Tanner Goset	Jax Sparks
Henry Ferguson	Neels Schoonbee	Ty Denton	Adam Baker
Carter Goodwin	Caden Channell	Bryce Worley	Tyler Abshagen
Caleb Neely	Mckeeon Maas	Colton Denton	Brandon Wright
Caleb Jinks	Austin Bolding	Will Webb	
Boone Fields	Jaxon Jones	Micah Hoffmeister	

a Troy University (Alabama) commitment, is now a four-year varsity starter who will

be counted on for leadership Jacob Dillon, a junior who returns at first base, "hit about

.300 last year" as a sophomore,

See HAWKS on Page 2C

### Hardin Valley

3/23	7:00	Rhea County
3/24	6:00	Knoxville West
3/25	1:00	@ Knoxville West
3/27	6:00	Farragut
3/29	6:00	@Maryville
3/30	5:00	Loudon (at Powell)
3/31	5:00	Cookeville (at UCHS)
4/1	11:00	@ CCHS
4/1	1:30	@ CCHS
4/3	6:00	Heritage
4/5	6:00	William Blount
4/6	5:00	Bradley Central
4/7	11:00	Goodpasture
4/7	1:30	Westfield
4/10	6:30	@ Bearden
4/12	6:30	@ Farragut
4/14	6:00	@ Rhea County
4/15	12:00	@ Morristown West
4/17	6:00	Maryville
4/19	6:00	@ Heritage
4/20	6:00	Karns
4/21	6:00	Knox Central
4/24	6:00	@ William Blount
4/26	6:00	Bearden
4/27	6:00	Walker Valley
4/28	6:00	@ Walker Valley
5/1	6:00	@ Knoxville Central

**Best wishes for a great season!**

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Morristown, TN 37814

# CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF KNOXVILLE WARRIORS

The way Tommy Pharr's Christian Academy of Knoxville baseball Warriors were compiling state championships late last decade, this nine-time TSSAA high school baseball state champion head coach was approaching John Wooden-like status for dominance.

While his Warriors have remained one of Division II-A's top teams the past two seasons, a state title hasn't capped off that success. Last year's team finished a solid 29-8, but fell short of a state tourney trip to Murfreesboro.

Though there's a lot of new starters in the fold, never count out a Pharr-coached team when it comes to state title contention.

### Biggest team strength

"I think we're going to be pretty good on the mound and play good defense," Pharr said.

### Concerns

"Offensively, how well we'll hit," the coach said. "We've got a lot of new guys, a lot of unproven guys."

"We'll see if we can get better at that as the seasons goes along."

### Top returning talent

Wes Alig, junior shortstop who is a Kennesaw State commitment, "I think was the MVP of our district last year," the coach said. "He was our best player last year and will be our



Photo Courtesy of Pro Photo

## ROSTER

Josh Price	Sr.	Collin Crider	Fr.	Wesley Alig	Jr.
Connor Nelson	Sr.	Jack Pearson	So.	Micah Bennett	Fr.
Jon Yeager	So.	McCormick Tyler	So.	Christian Rosa	Jr.
Chip Shelton	So.	Caleb Knutsen	Sr.	Blake Jarrard	So.
Hayden Hayes	So.	John Kirby Hamilton	Sr.	Jameson Van Ness	Jr.
Bleau Kennedy	So.	Jonathon Van Ness	Jr.	Alex Trimble	Fr.
Joey Sulish	Fr.	Jackson Biles	So.	Ian Johnson	Sr.
Sy Keener	Sr.	Luke Jones	Sr.	Tyler Statas	So.
Liam Quinn	Sr.	Aaron Bobo	Sr.	Bennett Rymer	Sr.
Shepard Strange	So.	Lewis Brooke	Jr.	Tyler Bennett	So.
Parker Jones	So.	Sam Cecil	Sr.	Brody Waller	Fr.
Will Wright	So.	Noah Taylor	So.	Gavin Bergeron	Fr.

best player this year."

Senior Sy Keener returns at second base. "He's another solid player," Pharr said. "He's gotten better and stronger

over the years. We're looking to have a big year from him."

Senior catcher Bennett Rymer returns. "A solid player, tough kid," the coach said.

"Scrappy is probably the best way to describe him."

Senior Sam Cecil, a Transylvania University (Kentucky) signee, is a returning starter

who's moving to left field. "He's a real good hitter and a solid kid, too," Pharr said.

See **WARRIORS** on Page 3C

## Hawks

From page 1C

his coach said.

Providing lots of depth at second base, Austin Bolding, a senior, and Jaxon Jones, a sophomore, "both played significant innings for us last year," Roach said.

Junior Henry Ferguson, an East Tennessee State University commitment, returns to the fold at shortstop.

To round out this ultra-experienced infield is senior third

baseman Will Webb, an All-District honoree last season.

In left field, senior Carson Hoffmeister — another four-year starter — has provided lots of pop at the top of the Hawks' line-up.

Junior Caleb Neely returns in center field, while senior Caden Channell is penciled in for right field.

Colton Denton returns to serve, primarily, as the team's designated hitter.

### Pitching, youth

At the top of Hardin Valley's

pitching rotation are returning All-District honorees Micah Hoffmeister and senior Adam Baker.

Dillon and Webb also will start on the mound, the coach added.

Freshman pitcher Jax Sparks is among the young arms who have caught Roach's eye during preseason.

Overall on the mound, the coach said he had nine capable arms, "and six of them threw between 82 and 86 (mph). We've got some depth this

year," which includes "guys who haven't pitched before but are trying it out."

### Concerns

Roach pointed out momentum shifts happen to even the best of programs over the course of a given season.

"You can peak in April, and someone else can peak in May — and you're the better team on paper, but they go further than you do," the coach said. "... We'll be trying to get hot at the right time."

He pointed out a familiar col-

lege baseball example: the nation's No. 1-ranked Tennessee Vols lost in the NCAA Tournament Regional round last season, yet the No. 9-seed from the SEC, Ole Miss, not only made the NCAA Tournament — but won the national championship.

About timing the Hawks' peak to happen in May each season, "I've been trying to figure that out for five years now," Roach said.

"We'll see what happens."



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# BEARDEN HIGH SCHOOL BULLDOGS

A healthy portion of Bulldogs talent returns to help Bearden baseball navigate a tough District 4-4A in 2023.

Six starters return — many earning local and/or state honors — to a team that finished as district tournament runner-up before losing at Powell in the Region 2-4A semifinals, which ended the Bearden season at 25-17.

About his team's biggest strength, "It's the opposite of last year: experience," said head coach Dave Prichard, now in his second season at BHS. "We return a ton of guys who came into last year with no experience, and now they've got a lot of it."

"We had some success down the stretch last year, and we're just looking to build off of it," he added.

Junior Brooks Wright returns behind the plate to catch — but he'll also be throwing toward the plate at the most critical times. "An All-state player, phenomenal bat, a good leader," the coach said.

"He'll also throw for us. ... I think Brooks will probably be the go-to ace," Prichard added.

Evan Goins, senior third baseman whose versatility found him playing at different infield spots in 2022, "had an All-District season; super-consistent with the bat, a real heads-up player," the coach said.

Brady Frederick, senior sec-



## ROSTER

2	Luke Seagrist	Sr	19	Matt Schroeffel	Fr	37	Riley Mahan	Jr
3	J.P. Harris	Sr	20	Hudson Hoffecker	Sr	38	Cole Wilhoite	Fr
6	Brady Frederick	Sr	21	Eli Algood	Sr	39	Ian McCloud	Fr
8	Jonah Kohring	Jr	23	Cameron Cooper	So	41	Hunter Tolbert	Fr
9	Parker Coe	Sr	24	Kyle Moss	Sr	43	Calvin Blackmon	Fr
10	Tori Riggins	So	25	Jeb Cox	Sr	44	Charlie Loftin	Fr
12	Isaiah Whited	So	26	Logan Benko	So	45	Walter Pankau	Fr
13	Tripp Greer	Sr	27	Brooks Wright	Jr	46	Jack Fennell	Fr
14	Jake Collette	Sr	28	Connor Sipe	So	47	Tyler Cline	Fr
15	Owen Matthews	Sr	30	Evan Cope	So	48	Fenn Piper	Fr
16	Evan Goins	Sr	31	Greyson Wright	Fr	49	Cristian Baker	Fr
17	Brody Benko	Jr	34	Hunter Harris	Fr	98	Rhys Thomas	Jr
18	Braden Suggs	Sr	36	Bobby Powell	Fr	99	Aiden Tipton	Sr

ond baseman, also earned All-District honors last season. "He had a really big offensive year," Prichard said.

Frederick's value extends to the mound. "He's probably a primary relief guy out of the bullpen," the coach said.

Junior Riley Mahan, "a spot starter last year" according to

the coach, will start in right field. "He had a really good second-half of the year offensively... He finished well in the District Tournament. A power guy."

Senior Luke Seagrist returns in center field. "Just a blessed runner and phenomenal defensive player," Prichard said. "He

puts a lot of pressure on people offensively."

Senior Parker Coe, starting shortstop, "is a plus defender," the coach said. "I'm looking for him to do a little bit more with the bat this year."

Senior J.P. Harris "did a great job as a (designated hitter) and pinch hitter,"

## Bearden

3/23	@ West	5:30
3/24	Science Hill	6:30
3/25	Knox Central	1:00
3/27	Maryville	6:30
3/29	@ William Blount	6:00
3/30	Sweetwater (@ Clinton)	5:00
3/31	Providence Academy	6:00
4/1	Portland	4:00
4/1	Webb	6:30
4/3	Farragut	6:30
4/5	Heritage	6:30
4/6	George Rogers Clark, KY (@ Oak Ridge)	7:15
4/7	@ Sevier County	4:45
4/8	Johnson Central, KY (@ Bearden)	10:00
4/8	Station Camp (@ Bearden)	12:15
4/10	Hardin Valley	6:30
4/11	@ Maryville	6:00
4/14	@ Knox Central	6:00
4/15	@ Science Hill	1:00
4/17	William Blount	6:30
4/19	@ Farragut	6:30
4/20	Jefferson County	6:30
4/21	CAK	5:30
4/24	@ Heritage	6:00
4/26	@ Hardin Valley	6:00
4/27	Throwback Game (@ Farragut)	TBD
4/28	Oak Ridge	6:30
5/1	@ Oak Ridge	6:00

Prichard said.

Attempting to bounce back from shoulder surgery is senior Owen Matthews, who "looks to compete" for the designated hitter role. "He had some good power numbers last year."

Senior Kyle Moss, who saw

See BULLDOGS on Page 5C

## CAK

### Warriors

From page 2C

Experienced pitchers returning include senior Luke Jones, a Lincoln Memorial University commitment who'll serve as staff ace. "He'll be our top guy," the coach said. "He's a solid pitcher and player, and just a great kid. A hard worker."

Senior pitcher Caleb Knutson "will be one of our top guys on the mound," the coach said.

Junior Jonathon Van Ness "will be one of our better guys on the mound," Pharr said.

Seniors Aaron Bobo and Josh Price "pitched a lot for us last year," the coach said.

Sophomore Bleau Kennedy also will be "one of our guys

on the mound."

### Stepping up

Junior Christian Rosa and senior Connor Nelson "are in the mix" to start at third base. At first base, sophomore Tyler Bennett "is probably the leading candidate there," Pharr said. Also looking for time at first is senior Liam Quinn.

Junior catcher Jameson Van

Ness is fighting for time behind the plate.

In the outfield, sophomore Jack Pearson is pegged for center field, with Kennedy seeking playing time in center.

Right field is a battle between seniors John Kirby Hamilton and Ian Johnson. Junior Lewis Brooke also will look for outfield playing time when he recovers from a

hand injury.

Freshman Joey Sulish "is going to have a chance to help us on the mound and in the field. ... He's one of our better pitchers," the coach said. "He's a really good player as a freshman."

"He's an infielder, but he may play in the outfield for us some."



# CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF KNOXVILLE VARSITY BASEBALL STATE CHAMPIONS 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019



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# CONCORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LIONS

A young program has a lot of returning starters — despite having just two seniors who see playing time — for second-year head coach Mitch Turner and his Concord Christian School baseball team.

“Returning experience is a strong suit for us,” Turner said. “We’ve got guys in the program for a year now, so they know what I expect out of them.

“We’ve got a bunch of hard-working kids who are on a routine now and who have a full year-and-a-half since we came into the program as the coaching staff,” he added.

