

BASEBALL PREVIEW

Stories by Alan Sloan, Ken Lay and Bill Howard:
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FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL ADMIRALS

The question of whether it will be “reload or rebuild” with the super-successful Farragut High School baseball program, in 2025, has yet to be answered, of course.

However, program history dating all the way back to the late 1990s is encouraging when trying to rebound from the loss of a strong senior class from the year before.

Coming off a third consecutive Class 4A state championship led by a senior class said to be one of the best, perhaps, in TSSAA history, the Ads are now extremely young.

“I think we’re a team that, as far as the high school level is concerned, doesn’t have a ton of experience,” said new Admirals skipper Garrett Copeland, moving up after being a long-time assistant to former boss Matt Buckner.

However, “It’s guys that have played a lot of baseball,” the coach added. “Honestly, it’s a relatively new lineup; it’ll be a bunch of different faces that people aren’t used to seeing.”

About handling the pressure associated with Farragut baseball success, “I think for us and I think for our team, we have guys that want to be good,” Copeland said. “I don’t know that we feel a lot outside

See FHS BASEBALL on Page 4C



Farragut baseball seniors Jackson Zeller, left, and Cole Draper with new Admirals skipper Garrett Copeland.

ROSTER

1	Braxton Tye	So	13	Jackson Zeller	Sr	28	TJ Renker	So
2	Benny Miller	Sr	14	Braden Humphrey	Sr	29	Connell Driver	Sr
3	Eli Tittle	Jr	16	Nash Spurgeon	Sr	30	Cole Draper	Sr
4	Sam Bobich	Sr	17	Joey Ray	So	31	Corey Cole	So
6	Braiden Meredith	So	18	Owen Stelzer	Sr	32	Patrick Kovacs	Jr
7	Reid Thomason	Sr	19	Will Dickens	Jr	33	Jake Harris	Jr
8	Aidan Flagg	Jr	20	Brayden Alexander	Sr	34	Brodie Roberts	Sr
9	Zain Kureshi-Smith	Jr	23	Will Dodson	Sr	36	Tobias Peterson	Sr
10	Bradley Wade	Jr	22	Travis Brummitt Jr.	Jr	38	Cole Creasman	Fr
11	Brody Watkins	Jr	24	Landon Searles	Sr	50	Cash Shroeder	So
12	Matthew Johnston	Jr	26	Neyland Williams	Jr			

Alan Sloan

Farragut

3/3	Knoxville Catholic High School	Home
3/5	Knox West High School *	Home
3/7	Cherokee High School	Home
3/8	McCallie School	Home
3/8	Science Hill High School	Home
3/10	Lebanon High School	Home
3/11	Grace Christian Academy	Away
3/13	Hardin Valley Academy *	Away
3/17	Buchholz (PBC)	Home
3/18	Oakleaf (PBC)	Home
3/19	Mosely (PBC)	Home
3/20	Lincoln (PBC)	Home
3/26	Bearden High School *	Away
3/27	Lincoln Co. High (tourney)	Home
3/28	Vestavia (tourney)	Home
3/28	Mountain Brook (tourney)	Home
3/29	Heuytown (tourney)	Home
3/31	Maryville High School *	Home
4/2	William Blount High School *	Away
4/4	Dobyns-Bennett High School	Home
4/7	Hardin Valley Academy *	Home
4/9	West High School *	Away
4/10	Bowling Green, KY	Home
4/12	McCallie School (doubleheader)	Away
4/14	Bearden High School *	Home
4/15	Maryville High School *	Away
4/16	Toledo Catholic	Home
4/17	Toledo Catholic	Home
4/19	Lipscomb Academy	Away
4/19	Rossvie High School	Away
4/23	William Blount High School *	Home
4/24	Pigeon Forge High (Throwback)	Home
4/25	Baylor School	Away

* Denotes Division I District 4-4A games

HARDIN VALLEY ACADEMY HAWKS

Confident in his pitching staff, new Hardin Valley Academy baseball head coach Aaron Simmons also emphasizes the Hawks’ “versatility” for 2025.

Adding to that versatility, yet having a solid hold on their main positions, are a handful of HVA seniors who, having tasted major program success as sophomores in 2023, helped Hardin Valley finish as Division I-4A state runner-up.

Those Hawks also defeated state power Farragut three times out of five that season.