As a whole, “They are really learning how to play the game of baseball,” the coach said.

A pair of juniors, both transfers, and a sophomore look to carry a big load on the mound.

Juniors Grayson Van Rossum and Atlee Alexander, a lefthanded pitcher, “are going to do really well on the mound for us,” the coach said.

Sophomore Mason Sparks saw pitching time as a freshman. “He has got a really live arm. We’re really excited about his upcoming season and the rest of his career with us,” Turner said.

Junior catcher Cody Johnson returns, as does junior first baseman Manu Porter, who also pitches. Yet another ju-



nior, Cale Smith, is back playing second base.

The left side of the Lions’ infield features the roster’s only seniors, both of whom return as starters: shortstop Bryce Butler and third baseman Brady Moore. Butler and Moore also pitch.

Junior centerfielder Davis Givens, yet another returning starter, “kind of anchors down our outfield,” Turner said.

Sophomore Zach Langley, left fielder, saw extensive playing time as a freshman.

When he’s not pitching, Al-

xander will start in right field.

Freshman Micah Dewald “catches, pitches and plays middle infield. He plays pretty much anywhere for us ... he’ll pretty much be an everyday starter,” the coach said. “He is one of the brighter lights in our program right now because he’s so young and talented. He got to play last year as an eighth-grader.

“He’s going to make a huge impact as a freshman,” he added.

Having a half-dozen eighth-graders are on the roster, “It’s always nice being a private

school (with all grades) on the same campus, where eighth-graders get to play up on the high school team,” Turner said. “They get that experience and get kind of transitioned.”

The coach said “a couple” of those eighth-graders “who stand out” might see varsity action.

Caleb Stuart “will catch for us some, will pitch some and will play first base,” the coach said.

Drew Snow “will play some middle infield, pitch and play outfield.”

## Concord

3/20	.....4:30	@ The Kings Academy
3/23	.....5:30	@ Webb School
3/27	.....5:00	@ CAK (DH)
4/3	.....4:30	@ Providence (DH)
4/4	.....5:00	@ Knoxville Catholic
4/6	.....5:30	@ Hampton
4/10	.....5:30	@ Lakeway (DH)
4/13	.....5:30	@ Webb School
4/17	...5:00	@ Grace Christian (DH)
4/18	.....5:30	@ Cumberland Gap
4/20	.....5:30	@ Sweetwater
4/25	.....5:30	@ Campbell County
4/28	.....	District Play-In Series
4/29	.....	District Play-In Series

## ROSTER

15	Bryce Butler	Sr
5	Brady Moore	Sr
35	Cody Johnson	Jr
7	Manu Porter	Jr
3	Atlee Alexander	Jr.
12	John Hurst	Soph
17	Davis Givens	Jr
6	Cale Smith	Jr
11	Mason Sparks	Soph
1	Zack Langley	Soph
9	Micah Dewald	Fr
8	Caleb Stuart	8th
13	Drew Snow	8th
16	Grayson Van Rossum	Jr.

# WEBB SCHOOL OF KNOXVILLE SPARTANS

Lots of talented pitching arms look to hold down opponents, while many Webb School of Knoxville batters get adjusted to having bigger roles against Division II-AA and other top area pitchers in 2023.

These baseball Spartans look to improve upon a fourth-place region finish in 2022.

“We play in a very tough region against very good teams,” head coach Jordan Wormsley said, with region rivals Knoxville Catholic, Baylor and McCallie (eventual state champ) reaching the state “final four” in Murfreesboro last spring.

### Top overall talent

Senior second baseman Cole Nathan, the team’s leadoff hitter in 2022, returns. “He had our highest batting average and most hits,” Wormsley said.

Having committed to Carson-Newman University, Nathan “is also one of our top arms pitching-wise,” the coach said.

At third base, Wormsley highlighted junior Jack Wagner, who also played outfield in 2022.

Likely to be in the middle of the Spartans’ batting order, Wagner “hit well for us, over .300 last year,” the coach said.

“He’s also one of our top arms in terms of pitching.”

Junior first baseman Blake Carter played mostly outfield, or served as the designated hitter, in 2022. “A very productive hitter; hit for a very high average,” Wormsley said. “Our highest power potential at the plate we see out of him. I think he led us in extra-base hits last year.”

Also a Spartans pitcher, “Carter “will probably be a spot starter, but a frequent reliever who we are going to count on for his arm strength and ability on the mound,” the coach said.

MaKai Derry, a sophomore, will transition from a starting center fielder as a freshman to become the shortstop. Though at the bottom of the Spartans order in 2022, “he hit for a good average,” Wormsley said. “... I can see him making a move toward the top of the lineup for us.”



Wormsley

Yet another pitcher who the coach sees as a “possible spot starter,” Derry should be “a consistent reliever.”

Junior Griffin Saunders returns behind the plate. “He was our primary catcher last year,” the coach said. “He’s made a lot of progress with the bat.”

Junior Jack Felton “I see as a utility guy we use in a lot of different places,” Wormsley said. Primarily an outfielder last season, Felton “will probably spend a little more time in the infield. ... A good hitter.”

Still another Webb infielder who pitches, Felton also fits the “spot starter/primary reliever” profile.

“Most of our outfield will be new players,” Wormsley said.

Expected to get lots of out-

field playing time is junior Connor Knight, a transfer from California. “He’s shown a lot of great potential with the bat and in the outfield,” the coach said. “A very good athlete. ... I think he could hit maybe somewhere in the middle of our order. Some potential there for power and run production.”

Knight also is expected to be one the team’s top pitchers, “a guy I would anticipate being a starter and pitching a lot of key innings for us.”

Battling for the center field spot is junior Alec Daniels, who “looks great in the outfield,” Wormsley said. “He really can run; hits very well also.”

Daniels also adds depth behind the plate.

Freshman Colten Collier also looks to play center field. “A good defensive outfielder, good potential” the coach said. “... He’s had a lot of experience playing baseball at a high level.

“I think there’s a lot of similarities between he and Alec,” Wormsley added. “I think either of those guys, if not starting in center, could have a place in left field.”

Battling for time in left field is sophomore Asher Harness. “He had a tremendous season for our JV team” in 2022, the coach said. “His bat, as well, is very accomplished.

“He is also a pitcher.” Also battling for left field is senior Cannon Myers. “He’s been a very hard worker within our program,” Wormsley said.

### Top pitchers

Any one of three pitchers “could be the No. 1 guy,” the

## Webb

3/23	5:30	.....Concord Christian	4/14	5:30	..... Lakeway Christian
3/25	@ Sevier County Tourney		4/17	4:00	..... Chatt. Christian (DH)
3/27	5:00	.....Baylor	4/18	5:00	.....@ Chatt. Christian
3/28	4:00	..... @ Baylor (DH)	4/20	5:30	.....Grace Christian
3/31-4/1	@ Anderson/Clinton Tourney		4/24	5:30	..... @ Lakeway Christian
4/3	5:00	.....McCallie	4/25	6:00	..... @ Grace Christian
4/4	4:00	.....@ McCallie (DH)	4/27	5:30	.....Sweetwater
4/7-4/8	..... ETBCA Tournament		4/29	1:00	.....@ Maryville
4/12	6:00	.....@ Alcoa	5/1	5:00	..... Knoxville Catholic
4/13	5:30	.....Concord Christian	5/2	6:00	.....@ Knoxville Catholic

## ROSTER

22	Camden Deans	Senior	3	Griffin Saunders	Junior
6	Cannon Myers	Senior	9	Jack Wagner	Junior
1	Cole Nathan	Senior	7	MaKai Derry	Sophomore
23	Charles Robinson	Senior	17	Asher Harness	Sophomore
12	Blake Carter	Junior	11	Colten Collier	Freshman
10	Carson Dabbs	Junior	27	Grayson Gregory	Freshman
8	Alec Daniels	Junior	33	Ethan Walls	Freshman
5	Jack Felton	Junior	13	Treyson Derry	8th Grade
24	Connor Knight	Junior			

coach said.

“The most power potential probably comes from Connor Knight and Jack Wagner,” Wormsley added. “The two of them probably have the most stuff. Either of them could be our ace.

“Cole Nathan has always been a very sound pitcher. He’s got great stuff as well.”

Junior pitcher Carson Dabbs “could easily be our fourth starter,” Wormsley said. “He could easily be a key reliever. Good velocity, great movement, great action on everything he throws. He’ll be super

competitive for us.”

These four top pitchers “are mid-80s plus” in terms of mph, the coach added. “At the high school level, that’s usually going to give you a chance to be successful.”

### Biggest team strength

“The potential for our pitching and pitching depth could be our biggest strength,” Wormsley said. “We’ve got, easily, nine guys throughout our pitching rotation that have high school experience and have pitched in big games and big roles.

“Defensively, I think we’re going to be strong,” he added.



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# KNOXVILLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL IRISH

Five starters return in the field, including a pair of All-state outfielders, for a 2023 Knoxville Catholic baseball team coming off a third-place TSSAA Division II-AA state finish last season (26-14 final record).

"The top-half of the lineup is definitely a strength of ours," said Irish head coach Caleb Moore, in his eighth season leading this KCHS program.

However, when asked about the team's biggest strength, "I think it's our starting pitching," the coach said. "... I think our starting depth on the mound is really good."

### Top talent

Senior Ben Sompayrac returns at first base, while also being one of the team's top pitchers. "He's a veteran leader; he's been there a lot," Moore said. "He's pitched a lot of innings for us. ... He's another good arm for us; he really knows how to pitch and get people out."

In the middle infield and on the mound, junior Hudson Lutterman and senior Daniel Parris "are really high-level players for us ... and both pitch for us as well," the coach said. "They've played a lot of high-level baseball. They are an integral part of our team."

In fact, Moore said Parris likely is the Irish staff ace. "He's a Tennessee signee," the coach said. "He's a really good pitcher. He can throw multiple pitches for strikes."

Lutterman "will probably be one of the first guys out of the bullpen for us," he added. "If it's close toward the end of a game,

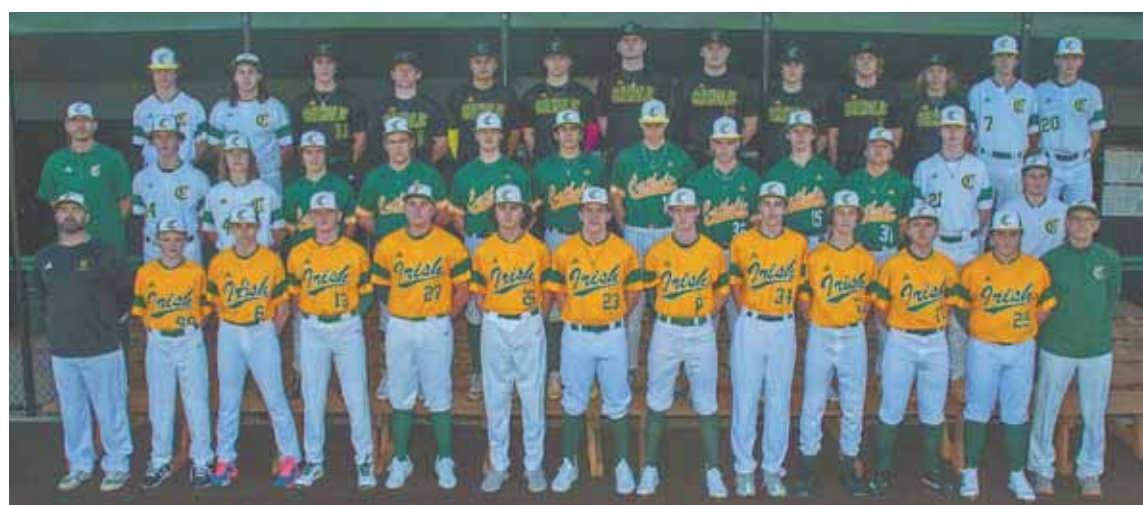


Photo Submitted

## ROSTER

0	Nick Turner	Soph	12	Daniel Parris	Sr	25	Harrison Vieira	Soph
1	Ryan Theobald	Sr	13	Jamie Bentley	Fr	26	JJ Murphy	Fr
2	Ian Hubbard	Sr	14	Hutson Oakes	Soph	27	Lex Lucier	Fr
3	Evon Kolesar	Sr	15	Grant Tallent	Jr	28	Nate O'Donnell	Soph
4	Alex Ditmire	Soph	16	Jack Judd	Jr	29	Cooper Ackermann	Fr
5	Miller Spence	Sr	17	Charlie Chady	Fr	30	Colton Breenen	Jr
6	Kemp Avans	Fr	19	Hudson Lutterman	Jr	31	Aidan Alexander	Jr
7	Cooper Williamson	Soph	20	Manny Maurer	Soph	32	Mason Fields	Jr
8	Carter Muth	Fr	21	Bryce Gulbrand	Soph	33	Joey Lamattina	Sr
9	Jacob Camfield	Sr	22	Nicholas Kaczmarek	Jr	34	Ben Sinclair	Fr
10	Ben Sompayrac	Sr	23	Kaleb Johnson	Fr	51	Coleman Sharp	Fr
11	Richie DeLacruz	Sr	24	Cade Avans	Jr	99	Tanner Muir	Fr

that'll kind of be his role."

In the outfield, senior All-state honoree Miller Spence returns to play left field. "He can be a table-setter," Moore said. "He has good speed."

Senior Ian Hubbard, another All-state honoree, returns in center field — and pitches. "He threw a lot of conference games for us last year," Moore said. "Hit eight home runs for us last year as well. He has good power and good speed."

Battling for the start in right

field is junior Grant Tallent and sophomore Cooper Williamson. "They could see their way on the field as a (designated hitter) if they are not playing in the outfield," the coach said. "Each provides good speed. ... Cooper pitches for us as well."

### Depth

While the starting catching and third base positions were "a little bit up in the air for us" entering the season, Moore said he has capable candidates.

Battling for the spot at

third includes senior Richie DeLacruz. "He provides us a lefthanded bat," Moore said. "He can play a lot of small-ball: bunt, hit-and-run."

Senior Ryan Theobald is versatile "as a utility player" who will see lots of playing time according to Moore. "He can play second, he can play short, he can play third, he can play outfield. He's a Jack-of-all-trades, a high-energy guy."

Elsewhere, sophomore Hutson Oakes "will get some time

## Catholic

3/23	..... West Ridge @ Sevier Co	4:30 pm
3/24	.. East Roberston @ Sevier Co	2pm
3/25	..... Jeff County @ Sevier Co	2:30pm
3/25	..... @ Sevier County	5pm
3/27	..... V McCallie (DH)	4 pm
3/28	..... @ McCallie	6pm
3/29	..... Christ School (NC)	7pm
3/30	..... Marshall County	2:30pm
3/31	... Middle Tennessee Christian	3pm
4/1	..... Coalfield	3pm
4/1	..... William Blount	5:30pm
4/3	... Madison Southern (Ky)	5pm
4/4	..... Concord Christian	6 pm
4/11	..... Greenville	6 pm
4/15	..... @ Christ School (NC)	2pm
4/17	..... @ Baylor	6 pm
4/18	..... Baylor (DH)	4 pm
4/20	..... @ Lakeway Christian	6 pm
4/22	..... Morristown West	1pm
4/24	..... Chatt Christian	6 pm
4/25	@ Chatt Christian - (DH)	4 pm
4/29	... Powell @ Smokies Stadium	1 pm
5/1	..... @ Webb	6 pm
5/2	..... Webb	6 pm
5/3	..... @ Webb	6 pm
Tbd	..... Dii-AA Tournament	

at first base and also on the mound," Moore said.

Adding to pitching depth is senior Jacob Camfield. "He'll get some time starting, and probably in conference games be one of our first bullpen arms," Moore said.

### Biggest concern

Moore said "overall depth" is his biggest concern, especially behind the plate and in the bullpen. "We're going to have to have a couple of people to step up," he said.

## Bulldogs

From page 3C

playing time at first base last season, is battling for that starting spot with junior Rhys Thomas and senior Aiden Tipton.

Having "a lot of outfield

depth" according to Prichard, junior Brody Benko "has had a really good (pre-season)," as he battles for starting time with seniors Hudson Hoffecker and Braden Suggs.

Seniors Eli Algood and Tripp Greer "also will be battling for some time," the coach said.

Among top young talent "who may get an opportunity to see some action" according to Prichard are sophomore Cameron Cooper (outfielder) and freshman Greyson Wright (infielder).

As for team pitching overall, "We're looking for consistency," the coach said. "We were up and down on the mound, which kind of led to us being up and down throughout (last) season.

"We're light years ahead of where we were last year on the mound," he added. "We just need to see that consistency

once we start the season."

Behind Wright and Frederick among his top pitchers, "We've got Tipton, Suggs and Isaiiah Whited (sophomore); those will be guys we lean on from the starting perspective," Prichard said.

## Admirals

From page 1C

end of the season," coach Buckner said. "Really had a excellent playoff run. A really talented player; I think Jake's a Division I (college) player also. I think he'll have a big year. Eli's an excellent, and steady, defender."

At shortstop, Lukas Buckner also was named East Tennessee Baseball Coaches Player of the Year plus several local honors.

In center field, Brennon Seigler "is on some pre-season All-American lists," Buckner said about yet another standout junior.

Senior Mark Underwood, whose defense and clutch hitting in the state title game were huge last May, returns in left field. "Mark hit over .390 last year," coach Buckner said.

Junior Landis Davila, yet another clutch bat, returns in right field.

"That's a talented group; good athletes and good runners (on the bases)," coach Buckner said about his returning outfielders. "Pretty elite defenders. ... Basically three center fielders. ... Brennon and Landis both had good years, hit over .300."

Junior Gavin Brewer takes over catching duties from his brother after Garrett Brewer graduated last spring. "Gavin is a really talented player — I think he's a college baseball player if he has a big year," coach Buckner said. "He's a converted infielder who's done a great job learning how to catch."

Senior Cooper Schulze provides depth behind the plate.

Looking to become the team's designated hitter while providing outfield depth, is junior Charlie Bozeman, a Samford University commitment. "He's a strong kid who should provide us with some punch in our lineup," the coach said.

As for pitching, "We have a super-talented staff," the Admirals skipper said.

"Probably the best guy, statistically, we have returning is Stratton Scott, a UT commit," coach Buckner said about the junior. "He had a big summer, and we're expecting big things out of him."

Others in the talented category who also bring experience include juniors Michael Delph and Braylon Hall.

However, "We have some new additions that are going to be quite good," the coach said.

Look for senior pitcher Ashton Sulack, a 6-foot-3 lefty, to play a bigger role this season. "I think he's going to be really, really big for us," coach Buckner said.

Junior pitcher Ryan Wallace, a lefty, is another "who I am expecting big things from," the coach said. About junior Braxton Lewis, "I think he's going to have a big career" finish.

About junior pitcher Matt Heflin, "I have pretty high expectations for him," coach Buckner said.

Sophomore Reid Thomason also is in the mix. "I think he's going to be tremendous," the coach said.

Coach Buckner did not mention a possible closer among his staff.

With all the talent and experience, what's the biggest concern for this team?

"One thing is staying healthy," Buckner said. "We've already had some guys dinged up a little bit. That would concern me a little bit."

In addition, "Just trying to stay in the mindset of playing good day to day," he added. "We have a talented team, but you still have to do it on the field."

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# SOFTBALL PREVIEW

Stories by Alan Sloan, editor@farragutpress.com

6C • farragutpress Wednesday, March 22, 2023

## HARDIN VALLEY ACADEMY HAWKS

For its first 13 years as a high school program, dating back to its first season in spring 2009, Hardin Valley Academy softball had one leader: head coach Whitney Hickam-Cruze.

But the Lady Hawks of 2023 will have its third head coach in as many seasons.

Looking to lead HVA back to the winning ways of seasons past, new head coach Autumn Collin faces the challenge of reversing a rough 2022 season.

### Starters

Leading the quest for victories are five Lady Hawk returning starters plus some younger talent Collin is praising.

Returning staff pitching ace Gracie Gray, a senior, is one of two team captains. "She's an amazing force on the mound and at bat," Collin said. "She's an amazing hitter; last year she had 50 RBIs."

Senior Makenzie Mansell, another returning starter, will probably start in either left or right field according to Collin, but also could play some at second base. "She's a great leader," the coach said.

Senior Kaitlynn Mann, the other team captain, will play third base while adding depth as a pitcher. "She's a team leader," Collin said.

Senior center fielder Avery Thrift is the team's lead-



Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Wiggs

off hitter.

Sophomore Alex Souders is the starting catcher. "She is hard working and can block the ball like nobody's business," the coach said.

Sophomore Ayla Perry, who Collin described as a "lefty slapper," returns after starting at shortstop as a freshman.

See LADY HAWKS on Page 9C

### Hardin Valley

3/23	6:00	.....@ William Blount
3/27	5:30	.....@ Carter
3/28	6:00	.....@ Bearden
3/30	6:00	.....@ Farragut
3/31	6:00	.....Karns
4/3	6:00	.....Oak Ridge
4/4	6:00	.....Heritage
4/6	6:00	.....@ Maryville
4/7	1:00	.....@ Powell
4/10	5:30	.....Carter
4/11	6:00	.....William Blount
4/13	6:00	.....Bearden
4/14-4/15	TBA	@ Gibbs Invitational
4/17	6:00	.....Knox Central
4/18	6:00	.....Farragut
4/19	6:00	.....South-Doyle
4/20	6:00	.....@ Heritage
4/24	7:00	.....@ Karns
4/26	6:00	.....Knoxville West
4/27-4/28	.....	Reg. Chal. HVA/FHS
5/1	6:00	.....Clinton

### ROSTER

00	Avery Thrift	12	Kate Smith	25	Kaitlynn Mann
1	Mackenzie Mansell	13	Brielle Garson	26	Ayla Perry
3	Kayla Sosebee	15	Corley Vaughn	27	Madison Cox
4	Nathalia Rodriguez	16	Kami Taylor	29	Ashlynn Storms
6	Madison Mann	17	Gracie Gray	33	Alex Souders
8	Natalie Nettles	19	Jenna Hagee	47	Emma Kate Schneider
11	Bella Garcia	20	Addison Chandler		

## CONCORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LIONS

Concerning the young Concord Christian School softball program, head coach Haden Roberts said there's a lot of things "I'm excited about" in 2023.

"I think our biggest strength is our depth and our experience," said the coach, whose team looks to build on a three-win season in 2022 with six returning starters. "Being able to work together as one team, as one family, is really what we build our team off of."

### Top players

Junior Lexi Esteppe, returning at shortstop, "was the top performer on our team last year, and one of the top performers in the district — All-District," Roberts said.

Offensively, the coach said Esteppe had one of the top batting averages in the East Tennessee area in 2022, "and over a .900 fielding percentage," which — similar to her batting average — "also is the highest in school history."

Senior Sophie Starkey returns at first base. "Sophie's our senior leader this year," Roberts said. "We'll be relying on her to do a lot for us."



Freshman Katie Phillips will get the start at second base.

Only an eighth-grader, Kensley Jennings will start at third base. "We're really excited about her," Roberts said.

Sophomore Alexis Haynes, a transfer, is starting catcher.

See LADY LIONS on Page 10C

### Concord

3/20	@Campbell County	..... 5:30
3/21	@CAK	..... 5:30
3/23	The Kings Academy	..... 6:00
3/25	Lenoir City	..... noon
3/25	@ Lenoir City	..... 6:00
3/27	@FBA	..... 5:30
3/28	Lakeway	..... 5:30
3/31	Grace Christian (DH)	..... 5:30
4/3	@TKA	..... 6:00
4/6	Fulton	..... 6:00
4/11	@Lakeway	..... 5:30
4/13	Eagleton (DH)	..... 5:30
4/14	@Fulton	..... 6:00
4/17	@Rockwood	..... 5:30
4/18	CAK	..... 5:30
4/22	FBA	..... 2:00
4/25	Campbell Co.	..... 6:00

### ROSTER

Sophie Starkey	SR	Abbie Lambert	JR	Tasiana Porter	FR
Kate Turner	SR	Cortlyn Hedger	SO	Chloe Nestor	FR
Addi Brown	SR	Alexis Haynes	SO	Caris Baggett	FR
Raleigh Jack Walker	SR	Claudia Sanchez Jimenez	SO	Kensley Jennings	8th
Lexi Esteppe	JR	Katie Phillips	FR	Manhattan Shuler	8th
Athena Lester	JR	Nell Pattison	FR		

**Best wishes for a great season!**

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# FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL ADMIRALS

Back-to-back TSSAA state championships, an impressive transfer, a 20-game winning pitcher and lots of punch expected from its three-through-five hitters — not to mention a second season enjoying its massive facilities upgrade — has Nick Green's Farragut Lady Admirals softball team looking to reach the top once again.