Pitching

About his pitchers, Simmons said, “I think we got some guys that can go out and shut out; some of the best of the best. I think we’re going to be great on the bump.”

While Hardin Valley eventually “will have somebody that’s off, we can put somebody right back in there that’s going to be on, and they won’t be able to hit them,” he said.

Defense/infield

About being solid defensively, senior second baseman Jaxon Jones said, “Pressure’s always there. I mean, it’s go out there, do your job and try your best not to make errors. I think we have a solid infield this year.

In fact, “We’re shaping up; we’ve got players who can play any position,” the senior



Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Wiggs/Jeremy Wiggs Photography

ROSTER

4	Tyler Wright	Sr	19	Matt Champion	Sr	10	Cameron Dillon	Jr	2	Ben Wright	Jr
1	Isaac Worley	Sr	12	Caiden Mitchell	Sr	21	Wyatt Fellers	Jr	18	Mason Shelton	So
8	Braden Wyatt	Sr	15	Neels Schoonbee	Sr	28	Nathan Emard	Jr	7	Caleb Van Lant	So
6	Boone Fields	Sr	26	Aiden Murphy	Sr	5	Jack Pate	Jr	25	Bryson Loveland	So
23	Colton Denton	Sr	16	Andrew Lewis	Sr	20	Tyler Sowards	Jr		Levi Thomas	So
13	Jaxon Jones	Sr	22	Carson Lane	Jr	14	William Blair	Jr			
			11	Jax Sparks	Jr	17	Camden Huckaby	Jr			

added. “Probably one of our best defenses, and I’ve been in this program in a while, so it’s looking great.”

“The depth of what we have

this year is tremendous,” Simmons said, also pointing out the Hawks’ versatility.

“I mean, day in, day out, each position could change,”

he added. “We have so many players that can play so many different positions at certain times. It’s going to be a wild variety of different places de-

pending on the opponent that day.

“Obviously, we’ve got some

See HAWKS BASEBALL on Page 4C

Hardin Valley

3/4	Boyd Buchanan	Home
3/7	The Kings Academy	Away
3/8	Webb School	Home
3/10	Grace Christian	Away
3/11	Kingston	Home
3/13	Farragut *	Home
3/14	Knox Central	Away
3/17	Lincoln Christian Gulf Shores (AL)	Away
3/18	Spanish Fort (AL)	Away
3/19	Rattan (OK)	Away
3/19	Baylor School	Away
3/24	William Blount *	Away
3/26	Maryville *	Away
3/27	Central (KCHS Tourney, 3 games)	Away
3/27	Grace Christian Catholic	Away
3/28	Providence	Away
3/31	Jefferson County (Alumni Night)	Home
4/2	Bearden *	Home
	ETBCA Tourney: three games April 3-5	
4/3	Collins (KY)	Home
4/4	Mercer County (KY)	Home
4/5	Red Bank	Home
4/7	Farragut *	Away
4/9	William Blount *	Home
4/10	Oak Ridge	Away
4/14	Maryville *	Home
4/16	West *	Home
4/18	Lenoir City (Senior Night)	Home
4/21	Bearden *	Away
4/23	West *	Away
4/24	McMinn Co.	Home
4/25	Oak Ridge	Home

* Denotes Division I District 4-4A games

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BEARDEN HIGH SCHOOL BULLDOGS