While graduation hit FHS hard in some places, there's lots of talent once again from top to bottom.

"I don't see us going 43-3" as his 2022 state champs finished, Green said, adding his Lady Admirals were 85-5 during the past two championship seasons combined.

With another extremely tough schedule early on, "We might lose five games the first week," he added.

Either way in terms of a start, "We have to make sure we stay positive," the Admirals skipper said.

### Biggest contributors

Junior pitcher Emma MacTavish takes over as staff ace, coming off a stellar 20-2 season in 2022. "She pitched a lot of big games for us," Green said. "She will be the main workhorse for the staff this year."



## ROSTER

Ava Guzowski	Sr	Addison Pressley	Jr	Christie George	Fr
Sophia Leto	Sr	Rilee Kate Ragan	Jr	Courtney George	Fr
Avery Mattina	Sr	Laney Shrader	Jr	Baylee Johnson	Fr
Anna French	Jr	Aubrie Conger	Soph	Bridget Kovacs	Fr
Caylee George	Jr	Amelia Dorset	Soph	Alexa Shrader	Fr
Emma MacTavish	Jr	Audrey Ginel	Soph	RC Pack	Fr
Hailey Nichols	Jr	Elsa Morrison	Soph		

Sophomore transfer Elsa Morrison (from Indiana), the new starting catcher, "will probably be the biggest impact player for us this year," the Ad-

mirals skipper said. "I think she's going to be an incredible player. She can hit, catch, throw. She will definitely dominate behind the plate."

With Morrison already drawing interest from major college programs including Tennessee and Florida State, "She will pretty much shut down every-

body's running game," Green added, "and give us a tremendous boost offensively in the

See LADY ADS on Page 8C

### Farragut

3/23	@ Heritage	5:30
3/24-3/25	@ Wildcat Classic, Hixson TN	TBD
3/28	@ William Blount	5:30
3/29	Karns JV	6:00
3/30	Hardin Valley	6:00
3/31	Unaka	6:00
4/3	Central	6:00
4/4	Maryville	6:00
4/6	@ Bearden	5:30
4/11	Heritage	6:00
4/12	Powell (CBFO Night)	6:00
4/13	William Blount	6:00
4/18	@ Hardin Valley	5:30
4/19	@ Halls	6:00
4/20	@ Maryville	6:00
4/21	Alcoa	6:00
4/25	Grace Christian	6:00
4/27-4/29	Region 2 Challenge	TBD
5/1	@ Gibbs	6:00

# KNOXVILLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL IRISH

Though five starters return to the fold for second-year head coach Brooks Cherry, depth is a serious concern across the Knoxville Catholic softball roster.

"We're down to 11 or 12 kids," Cherry said, having dealt with similar depth issues — experience-wise — in 2022.

"I think last year we started our first game with 19 kids, but 16 of them had never played high school softball — 14

had never played softball period," Cherry said.

Though playing at the Division II-AA level "in a tough district" with so many unproven KCHS performers, "We won



Cherry

seven games," the coach said about 2022. "... We're trying to build on that and get a few more wins.

"I think our biggest strength will be our senior leadership," Cherry added. "We have two kids who play the game the right way."

### Top players

Senior Blair Cherry, who has moved behind the plate to catch, "led our team last year in hitting and home runs,"

coach Cherry said.

Beginning just her second season of playing softball at KCHS, senior Katie Pettinger "will play some first (base) and third (base)," the coach said. "A really good athlete."

Kenzy Navarro "started pretty much every game last year at second base and had a good year," coach Cherry said, adding the junior also could see time at third.

Sophomore outfielder Alice

Parris "started about half the season" in 2022. She could also find time at first base.

Sophomore Danielle Kaczmarek returns as an outfield starter. "She has good speed," coach Cherry said.

The Lady Irish will rely on a freshman pitcher as staff ace.

Caitlyn Brooks "will be our starting pitcher," coach Cherry said. "She's proven she can

See LADY IRISH on Page 10C



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# BEARDEN HIGH SCHOOL BULLDOGS



Good enough to defeat a Farragut team that lost only three games the entire season — while the Lady Ads repeated as state champs — the junior-laden and “faster” Bearden softball crew is looking to take the next step toward contention for District 4-4A supremacy.

Though losing a catcher and starting center fielder he said were “two big pieces” helping the 2022 team finish 19-6-1 as district runner-up, second-year head coach Kenneth Boles has seven of nine Lady Bulldogs starters returning.

“Our team strength this year is going to be our increased speed,” the coach said. “We’ve worked through the off-season, and we’ve picked up a lot in our speed.”

In addition, “We’re going to be a little more team-oriented this year,” he added. “Last year we had a few bumps.”

Overall, “If we can get this weather to cooperate, we’re going to have a great season,” Boles said.

However, “Our district is probably the toughest district

ROSTER			
Allie Seritt	Abby Pickard	Elizabeth Newman	Bailey Hauge
Rylee Sieber	Kendall Hubbs	Ashlynn Gonzales	Megan Lawson
Lauren Spainhower	Bella Silvan	Jordan Palmer	Jaelynn Story
Jaycie Overton	Sofia Silvan	Abby Kelton	Catherine Smith
Abby Thompson	Kendyl May	Madelyn Brown	Aleksandra Walker
Reese Waltman	Ransley Greenoe	Makhia Nickerson	

in the state,” he added.

### Top talent

On the mound, the one-two punch of Lauren Spainhower and Rylee Sieber, both juniors, return. “They’re battle-tested, both of them,” the coach said, adding that when Sieber isn’t pitching, she’ll start at second base.

When Spainhower isn’t pitching, she will start in center field.

Junior Abby Kelton returns at first base. “She does a great job over there for me,” Boles said.

Shortstop Allie Seritt, yet another junior, “doesn’t say a lot but she gets the job done,” the coach said. “She’s kind of like one of those hard-hat people, she puts on her hard-hat

and goes to work.”

Senior Reese Waltman returns to play third base. “She’s going to be my core and my anchor for this infield because she brings a lot of stability, a lot of ball knowledge,” Boles said. “She’s been here through a lot of change and turnover, but she’s stuck with it and she does a great job.”

Despite the talent loss at catcher, “I’m going to be pretty good behind the plate,” Boles said about new starter Kendall Hubbs, a sophomore. “She has taken giant steps this year — and she’ll probably be in the mix for some outfield varsity time this year, and run some bases for me.”

Senior Jaelynn Story provides catching depth.

When Sieber is pitching, freshman Megan Lawson will fill the void and start at second base. “She brings a lot of pop in her bat,” the coach said. “She’s one of those kids you can’t really do without. She’s a great kid. ... She may do some catching.”

In the outfield, sophomore Abby Thompson is set to play right field. “She was there last year, so she’s got some experience,” the coach said.

Thompson will move to center field when Spainhower is pitching, and sophomore Sofia Silvan will start in right field.

Left field is the starting position for Jaycie Overton, a sophomore. “She’s going to bring a little pop with her bat,” Boles said. “She played quite a bit

Bearden	
3/23 @ Maryville .....	5:30
3/24 Cosby .....	5:30
3/28 Hardin Valley Academy....	5:30
3/30 Heritage.....	5:30
3/31 @ Jefferson Co.....	5:30
4/1 @ Claiborne High School (DH)	
4/4 William Blount.....	5:30
4/6 Farragut High School .....	5:30
4/11 Maryville.....	6:00
4/13 @ Hardin Valley Academy	5:30
4/17 @ Knoxville Halls.....	6:00
4/18 @ Heritage .....	5:30
4/20 @ William Blount .....	* 5:30
4/21 @ Clinton .....	5:30
4/24 Lakeway Christian .....	5:30
4/25 Jefferson Co.....	5:30
4/27 @ Karns .....	5:30
4/28 Karns.....	5:30

for me last year. I put her in a lot of situations that freshmen aren’t supposed to be in, just to see if she could handle it. She did well last year.”

## Farragut High School

### Lady Ads

From page 7C

middle of the order.”

Junior Hailey Nichols, who served as the team’s designated player during the regular season last spring, will be at first base — where she filled in, due to injury, during the play-offs. “She gives us a nice big bat in the order,” Green said.

Junior Rilee Kate Ragan, “who had some spot starts” in the middle infield during 2022, is the new second baseman. “She’s displayed pretty good defensive ability,” Green said. “She runs pretty well; we’d like to see her hit .300 or something like that.”

Anchoring the infield is senior standout Ava Guzowski, a three-year starting shortstop who is a Kennesaw State University (Georgia) signee. “She

has real good defensive ability and pretty good instincts,” the coach said. “... Obviously, she’ll be in the middle of the (batting) order somewhere.”

Junior Laney Shrader, who returns as starting third baseman, had been limited in pre-season workouts and scrimmages due to injury.

Green said the combination of Guzowski, Morrison and Nichols in the power portion of the batting lineup “should be really good, batting at three, four, five ... should be pretty productive.”

With those three leading the way, infield “will be the strength of our team this year, as long as we get all of our starters back,” Green said.

Losing two starters to graduation after last season, “outfield is a little bit thinner,” the coach said.

Junior Addison Pressley, the lone returning outfield starter and the team’s leadoff hitter, will move from left field to center field. “She had a really good year last year at the top of the order for us,” Green said. “There’s no reason to expect her not to have the same, or better, year this year.”

Sophomore Amelia Dorset “will be competing for one of those corner spots,” either left field or right field.

A slap hitter, Dorset “had a couple of spot starts last year,” the coach said.

Sophomore Audrey Ginel also is expected to play one of the corner outfield positions. “She’s improved a lot offensively,” the coach said.

Junior Anna French is in the mix for outfield playing time. “She’ll be battling for one of those corner spots,” Green

said. “Provides a little bit more offensive firepower for us out there.”

### Depth

Senior transfers Avery Mattina, also a first baseman, and Sophia Leto, also an infielder, “Will give us much-needed depth in the pitching staff,” Green said.

Freshman pitcher Baylee Johnson, a transfer who played at a local private school as an eighth-grader, is not eligible for varsity action this season per TSSAA transfer rules.

“But she will be able to pitch in the JV games for us,” Green said.

Providing catching depth are Nichols and French. Backing up at first base will be freshman Bridget Kovacs, who could start whenever Nichols is moved to catcher. Sophomore Aubrie Conger will pro-

vide depth at second base. “A pretty good defensive kid,” the coach said.

Either Morrison or Ragan could be moved to relieve Guzowski at shortstop, Green said.

Ready to play third if needed is Leto, who Green said “has some infield experience.” Freshman Alexa Shrader also is expected to provide depth at third. “She has really good defensive skills,” the coach said.

Outfield depth is a real family affair, featuring junior Caylee George, who also will see “courtesy running or pinch-running time,” along with her freshman twin sisters, Christie George and Courtney George.

The twins “both run pretty good, too, so we could use them as (base) runners, probably early on,” the coach said.

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# CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF KNOXVILLE WARRIORS

According to head coach Hannah Seaver Logan, there's "three to watch" for Christian Academy of Knoxville high school softball in 2023. The program is coming off a 16-8-1 season in 2022.

**'Three to watch'**

Senior Addison Smith "is primarily going to be a pitcher for us," Logan said about her staff ace and All-District honoree. "But she also serves as a shortstop and center fielder."

Offensively, Smith batted .458 last season according to the coach, "with five home runs six triples, 19 stolen bases, and she had 28 runs scored."

On the mound in 2022, "She maintained a 2.17 (earned-run average)," Logan added.

"She's an outstanding kid. She has a really fantastic work ethic."

Senior Aubreigh Morgan "is our starting shortstop," Logan said about the All-District honoree, finishing last season with a .361 batting average including one home run and 10 RBI, plus 13 stolen bases.

"She's a phenomenal athlete to watch," the coach added. "A hard worker."

Moreover, Smith and Morgan "are really good leaders who care more about doing the right thing and being good students and taking care of their teammates than they do just winning," Logan said. "But they're also ultra-competitive people; they know how to light a fire in every single girl."

Sophomore Gracie Kringen, another returning All-District



**ROSTER**

Aubreigh Morgan	Sr.	Caroline Rogers	Soph.	Charlotte Cole	Jr.
Sophie Carroll	Fr.	Kate Myers	Soph.	Estella Tarbox	Soph.
Audrey Blankenship	Fr.	Mary Grace Matthews	Soph.	Mabel Miller	Fr.
Gracie Kringen	Soph.	Kyla Hill	Jr.	Greer Dugger	
Halle Bedwell	Soph.	Addison Smith	Sr.		

honoree, will start in left field. "She's a lefthanded slapper who batted .491" with 22 RBI, nine steals and scored 17 runs according to Logan. "She is one of the quietest, most reserved people when you get to know her," the coach said. "... She is an outstanding player and an outstanding person, too."