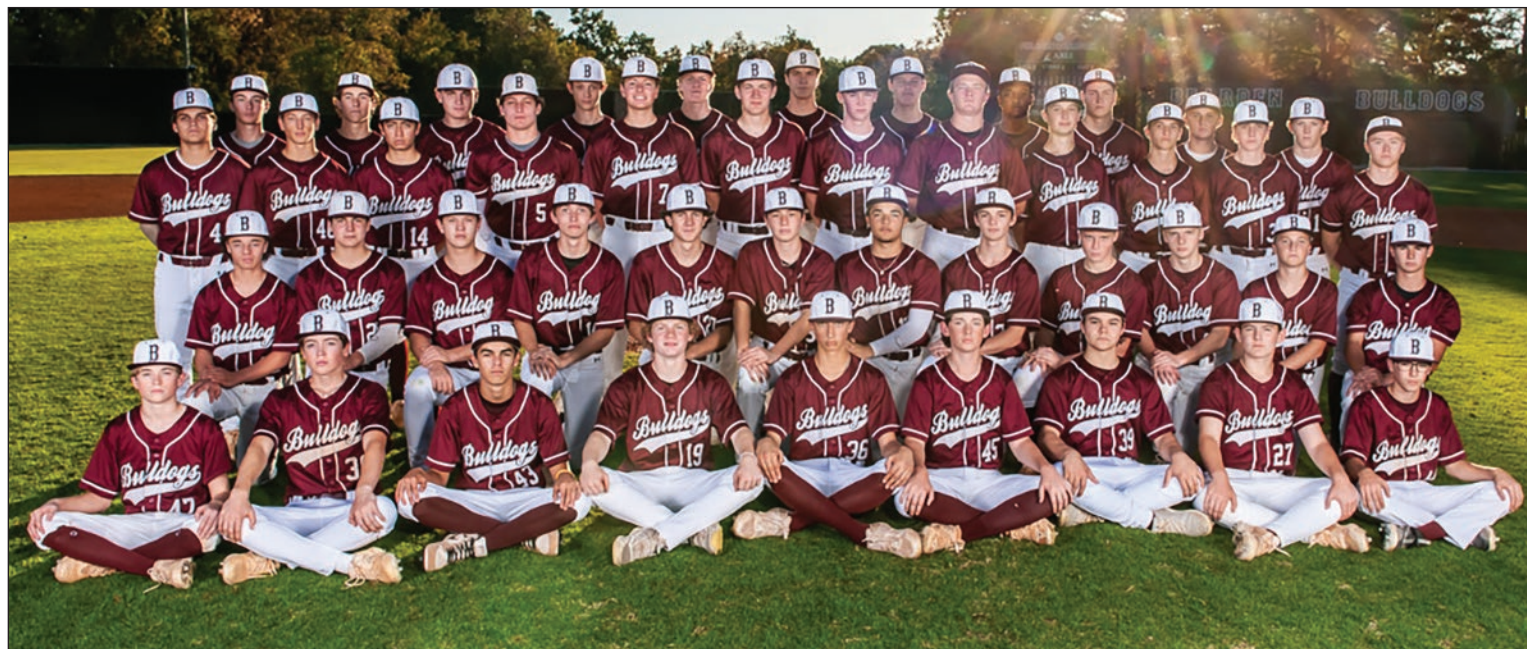


Photo courtesy of Tammy Kreger

Bearden

3/5	Knoxville Central	Away
3/7	McCallie	.....	Away
3/10	Loudon	.....	Home
3/11	The King's Academy	.....	Home
3/12	Lenoir City	.....	Home
3/13	Elizabethton	.....	Away
3/14	Morristown West	.....	Away
3/15	Murfreesboro Central Magnet	.....	Home
3/15	Hixson	.....	Home
3/19	West	.....	Away
3/20	Science Hill	.....	Home
3/21	Jefferson County	.....	Away
3/24	Maryville	.....	Away
3/26	Farragut	.....	Home
3/27	Lakeway Christian	.....	Home
3/28	Macon County	.....	Home
3/28	Abingdon, VA	.....	Home
3/29	Howland, Ohio	.....	Home
3/31	William Blount	.....	Home
4/2	HVA	.....	Away
4/4	Knoxville Catholic	.....	Away
4/5	Mercer County, KY	.....	Home
4/5	Daniel Boone	.....	Home
4/7	West	.....	Home
4/9	Maryville	.....	Home
4/10	Grace Christian	.....	Away
4/11	CAK	.....	Home
4/12	Morristown West	.....	Home
4/14	Farragut	.....	Away
4/16	William Blount	.....	Away
4/17	Karns	.....	Home
4/19	Grace Christian	.....	Home
4/21	HVA	.....	Home
4/22	Central	.....	Home
4/24	Gibbs (Throwback at FHS)	.....	Away
4/26	Stone Memorial	.....	Away

• Denotes Division I District 4-4A games

It's high school baseball time again. Most of the area's top teams will open their respective 2025 seasons this week.

Bearden High School opened its new campaign Wednesday when it played Knoxville Central at Tommy Schumpert Park.

The Bulldogs entered the 2025 season with some lofty expectations.

Bearden returns several key players from the 2024 squad, which went 21-14 and reached the semifinals of the District 4-4A Tournament.