**Other key players**

Sophomore Halle Bedwell will start in center field. Right field "is kind of an

open position right now," the coach said.

Sophomore Caroline Rogers and junior Kyla Hill "rotate between catcher and third base," Logan said. "Both of them play both positions really well."

Junior Charlotte Cole is set to start at second base. "She's been playing for the (school) since she was a fourth-grader," Logan said.

Starting at first base is sophomore Mary Grace Matthews. "She is one of our power hit-

ters," the coach said. "Just a really, really phenomenal athlete. Very motivated."

"If you were to ask, 'hey, who is the workhorse on your team?' It's Mary Grace, she's fantastic."

Among top pitchers is sophomore Kate Myers. Cole and Smith also will pitch. "This year our pitchers are more movement-based, so our defense is going to have to be behind them a little bit more" in 2023, Logan said.

**CAK**

3/23	5:30	.....	Lakeway Christian
3/27	6:00	.....	Grace Christian
3/28	5:30	.....	@ Jefferson County
3/30	6:00	.....	Seymour
3/31	6:00	.....	@ The Kings Academy
4/3	5:30	.....	@ First Baptist Academy
4/4	6:00	.....	@ Knoxville Catholic
4/5	6:00	.....	@ South-Doyle
4/6	5:30	.....	Carter
4/11	5:30	.....	Grace Christian
4/13	6:00	.....	The Kings Academy
4/14	5:30	.....	Webb School
4/17	5:30	.....	First Baptist Academy
4/18	5:30	.....	@ Concord Christian
4/20	5:30	.....	@ Lakeway Christian
4/24	5:30	.....	@ Webb School
4/25	6:00	.....	Knoxville Catholic
4/26	6:00	.....	South-Doyle
4/27	5:00	.....	@ Sevier County
5/1	5:30	.....	@ Oneida
5/2	5:30	.....	Eagleton Career Academy
5/3	6:00	.....	@ Midway

**Biggest strength**

"I think our biggest team strength lies in our chemistry," the coach said. "The girls all care about each other a lot. This is my 10th season as a softball coach, and I've never had a group of girls that have ever been this cohesive."

**Concerns**

"We have a young team," Logan said. "The bulk of our team is from sophomores on down."

**Lady Hawks**

From page 6C

"We're expecting big things out of her at-bats. She can hit, bunt, slap — she can do it all."

Addison Chandler, also a sophomore, "will probably be our second baseman," the coach said, but added she also could see time in the outfield.

Either way, "We expect some big things from her," Collin said.

Natalie Nettles, a junior, is the other corner outfielder. "She can track the ball really well," the coach said.

Jenna Hagee, also a junior, "is a lefty power hitter" starting at first base, Collin said.

Freshman Kayla Sosebee is

the team's No. 2 pitcher, Collin said. Also providing depth on the mound is sophomore Emma Kate Schneider, "who is our back-up catcher," the coach said. Her defensive versatility means Schneider likely will play some in the outfield.

Sophomore Nathalia Rodriguez adds pitching depth while serving as a back-up third

baseman. Sophomore Madison Mann will back-up at first base.

**Biggest team strength**

"Our biggest strength is, I think, our ability to adapt," Collin said.

"... We've been really focusing on defense as a team."

Her pitchers exhibiting a good command of the strike zone — even allowing more

pitches to be put in play — is key.

"Letting our defense work is the big thing that I want to focus on," the coach said.

**Concerns**

"The mindset of getting them to believe they're better than what they think. ... Going out with a positive attitude about it," Collin said.



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# WEBB SCHOOL OF KNOXVILLE SPARTANS

There's a lot of "new" with Webb School of Knoxville softball.

A program filled with inexperienced players and a new head coach will have quite a place to learn and perform: opening a new softball field just below the school's baseball field — with a new fieldhouse to be shared by the softball and baseball programs set to open sometime in early April.

"We're super-excited about our new field," head coach Tommy Bryant said.

As for winning games, "It's going to be a re-building year," the coach said. "But we do have some really strong players."

"We're going to lean heavily on our senior shortstop/pitcher Hannah Bruce, who has signed to play with (University of Virginia) Wise," he added. On the mound, "She's going to help us pick up the slack."

"We're going to lean heavily on our seniors." Senior pitcher Bryn Lawson is staff ace. Seniors Caroline Rice (catcher, first base), Abby Beaty (infield/outfield) and Hollie Shamiyeh (first base and outfield) look to be leaders.

"We'll also be leaning heavily on junior Molly Bryant," who will play either third base, first base or catcher, the coach said. "She's a big stick. She led the state in home runs (among freshmen)" in 2021.



Photo Courtesy of Bobby Lewis, Pro Photo

## ROSTER

Caroline Rice	Sr	Hannah Bruce	Sr	Jeneva Mitchell	Soph	Lyla Henderson	8th
Bryn Lawson	Sr	Taryn Breeden	Jr	Libby Dunaway	Soph	Terralyn Hill	8th
Abby Beaty	Sr	Molly Bryant	Jr	Matazja Goins	Fr	Avery Wade	8th
Hollie Shamiyeh	Sr	Alexis Barton	Jr	Aubrey Halkett	8th	Emme Yost	8th

Sophomore center fielder Jeneva Mitchell will bring "big-time help," coach Bryant said. Mitchell will move to shortstop when Bruce is pitching. Sophomore Libby Dunaway (infield/outfield) also will see lots of playing time.

Freshman Matazja Goins (first base, third base or catcher) "played a little bit last year" as an eighth-grader.

Junior Taryn Breeden was the team's pitching ace last year, but "she's probably not going to get to pitch any this year" due to shoulder surgery, the coach said.

As for Breeden being able to contribute as a hitter or pinch-runner, "She's not going to be able to play until maybe halfway through the season," coach Bryant said.

### Biggest team strength

"We've got good team speed," the coach said. "And we've got a mixture of power and contact hitters as well."

"Their attitude and their togetherness: this is a great group of young ladies," he added. "Everybody's got each other's back."

Moreover, "the handful of really good players are helping

the girls that are new," coach Bryant said.

### Concerns

That Lawson stays healthy because there is limited pitching depth.

Overall experience, the coach said, is another big issue. "We've got a lot of girls who haven't played before and are just learning the game. ... Learn as they go, trial by fire."

## Lady Lions

From page 6C

The coach said he anticipates Haynes to be "a leader behind the plate."

Nell Pattison, a freshman, will start in left field. Junior Abbie Lambert anchors down things in center field. "She's a newcomer to our team," the

coach said. "A really experienced player. We're excited to have her out there leading our outfield."

Senior Raleigh Jack Walker is the right fielder. "She's also a newcomer," Roberts said. "She's played a big role in (girls) sports at Concord, so we're real excited."

On the mound, sophomore

Cortlyn Hedger is staff ace among pitchers. "She's new to pitching, but has a lot of potential," the coach said. "She's been a big leader on our team since the eighth grade. She's jumped into this new role and she's done a great job."

Roberts did not mention any other Lady Lions pitchers.

Junior Athena Lester will be the CCS designated player. "She comes back to our team with a really high batting average from last year," Roberts said. "A lot of experience."

### Extra depth

Having freshman Chloe Nestor and eighth-grader Manhattan Shuler on the varsity roster "gives us a lot more

depth than we've had in the past. A lot more athleticism," the coach said.

### Assistant coach

Roberts made a point to praise assistant coach Grace Gordon. "She helped this program out a lot," the head coach said.

## Knoxville Catholic High School

3/21 6:00..... First Baptist Academy	4/14 6:30..... Loudon
3/22 6:00..... Knoxville West	4/17 5:30..... Webb School
3/23 6:00..... Coalfield	4/18 5:30..... @ First Baptist Academy
3/27 6:00..... Cocke County	4/20 6:00..... @ Coalfield
3/28 5:00..... @ Girls Preparatory School	4/25 6:00..... @ CAK
3/29 6:00..... Knoxville West	4/27 6:00..... @ Cocke County
3/30 3:30..... @ Baylor (DH)	4/28 5:00..... Notre Dame
4/3 5:30..... @ Webb School	5/1 6:30..... @ Loudon
4/4 6:00..... CAK	5/2 5:00..... @ Chattanooga Christian
4/11 5:30..... @ Eagleton Career Academy	

## ROSTER

Kenzy Navarro	Jr.	Katie Pettinger	Sr	Caitlyn Brooks	Fr
Alice Parris	Soph	Maria Wilson	Jr	Deja Casby	Fr
Danielle Kaczmarek	Soph	Maura Laco	Jr	Autumn Shaffer	Fr
Blair Cherry	Sr	Emma Brinkman	Soph		

## Lady Irish

From page 7C

throw strikes and knows how to compete on the mound."

Sophomore Emma Brinkman likely will start as either the designated player or in the outfield, the coach said.

Freshman Deja Casby "is projected to start at shortstop," he added.

Junior Maria Wilson "will probably start in right field or first base," coach Cherry said.

Freshman Autumn Shaffer likely will start in left field, while junior Maura Laco "will get some time this year in the outfield," the coach said.

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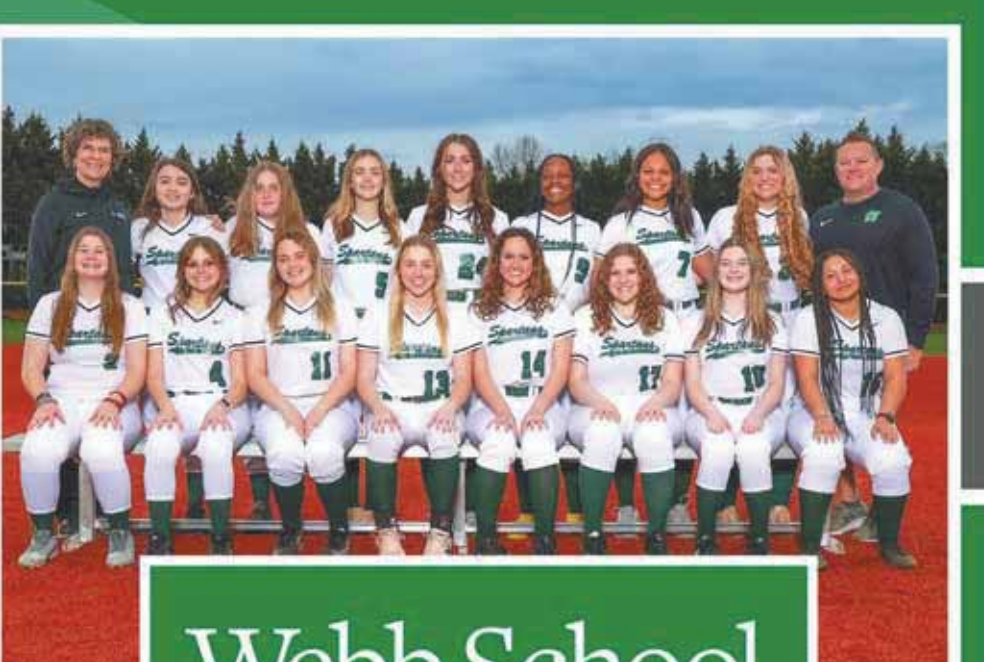
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# 2023



## LADY SPARTAN SOFTBALL TEAM

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## Webb School OF KNOXVILLE

# SOCCKER PREVIEW

Stories by Alan Sloan, editor@farragutpress.com

farragutpress Wednesday, March 22, 2023 • 11C

## FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL ADMIRALS

Whether it's the high school, college or professional ranks, year No. 3 for a head coach often proves to be a turning-point season. Really big things have been known to happen in such situations — especially programs with rich histories.

Bradley Culbreth, who enters his third season as Farragut boys soccer head coach, isn't making any big predictions, especially coming off a rare losing season (7-9-2) for a program his father, the late Wallie Culbreth, led to four state championship and one national title (2004) in just a seven-season span: 2003-2009.

However, "I can promise you that won't happen with this team," Culbreth said about another losing record. "There might be some tight games this year, but we expect to be winning at the end of them all."