The 2025 campaign will be Dave Prichard's fourth as the Bulldogs' head coach, and he's no stranger to the rigors of a District 4-4A schedule as the league is home to some of Tennessee's top baseball teams, including three-time defending Class 4A state champion Farragut, region tournament quali-

2	Sammy Greene	Sr
3	Bobby Powell	Jr
4	Logan Benko	Sr
5	Jack Fennell	Jr
6	Evan Cope	Sr
8	Hunter Harris	Jr
9	Cameron Cooper	Sr

fier Maryville, Hardin Valley Academy, William Blount, the Bulldogs and Knoxville West High School.

Pritchard said he knows his team will face some stiff district competition, but that's why he came to Bearden to coach the Bulldogs.

"You know that this district is one of the toughest in the state," he said. "You know Farragut is always going to be good."

"You know Hardin Valley is going to be good and you know

ROSTER

10	Matt Schroeffel	Jr
11	Connor Sipe	Sr
12	Isaiah Whited	Sr
13	Cole Wilhoite	Jr
14	Cristian Baker	Jr
16	Tyler Parks	Sr
21	Fenn Piper	Jr
22	Charlie Loftin	Jr
23	Grayson Wright	Jr
28	Ian McLeod	Jr
31	Gavin Bergeron	Jr
32	Walter Pankau	Jr
35	Colby Johson	Jr
46	Tyler Cline	Jr

Maryville is going to be good.

"And that's absolutely come here to a place like this. You come here because you know that you're going to play against the best teams."

As for 2025, "This could be the best team that I've had at Bearden," Prichard said. "This is the best pitching staff that I've had here and our defense is going to be solid."

"We've challenged our pitchers to throw strikes," he added. "If we throw strikes and play defense, we should do well. If

we don't throw strikes and we walk a lot of people, we could be in trouble. Our pitching and our defense should be our strengths."

Last season, the Bulldogs fell victim to offensive inconsistency and that's something BHS and Prichard are hoping to avoid in 2025. Bearden played in some close games in 2024, but came up on the losing end as it couldn't get the key hit in some clutch situations.

"I think the whole key to our season is going to be how con-

sistent we can be offensively," Prichard said. "Last year, we were inconsistent offensively. We were just hot and cold. We can't be hot and cold this year."

Bearden has a wealth of returning talent this season.

The Bulldogs' top returners include: Logan Benko (senior, infielder); Evan Cope (senior, pitcher/outfielder); Isaiah Whited (senior, outfielder/pitcher); Cameron Cooper (a senior who will play center

See BHS BASEBALL on Page 4C

CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF KNOXVILLE WARRIORS



CAK

3/3	Cocke Co	.....	Away
3/4	South Doyle	.....	Away
3/7	William Blount	.....	Home
3/8	Alcoa	.....	Away
3/10	Concord Christian	.....	Home
3/11	Concord Christian	.....	Away
3/12	Morristown East	.....	Home
3/13	Lenoir City	.....	Home
3/14	Onieda	.....	Away
3/17	Rockledge	.....	Tournament
3/18	Cottontdale	.....	Tournament
3/19	Ridgeview	.....	Tournament
3/20	Rheobeth	.....	Tournament
3/24	Providence (DH)	.....	Away
3/26	Coalfield	.....	Home
3/27	Riverside, WV	.....	Home
3/28	Loudon	.....	Home
3/29	Howland, Ohio	.....	Home
3/31	Grace Christian	.....	Away
4/1	Grace Christian	.....	Home
4/3-5	Etba Tournament	.....	TBA
4/3	Mercer Co, KY	.....	Home
4/4	Eagleville	.....	Home
4/5	MTCS	.....	Home
	Lenoir City	.....	Home
4/7	The Kings Academy	.....	Home
4/8	The Kings Academy	.....	Away
4-10	Frankfort, KY	.....	Home
4/11	Bearden	.....	Away
4/12	Silverdale	.....	Away
4/14	Lakeway Christian	.....	Home
4/15	Lakeway Christian	.....	Away
4/18	Davidson	.....	Away

• Denotes Division II-A East Region District games

Even greatness has dry spells where they don't "go all the way."

Just ask all-time great former NFL head coach Bill Belichick and retired all-time great quarterback Tom Brady. The big two built an NFL dynasty in New England netting six Super Bowl championships — yet they went nine straight seasons without an NFL title.

Now change the scope to Tennessee high school baseball coaching greatness, and Tommy Pharr can relate to so-called dry spells — which in his world still is maintaining excellence, but falling just short of a state title during the past four seasons.