"Last year was a growing year for us physically and mentally," he added. "We had some internal dynamics that we all learned from that was necessary growing pains. This team is eager to live up to the Farragut soccer expectations and hang a new banner at the field."

With Farragut's final game last season a district tourney playoff loss to rival Bearden, eventual Class AAA state runner-up, "I was eager to roll the ball out when last season ended," Culbreth said. "This is going to be a fun team to coach."

"Defense is mature, midfield has depth," Culbreth said about



his team strengths. "We are big, strong and fast. ... I have a lot of different dynamics to this team."

"Putting them in a position to be their strongest is the hard part because they all do so many different things," which Culbreth labeled "great problem."

### Concerns

"Starting fast in games," the coach said. "Every team has an identity, and this group likes to get settled in before they get go-

See FARRAGUT on Page 12C

### Farragut

- 3/24 @ West High School ..... 7:00
- 3/27 Oak Ridge High School .. 7:00
- 3/31 @ (N) Bearden Invitational ..... 7:00
- 4/1 @ (N) Bearden Invitational 7:00
- 4/2 @ (N) Bearden Invitational 7:00
- 4/4 Lenoir City High School . \* 7:00
- 4/6 CAK..... 7:00
- 4/11 @ Maryville \* ..... 7:00
- 4/14 Knoxville Catholic High School ..... 7:00
- 4/18 Austin-East High School . 6:30
- 4/20 Hardin Valley Academy \* 7:00
- 4/25 @ William Blount High School ..... \*6:00
- 4/28 Bearden High School .. \* 7:30
- 5/2 @ Heritage High School . \* 6:00
- 5/4 East Hamilton High School 6:00

Photo Courtesy of Carlos Reveiz

### ROSTER

Brady Anderson	Fr.	Ty Finnegan	Sr.	Ryan McCue	Fr.	Claudio Song	Jr.
Gavin Barnes	Jr.	Rowan Floyd	So.	Ahadu Mengesha	So.	Eric Sonnenschein	Sr.
Joe Brennen	So.	William Gallaher	Sr.	Ahmad Messidi	Jr.	Charlie Sorochoan	Fr.
Jack Bukovitz	Sr.	Zack Guigou	So.	Jonathan Moreno	So.	Ian Sorochoan	Sr.
Brooks Burnette	Jr.	Ethan Guo	Fr.	Case Pappas	Jr.	Jonah Thomas	Jr.
Matthew Burney	Fr.	Hudson Hale	Fr.	Zaxton Roberts	Fr.	Lincoln Unger	Fr.
Juan Byas	So.	Malik Hamed	Jr.	Gavin Samples	So.	Zane Unger	Jr.
Adrian D'Aloisio	Fr.	Nathan Henderson	Fr.	Cooper Sandidge	Fr.	Connor Watson	Fr.
Anders Deets	Jr.	William Kim	So.	Samuel Shuman	So.	Camden Williams	Sr.
Edwin Denic	Fr.	Muhammad Malik	So.	Peyton Simmons	Jr.		
Ethan Eriksen	Fr.	Daniel Martin	So.	Ruhaan Singh	Fr.		

## BEARDEN HIGH SCHOOL BULLDOGS

In the last three TSSAA Class AAA boys soccer state championship games, perennial power Bearden has represented the eastern half of Tennessee.

Wearing the championship crown after a thrilling overtime shootout victory in 2019, the SoccerDawgs have finished as state runner-up the past two seasons (2020 season lost to COVID).

An All-American forward leading a deep and talented front line, plus star potential on defense and goaltending, are expected to carry Bearden early in 2023 while a young, but



Bearden High School boys soccer seniors

### ROSTER

Photo Courtesy of Liza Hutchison

### Bearden

- 3/23 7:00.....Knox Central
- 3/24 7:00 Christ Presbyterian Acad
- 3/28 7:00.....Lenoir City
- 3/30-4/2 .....Bearden Invitational
- 4/6 7:00.....Knox West
- 4/10 7:00.....Greeneville
- 4/13 7:00@ Hardin Valley Academy
- 4/18 7:00.....Alcoa
- 4/20 7:00.....Maryville
- 4/25 6:00.....Heritage
- 4/28 7:30.....@ Farragut
- 5/3 6:30.....@ William Blount

See BEARDEN on Page 15C

Aidan Ainsworth	Fr.	Chris Faircloth	So.	Omar Hewzi	Jr.	Shepard McMurray	Jr.	Nic Prins	Jr.	Hayden Tate	Sr.
Yousuf Al Haddad	So.	Ethan Ford	Sr.	Cole Hutchison	Sr.	Andy Mowery	Fr.	Jack Raulston	Jr.	Jack Tirgrath	Jr.
Omar Ardahji	Fr.	Lucas Ford	So.	Addison Johnson	So.	Ben Mowery	Fr.	Brody Schwall	So.	Tate Whillock	Sr.
Marcus Bishop	Sr.	Preston Ford	So.	Eli Keener	Fr.	Logan Nelson	So.	Harrison Schwall	Sr.	Yasir Wirya	Jr.
Hamid Djouadi	Sr.	Griffin Foster	Jr.	Daniel Kinney	So.	Lucas Nordin	Sr.	Dillon Sims	Jr.	Jackson Wolverton	So.
Ahmed Dkhiri	Fr.	Eric Freudenberg	Sr.	Wylder Lee	Jr.	Bryce Pereyo	So.	Shawn Spencer	Jr.	Ethan Yeow	Fr.
Chandler Donohoe	Sr.	Jashua Garcia	So.	Jaden Mann	Jr.	Noah Price	So.	Cole Stopka	So.	Josiah Yeow	Sr.

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# HARDIN VALLEY ACADEMY HAWKS

A nice mix of experience and talented young soccer players at Hardin Valley Academy — known for being quick on their feet as a team year in, year out — look to challenge for District 4-AAA supremacy in 2023.

The task is harder without one of the team's best players — who doubles as a team leader. Brady Margo, senior All-state defender and a team captain, "is out right now with a major injury," head coach Jessie Stephens said. "We're doubtful we'll have him at all this season. That's a really big hit for us. ... He's so talented and so charismatic. He just kind of puts the team on his back."

Among her six healthy starters who return, "We're getting Brady Hammer back," Stephens said about the All-Region 2-AAA/All-District junior forward. "He's very creative and very dynamic on the ball. He brings a lot of speed to our team."

Senior DJ Powers, a returning All-District starter in the midfield, "is a really consistent, really steady piece for us," said the coach, whose team was eliminated in the district tourney semifinals in 2022 despite losing just two games all season. "A good decision-maker; kind of like commands



## Hardin Valley

- 3/23 Oak Ridge ..... 7:00
- 3/30 @ (N) Bearden Invitational ..... 7:00
- 3/31 @ (N) Bearden Invitational ..... 7:00
- 4/1 @ (N) Bearden Invitational ..... 7:00
- 4/4 @ Heritage \* ..... 6:00
- 4/6 @ Webb School ..... 6:30
- 4/11 William Blount \* ..... 7:00
- 4/13 Bearden \* ..... 7:00
- 4/18 @ Lenoir City \* ..... 7:00
- 4/20 @ Farragut \* ..... 7:00
- 4/25 Maryville \* ..... 7:00
- 4/27 @ Knoxville Catholic .. 7:00
- 5/2 @ Powell ..... 7:00

Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Wiggs

the midfield for us."

Senior Ishmael Palacios, an outside fullback who's transitioning from forward, "is one of my favorite players to watch," Stephens said. "He is just a great kid and a great defender — we're so lucky to have him back."

Junior Marques Powers, also an outside fullback, "is our only returning back-line player," the coach said. "He's

See HVA on Page 13C

## ROSTER

Lawson Bledsoe	Fr.	Brady Hammer	Jr.	Connor Mast	Sr.	Rees Smith	Fr.
Avery Bolas	Sr.	Dane Hammer	Fr.	Duncan Mauck	So.	Gavin Standafer	So.
Jack Brewer	Sr.	David Hart	Fr.	Derek Moran-Ruiz	Fr.	Gray Stephens	So.
Ben Brophy	So.	Tito Hernandez	Jr.	Ish Palacios	Sr.	Ali Tarch	Fr.
Nolan Burgess	Jr.	Nathan Holbrook	So.	Matthew Pastor	Fr.	Ethan Tucker	So.
Josh Colomac	So.	Benjamin Knapp	Fr.	Daniel Perez	Jr.	Cash White	Fr.
Blaine Dulniak	So.	Ryder Kolesar	Fr.	D.J. Powers	Sr.	Ryder White	Fr.
Vance Easler	So.	Adam Leonard	So.	Marques Powers	Jr.	Camden Wolfe	Fr.
Ricardo Espinal	Jr.	Robert Manrod	Sr.	Kayden Segich	Sr.	Jackson Yarbrough	So.
Jose Galicia	Fr.	Brady Margo	Sr.	Benson Smith	Fr.		

# CONCORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LIONS

Coming off earning a trip to the TSSAA Division II-A Region tournament last season, Concord Christian School's boys soccer team is loaded with experience and maturity for 2023.

"I've got everybody back, and there's 10 seniors," head coach Fernando Lopez said. "We've got experience, but I think the biggest thing this year is unity."

Praising the "hard work" from his team as a whole, "I think it's been showing in the pre-season," the coach said. "They came in fit."

"I think we're ready to take on all the teams," he added. "... We're focused and ready to take on the challenge."

### Top talent

Senior Kayden Sherritze returns as goalkeeper. "He's a

strong keeper; he's been working hard all pre-season," Lopez said. "I'm really confident with him in the back."

Defensively in front of Sherritze, senior Jude Goldenberg is center-fullback. "He's one of the leaders for the team," the coach said. "Very calm and decisive."

Senior midfielder Army Eckles "is calm on the ball and distributes the ball well," Lopez said. "He has worked hard all pre-season to get fit."

Sophomore Gage Jacobs "is one of the up-and-coming lead-

ers of the team," the coach said about the midfielder.

Three forwards Lopez highlighted were senior Marshall Craft, sophomore Franklin Von Hagen and senior Jared Huff.

Von Hagen "was one of my top players last year" as a freshman, the coach said. "Very crafty and versatile — can play anywhere on the field."

Craft and Huff "are versatile, can also play the midfield," Lopez said. "They are two other players who have been working hard in pre-season."

### Concerns

Looking ahead, "We'll have to rebuild the program next year," Lopez said, as the Lions will look to groom some of the younger players for leadership roles ahead.

## Concord

- 3/24 @ McMinn County (Smoky Mtn Cup)..... 8:00 pm
- 3/25 @ Halls (Smoky Mtn Cup) ..... 3:30pm
- 3/26 @ William Blount (Smoky Mtn Cup)..... 1:30pm
- 3/28 @ Providence Academy .. 5 pm
- 4/4 CAK..... 5:30pm
- 4/6 @ Oak Ridge ..... 6 pm
- 4/11 Maryville Christian .. 5:30pm
- 4/14 @ The King's Academy 6:30pm
- 4/20 Grace Christian ..... 5:30pm
- 4/25 @Lakeway Christian..... 6 pm
- 4/27 @ Berean Christian .... 5:30 pm

## ROSTER

Jake Baldwin	Sr	Kayden Sherritze	Sr	Franklin Von Hagen	Soph
Marshall Craft	Sr	Leo Yamanaka	Sr	Cooper Craft	Fr
John Dunn	Sr	Nate Von Hagen	Jr	Jackson Krahl	Fr
Army Eckles	Sr	Alex Baldwin	Soph	Josh Miller	Fr
Caden Gheen	Sr	Jace Gheen	Soph	Ben Mollenhour	Fr
Jude Goldenberg	Sr	Jordan Harrell	Soph		
Jared Huff	Sr	Gage Jacobs	Soph		
Jaewon Lee	Sr	Harvey Scott	Soph		

## Farragut

From page 11C

ing. It will be on the coaches to keep the same level of intensity from start to finish."

### Top returnees

Senior Eric Sonnenschein "is a dynamic midfielder with a very high soccer IQ," Culbreth said. "He is our quarterback on the field that connects all three phases of the game."

A pair of All-state defenders returning are seniors Jack Bukovitz (All-state in 2022 and a two-time All-Region 2-AAA and All-District honoree) and Will Galaher (All-state 2021 who also is a two-time All-Region 2-AAA and All-District honoree).

"I don't think there's two better center-backs in the state," Culbreth said. "They're both 6-foot-2, and both of them have started the last two years. They don't make it easy on yah. (This pair) makes me very solid from the back upward."

Brooks Burnette, a junior forward, earned All-Region and All-District honors as a freshman in 2021. "Brooks is big, strong and fast — he's going to make it hard on you," the coach said.

Junior forward Zane Unger "has a lot of upside and is very skilled," Culbreth said. "... Zane has grown, put on a lot of muscle, but he's tricky with his feet."

"Brooks and Zane, they've both started for two years also."

Other returners who contributed as starters or off the bench last season are Juan Byas (sophomore defender), Case Pappas (junior midfielder/defender), Gavin Samples (sophomore forward, midfielder), Ian Sorochan (senior forward), Jonah Thomas (junior defender), Camden Williams (senior defender), Gavin Barnes (junior goalkeeper), Ty Finnegan (senior defender), Ahadu Mengesha (sophomore midfielder), Anders Deets (junior midfielder), Zack Guigou (sophomore midfielder) and Lincoln Unger (freshman multi-positions).

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# KNOXVILLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL IRISH

With eight starters returning — “and two transfers that are going to be starting” — Knoxville Catholic boys soccer may be ready to reverse its two-year struggles playing in Division II-AA according to the boss.

“I’ve got a bunch who have been through the trenches, I’ll say that much,” said Gordon Heins, in his 11th season as KCHS boys soccer head coach. “... We’re probably deeper than we’ve been in the past.”

As a Division II-AA East Region team, “We are in the hardest region in the state,” Heins said about sharing the region with powerhouse Chattanooga Baylor among others.

Though having never won a region game in the program’s first two seasons playing in Division II-AA (0-6-1), “We’ve got a lot of third-year and second-year starters who know what it takes,” the coach said. “We’re much better prepared this year than we’ve been in the past.”

### Biggest strength

“Our biggest strength is in the midfield for sure ... attacking and defending in the midfield,” Heins said.



Michelle Hollenhead

## ROSTER

Chris Grill	William Ainsworth	Marcos Garcia	J.T. Tucker
Mario Rivera	Austin Ayo	Tyler Dorn	Trevor Belanger
Daniel Walsh	Christian Grover	Magnus Dickinson	Grayson Goodale
Jonathan Shaver	Elijah McManaway	Mac Hawley	
Alex Powers	Ryan Mather	Joshua Palacios	
Patrick Barry	Rodrigo Padilla	Jack Tucker	

### Top talent

Despite the team’s experience, there’s only one senior who’s a returning starter: midfielder Mario Rivera.

“He’s just the complete player,” Heins said. “He’s intelligent, he plays simple, he’s

very, very deceptive in his play. He wins all the 50-50 balls. He can place the ball 40 yards diagonally right to someone’s feet.

“He’s probably one of the best players that we’ve had here since I’ve been here in my

11 years, for sure,” the coach added about Rivera. “He kind of sets the standard for everybody else.”

Another key midfielder is sophomore returning starter Josh Palacios, “who is very similar to Mario,” Heins said.

## Catholic

3/25 @ Baylor School * 3:00/ 5:00
3/28 @t Christian Academy of Knoxville ..... 7:00
3/30 @ Chattanooga Christian School * ..... 6:00
4/4 Alcoa High School ..... 5:00
4/4 Loudon High School ..... 7:00
4/11 Powell High School ..... 7:00
4/14 @ Farragut High School . 7:00
4/19 McCallie School * ..... 7:00
4/21 @ Christian Academy of Knoxville ..... 7:00
4/25 Webb School of Knoxville * ..... 7:00
4/27 Hardin Valley Academy... 7:00
5/2 Lenoir City High School.. 7:00
5/4 Oak Ridge High School... 7:00

Transfer J.T. Tucker, a sophomore, will start as a center-midfielder. “He’s very intelligent player,” the coach said.

Having junior Jonathan Shaver back “as a third-year

See KCHS on Page 14C

# WEBB SCHOOL OF KNOXVILLE SPARTANS

Loaded with talented upperclassmen — though lacking “a traditional striker” according to the head coach — Webb School of Knoxville boys soccer looks to fly high in its second season playing the state’s biggest private schools in Division II-AA.

Key players remain who contributed to the Spartans’ Division II-A state championship in 2021. “We’re an older team: we’ve got 12 seniors and seven juniors,” Webb head coach Jared Ziegler said.

“And the guys are really fired up to play this year (based on) the way we went out last year,” he added about a tough season-ending state quarter-final playoff loss to Memphis Christian Brothers (final 9-4-1 Webb record). “I think they’ve got a chip on their shoulders, something to prove.”

Senior Nathan Pope returns as a goalkeeper with tons of experience. His first start came as a freshman “during the cancelled season (2020),” Ziegler said. “He’s basically played almost every game since.”

In goal when the Spartans won the 2021 Division II-A state title, Pope’s shutout performance in the championship-



Photo Courtesy of Bobby Lewis, Pro Photo

## ROSTER

Bayless Bolt (GK)	Jr	JP Quigley	Sr	Clovis Igiraneza	Sr
Nathan Pope (GK)	Sr	Alex Middlecoff	Jr	Owen Youngblood	Sr
Drew Autry (GK)	Fr	Roman Nasser	Jr	Ryder Solberg	Sr
Luke Dolin	Sr	Pierce Miller	Sr	Keaton Wyrick	Sr
Carter Prince	Sr	Colin Jung	Sr	Morgan McNally	Jr
Peter Hollenbach	Jr	Youseph Ali	Sr	Sam Kalosieh	Fr
Axel Mnzava	Sr	Warren Hurst	Jr		
Greyson Webb	Soph	Jacob Ellis	Jr		

winning match “was the best game I think he’s played in his life,” the coach added. “He’s definitely one of our leaders — a quiet lead-by-example type of player. ... A really smart kid.”

Senior Luke Dolin returns as a player “who’s played all over for us: outside back, on the wing ... though he’s had an

injury plagued career,” Ziegler said. “He’s super tough. ... He’s one of the most tenacious players I think I’ve ever coached. He’s just completely fearless.”

Signing with Elon University (North Carolina), senior J.P. Quigley, a Tennessee Sportswriters All-State honoree last season, returns to the midfield

— his main position — though due to defensive injuries played center fullback most of last season.

“He can play anywhere for us, but he’s primarily our holding mid(fielder),” the coach said.

Junior Alex Middlecoff, a two-year starter, returns as

## Webb

3/24 @ Austin-East High School ..... 6:30 PM
3/28 The King’s Academy ..... 5:45 PM
4/6 Hardin Valley Academy ..... 5:30 PM
4/11 @ Oak Ridge High School ..... 7:00 PM
4/14 @ Chattanooga Christian School ..... * 6:00 PM
4/19 Loudon High School ..... 5:45 PM
4/21 Baylor School ..... * 6:00 PM
4/25 @ Knoxville Catholic High School ..... * 7:00 PM
4/29 @ West High School ..... 2:00 PM
5/2 @ McCallie School . 5:30 PM

an attacking midfielder. “He’s another guy who can do it all,” Ziegler said. “Really a positive kid; he’s fast, strong and technical.”

A Rhodes College (Memphis) signee, senior Pierce Miller, returning as a wing (forward),

See WEBB on Page 14C

## HVA

From page 12C

one of my favorites — he’s so consistent. He’s a super-steady defender. In my opinion, one the better ones around. I love how Marques plays. ... Very consistent and very smart.”

Senior goalkeeper Avery Bolas also returns.

“We’ve got a new goalkeeper coming in; his name is Adam

Leonard,” Stephens said about the sophomore. “I’m really excited about him getting in the mix. He’s very talented.”

Senior Connor Mast, a defensive midfielder, “is being moved to the back line,” Stephens said. “He’s really sturdy, not flashy; a consistent player. It’s good to have him back. We’ll need that senior leadership that he brings to the field. “We’ve got some newcom-

ers we’re excited about,” the coach added. Nathan Holbrook, a sophomore, will start at forward. “He’s worked really hard this off-season. You can see a lot of improvement in him.”

Ben Brophy, also a sophomore forward, will see lots of playing time. Gavin Standifer, a sophomore midfielder, “got some minutes last year as a freshman.”

Among the younger players, “Our freshman class, overall, like I’m very pleased with the style of soccer they play and their soccer knowledge,” the coach said.

### Biggest team strength

“I’d say we’re decently quick,” Stephens said about her Hawks. “That’s something we’ve always had, overall, is really solid team speed. Our ability to get in behind people

has always been a strength of ours.”

### Concerns

“I would say a big weakness for us is just (lacking) size,” the coach said. “... We play a pretty style of soccer, but we don’t have a lot of size and strength.”

By comparison, Stephens said district rivals Bearden, Farragut and Maryville “are huge.”



## STATE & REGION RECORDS (2009-present)

**State Tournament Final Four Appearances**  
2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2021

**State Runner-Up**  
2013

**State Champions**  
2012, 2015, 2016, 2021

**Region Champions**  
2009, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2021

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# A CHAMPIONSHIP TRADITION

# CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF KNOXVILLE WARRIORS

At the top level of Christian Academy of Knoxville boys soccer talent and experience, the "CAK 8" are expected to toe the line — including well beyond the soccer pitch.

About his six top senior returnees, and two junior stand-outs, "These guys are the leaders ... I expect them to be leaders on and off the field," said second-year CAK head coach Bobby Deets, whose 2022 team was district champs and region finalist before falling in the Division II-A state quarter-finals.

Setting the desired example is senior outside fullback Dario Love, who is out indefinitely with an injury.

"Dario's leadership, on and off the field, is exemplary," the coach said. "His attitude is second to none. He's going to help the coaching staff this year while he's injured. I'm hoping he returns by the end of April, beginning of May."

Overall with the CAK 8, Deets labeled them "a very talented group."

"I'm looking forward to another great year, seeing these guys grow in maturity and wis-

dom," he added.

## Other CAK 8

Senior Chase Stokely, attacking midfielder, "was one of our leading goal scorers last year," the coach said.

Senior Will Franks, center midfielder, has committed to Covenant College (Georgia). "I expect to see several great things out of them," Deets said of Stokely and Franks.

Senior forward Adam Howard will add to the offensive firepower, as will fellow senior forward Walker Beavers, who "probably will be a starter," the coach said.

Both top juniors, Lukas Schreuder and Carson Woodroof, are defensive midfielders. "I'd like to see them really step up and take ownership of those roles," Deets said.

Two top senior defenders return in Kaleab Belk, center fullback, and Walker Douglass,

outside fullback.

Goalkeeping (as of this story's deadline) "is one of those things we're continuing to work on daily," the coach said. Senior Jonathan Poston is among those in the mix.

## Others in the mix

Senior Ethan Harpending (outside forward) and junior Mac Collier (center-midfield) are battling for playing time, as are senior defenders David Elliott, Cade Box, Ethan Coffey and Wesley Hood.

Despite the CAK 8 and the other above-mentioned talent,

"We also have a lot of young talent that are freshmen this year," Deets said. "A large freshmen group; around 10.

"We'll look for some of them to contribute," he added.

## Biggest strength

"The overall strength of the team is understanding how simple this game can be played," Deets said.

## Concerns

"How to integrate these freshmen and have them grow up real quick," the coach said. "I expect them to catch up to speed quickly."

## CAK

3/23	8:00	.....@	Morristown East (SMC)
3/24	2:00	.....@	Seymour (SMC)
3/25	1:30	.....@	Jefferson Co. (SMC)
3/28	7:00	.....	Knox Catholic
3/31	7:30	.....	The Kings Academy
4/4	7:00	.....@	Concord Christian
4/6	7:00	.....@	Farragut
4/11	6:00	.....	Providence
4/14	7:00	.....@	Berean
4/18	7:00	.....	Grace Christian
4/27	6:15	.....@	Lakeway Christian

## ROSTER

Walker Beavers	Sr.	Ethan Harpending	Sr.	Triston Miller	So.
Kaleab Belk	Sr.	Nate Hickman	Fr.	Graham Morrell	Fr.
Ethan Boudreaux	So.	Wesley Hood	Sr.	Jonathan Poston	Sr.
Cade Box	Sr.	Adam Howard	Sr.	Lukas Schreuder	Jr.
Caleb Bradley	Fr.	Tucker Jack	Fr.	Jake Slack	Fr.
Ethan Coffey	Sr.	Ethan Johnson	Fr.	Chase Stokely	Sr.
Mac Collier	Jr.	Elijah Krokowski	8th	Colby Stokely	Fr.
Walker Douglass	Sr.	Micah Krokowski	Fr.	Andrew Tsapenko	Fr.
David Elliott	Sr.	Hudson Ley	Fr.	Carson Woodroof	Jr.
Will Franks	Sr.	Dario Love	Sr.		

## KCHS

From page 13C

returning (starter) goalkeeper is a huge advantage," Heins said. "He's 6-foot-2, athletic, strong, fast, quick, communicates well. Distributes the ball very well."

Defense is another strong and experienced area, with

three returning starters.

William Ainsworth, a junior, is "bigger, faster, stronger, more intelligent," Heins said.

Junior Rodrigo Padilla "is probably our best outside defender," the coach said about this third-year starter.

Right fullback, junior Ryan Mather, is another third-year starter.

Still another third-year starter, who this season has moved to center-fullback, is junior Austin Ayo.

Up top features sophomore forward Marcos Garcia, who started as a freshman. "He's bigger, faster, stronger and more confident than he was last year," Heins said.

Also a starting forward is

freshman Jack Tucker, "who brings a lot of strength up top that we haven't had in terms of a pure finisher," the coach said. "He was on the Nashville FC Academy team."

Freshman Trevor Belanger is another youngster starting at forward. "A strong, quality player up top," Heins said.

Junior Grayson Goodale

could play either up top or as a defender. "He is going to be a very strong contributor, and probably first off the bench," the coach said. "He's the strongest and most athletic player we have."

Others looking to add depth include sophomore midfielder Christian Grover and junior midfielder Patrick Barry.

## Webb

From page 13C

"has been a starter his whole career as well," the coach said. A Tennessee Sports Writers All-State honoree as a sophomore, "He's an incredible attacking threat."

Repeat honors last year as a junior were thwarted due to a

back injury. "... He's one of the fastest guys I think I've ever seen. ... I think he's a Division I (college capable) player."

Junior midfielder Warren Hurst, who "played a lot of minutes for us last year," has recovered from a broken leg suffered last fall, Ziegler said. "He's a warrior, and he's going to be an important component

for us this year."

Junior forward Roman Nasser "played a lot of minutes in the second half of the season for us last year," the coach said. "We've played him at striker, and also played him at wing."

Sophomore Greyson Webb "will probably be in the starting line-up at times," Ziegler said. "He can play in the mid-

field, we've played him at striker some and we've played him on the wing. ... He's really technically gifted."

Senior Axel Mnzava, left fullback, "saw a lot of minutes at defensive midfield last year," the coach said. "He did great in that spot for us last year; but he's been really good for us on the back line in four pre-

season games."

Senior Carter Prince, a first-year starter at center-fullback, "started playing significant minutes" in 2022," Ziegler said. "... I'm really happy with Carter."

## Biggest strength

"We seem really tight knit," the coach said. "I think the guys really enjoy being around one another."



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# KNOXVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Despite having a roster filled with high school soccer players practically new to the sport, Knoxville Christian School's boys team still managed four wins in eight games during the program's inaugural season in 2022.

Many of those players return, and should be better with an added year of experience.

"This is the second year of the program, and we're definitely going in the right direction," Knights head coach Ivansky Rosario said. "They've definitely shown a lot of grit ... way more than we had last year."

However, "Most of them have barely any experience playing," the coach added. "This is their second or third year of playing."

"But they've shown a desire to grow."

## Top players

Among many returning starters is junior Conner Wallman, the team's left striker

who led the Knights in goals scored last season.

On the opposite side looking to fill the nets is Ryan Haeblerli, right striker (forward) who also was near the top in goals scored.

Also returning to the fold is sophomore Parker La Valle Rivera, a left midfielder/left winger who also knocked home key goals last season. "Keep an eye on Parker," Rosario said.

Jacob Young, also a junior, looks to add scoring punch at forward.

Adding still more experience to the line-up is center-back/defensive midfielder Kiran Varma, a senior.

Zunze Hong, a sophomore, is a key right midfielder/de-

fensive midfielder. Caleb Hamman, a junior, returns as the KCS goalkeeper.

Nicolas Lopez, a sophomore transfer from Madrid, Spain, could be a key cog as a defensive midfielder. "He is a workhorse for sure," Rosario said.

Two more Knights to watch among the younger players, the coach said, are Brady Perkins and Bo Griffin.

## Bigger schedule

Adding seven more matches to its regular season schedule in 2023 allows the Knights to gain even more game-time experience. In addition, KCS will travel to Dayton (Rhea County) for the annual National Association of Christian Athletes tournament May 9-12.

## Biggest team strength

"I'd say our resilience and our ability to look at ourselves and know what we have to do to push forward," Rosario said about the biggest team strengths.



Rosario

## KCS

3/28	4:00	@ JFW
4/3	4:30	JFW
4/6	5:30	@ Clayton Bradley
4/10	5:30	Ambassadors
4/14	4:30	JFW
4/18	5:30	@ Lakeway Christian
4/21	1:00	@ Berean
5/1	7:00	@ Karns
5/4	5:30	Ambassadors
5/9-5/12	TBA	@ NACA Tournament

## ROSTER

Caleb Hamman	Conner Wallman
Jacob Young	Evan Swanson
Ryan Haeblerli	Elizabeth Aturinda
Nicolas Lopez	Eli Vaughan
Evan Smith	Zunze Hong
Parker La Valle Rivera	Bo Griffin
Tristan Cody	Brady Perkins
Kiran Varma	Katie Barnes

## Bearden

From page 11C

talented, midfield adjusts in an area hit hard by graduation.

"We lost about four seniors in our midfield last year," said BHS head coach Ryan Radcliffe, whose team is coming off a 21-2-3 season in 2022.

Those graduation losses weren't just physical in nature.

"I think the biggest difference you're going to see this year is, we had a lot of big voices last year in our senior class — a lot of leadership and vocal presence," Radcliffe said. "That's going to be the biggest thing for us to find this year, are those vocal people. Find some leadership amongst the talent."

"I think talent-wise, we compare to last year — maybe even have a little bit more talent this year," the coach added. "But talent alone doesn't win you a championship."

Specifically, Radcliffe said he is looking for "some people in there, especially some seniors, who can step up and take on some leadership roles for us."

## Proven talent

When analyzing overall talent, a good place to start with the SoccerDawgs is senior All-American/two-time All-state forward Lucas Nordin, named Tennessee Player of the Year last season.

He scored 38 goals in 2022, and has "right around 60" for his career — having lost most of his freshman season in 2020 due to COVID cancellations.

"In all honesty, he looks faster and stronger than he's been in the past," Radcliffe said. Although saying Nordin "is not the most vocal" in terms of leadership style, the coach added, "He's definitely somebody that we're going to lean on in terms of production on the field."

In fact, "He just seems to be on a different level now."

Also up top is fellow senior Ethan Ford. A third-year starter, "he's a multi-sport athlete, strong and fast and physical," Radcliffe said. "We rely on him to score goals."

Junior forward Dillon Sims "played varsity for us as a freshman, then went to Nashville for his sophomore year, and now is back," the coach said. "He's definitely one we're going to rely on to help score some goals and (add) assists up top."

"I think our attack and our front line is going to be special to watch and fun to watch," he added.

Jack Raulston, a junior, will look to lead among a midfield with many new faces. "He's played a lot, both as a freshman and as a sophomore," Radcliffe said. "He looks good," he's grown; and has taken some big steps forward. Another player

who we hope can step in and score some goals for us."

Defensively, senior Cole Hutchison "is a two-year starter for us in the back line," the coach said. "Again, somebody we'll rely on a lot, hopefully giving us some experience and some leadership."

Junior Shepard McMurray is a returning defensive starter "who has experience back there," Radcliffe said.

Sophomore goalkeeper Logan Nelson "started for us as a freshman," the coach said. "Hopefully he'll be able to take a new step forward for us."

## Emerging talent

Among new starters and players looking to see lots of playing time include sophomore Cole Stopka, "somebody in the back who's really had a good pre-season," Radcliffe said. "A big kid."

Junior Nicolas Prins "is a very talented kid who's going

to step into our back line," the coach said. "He had a phenomenal scrimmage (recently)."

In his first season as a SoccerDawg, senior Hayden Tate is a forward "who may score a lot of goals for us this year," Radcliffe said.

Senior forward Harrison Schwall "will get a lot of minutes up top."

"We definitely have a fair amount of forward depth that hopefully can help us score a lot of goals and take a lot of pressure off of Lucas as well," the coach added.

Looking to fortify the midfield is senior Eric Freudenber. "He's looked good. He'll probably play a big role," Radcliffe said.

Senior Hamid Djouadi looks to contribute as either a midfielder or forward. "He will be a bigger piece to our puzzle this year, too," the coach said.

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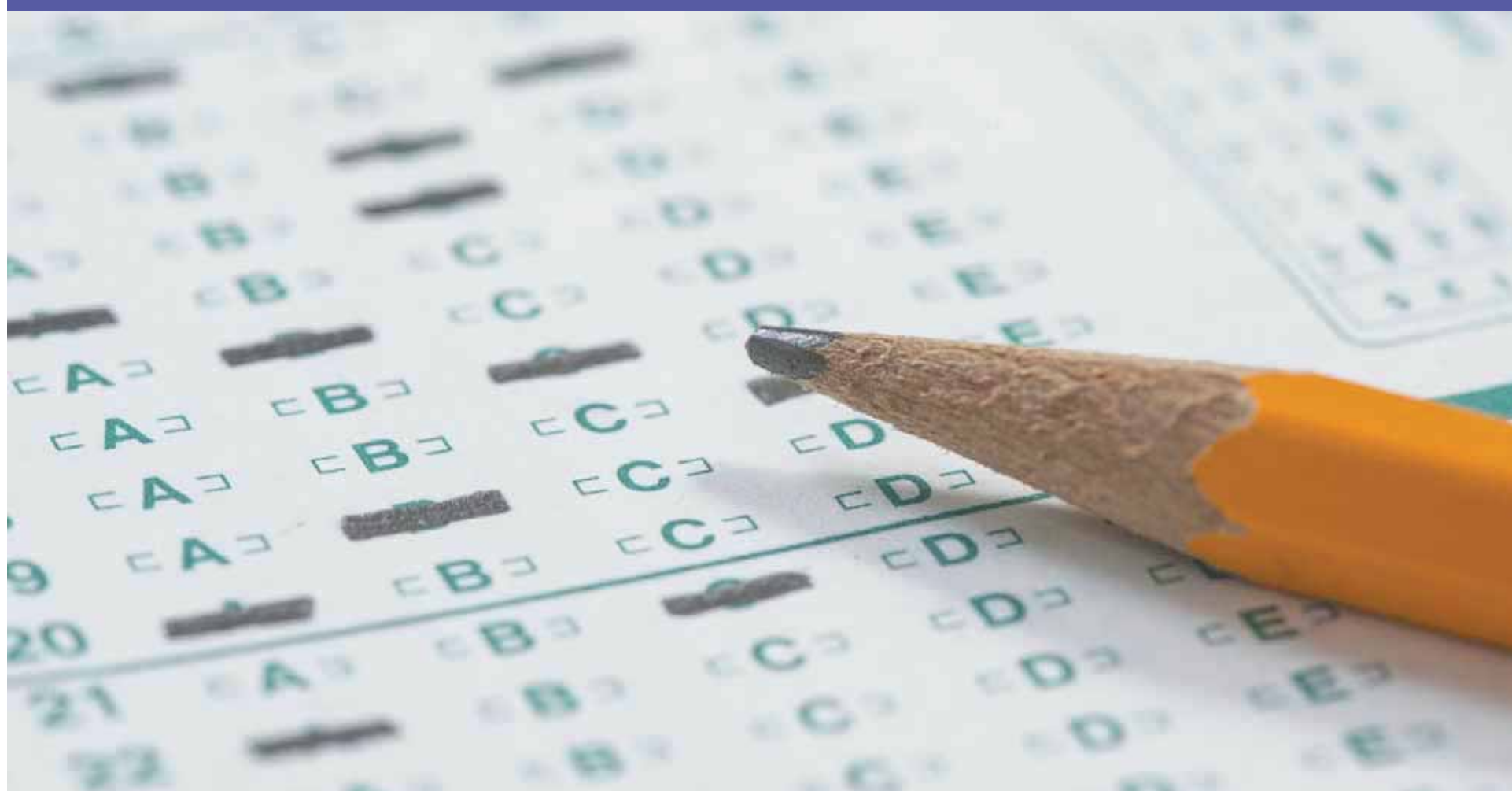
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