Now well into his 16th campaign leading CAK baseball, Pharr is looking for his fifth Warriors state crown — to go with 2014 and a threepeat from 2017 through 2019 — and 10th overall, having captured five in just 12 years as Admirals skipper at Farragut (1998 through 2009). That doesn't even count four times finishing as state runner-up.

Pitching strength

Pitching appears to be CAK's biggest asset for 2025.

"We've got a good group, and I think our top-end guys will give us a chance," he said. "Obviously, we've still got a long way to go. Then we got some other guys that we hope will develop as the year moves on and give us a chance. ... I'm hoping that that'll be a strength of our

Tyler Bennett	Sr
Micah Bennett	Jr
Elijah Burress	So
Briggs Allen	Fr
Jackson Biles	Sr
Joey Sulish	Jr
Alex Cox	So
Reid Damron	Fr
Hayden Hayes	Sr
Alex Trimble	Jr
Trece Holbert	So

program."

Pharr listed senior pitchers Tyler Bennett, a Tennessee Tech signee, Parker Jones and Blake Jarrard. "Then we've got a couple of other seniors that will pitch for us: Will Wright and Jackson Biles.

"Then two of our other guys that we're going to be depending on a lot are juniors who are probably going to pitch a lot for us; they are Joey Sulish and Brody Waller," he added. Sulish has committed to Tennessee Tech.

Among that talented group entering the season, "probably our top four guys are Bennett, Soulsh, Jones and Waller," the coach said.

The new starting catcher will be Biles. "He's done a good job defensively for us in all our scrimmages," Pharr said. "He caught some for us last year and played in the field some, so it's not like he's brand new. Sophomore Will Kingery is the backstop back-up.

ROSTER

Jackson Harden	Fr	Chip Shelton	Sr
Blake Jarrard	Sr	Seaton Moffett	Fr
Brody Waller	Jr	Will Wright	Sr
Will Kingery	So	Beckett Rich	Fr
Henley Hayes	Fr	Jon Yeager	Sr
Parker Jones	Sr	Buck Ross	Fr
Bayden Walsh	So	James Sharpe	Fr
Carter Johnson	Fr	JT Slack	Fr
Tyler McCormick	Sr	Ian Wright	Fr
Ethan Wynkoop	So	Marvin Wyrosdick	Fr
Wyatt Jones	Fr		

When not pitching, Waller returns to be the man starting at first base. "A really good defensive first baseman; he has to be a really good hitter for us to keep on getting better," the coach said.

At second base, "We got a little bit of a battle going on," Pharr said, as freshman Seaton Moffett "is a really good athlete; he's got a chance to be good going forward."

Also in the mix, "We've got a senior, Hayden Hayes. ... We've just been alternating them a lot," the coach added.

Bennett should have the job at third base, as a returning starter, when not pitching. Senior Jon Yeager "will get some time there and get some time (as designated hitter), probably," Pharr said.

Yet another top Warriors pitcher who will play a key infield position is Sulish, starting at shortstop, transitioning from being a starting outfielder in 2024.

"When he pitches, it'll either be Tyler Bennett or Moffet, one of those guys will flip over to there," the coach said.

Outfield

In center field, "We've got Wyatt Jones, who's a freshman; I think he's got a chance to be really good," Pharr said.

Senior Chip Shelton should be the starting right fielder, while Will Wright is slated to start in left field.

Also in the outfield mix, according to Pharr, are junior Alex Trimble, sophomore Alex Cox, junior Micah Bennett and senior Tyler McCormick.

Overall, "We're still trying to figure things out in a lot of ways," the coach said.

"I feel like we got a chance to have a solid defensive club," Pharr added.

Another strength

"I think we've got some fairly good athletes, so I think we're hopefully going to be a little more athletic," the coach said.

Concerns, hitting duo

Though the legendary coach expressed some concern about his offense, he singled out Bennett and Sulish. "Both of those guys are good hitters, good players," Pharr said.

Otherwise, "We lost some guys that were good hitters for us last year, and just replacing them is key," the coach added. "We've got a lot of guys who are not proven."

Round of 12 in 2024

Last season, "We made it to the round of 12" before being eliminated in the playoffs, Pharr said. "I guess that'd be like the substate round in the public school (Division I).

Final thoughts

"I just like our guys, they're a lot of fun to be around," the coach said. "They work really hard; they put in a lot of time, effort. We've got quality young men, and that's the biggest thing anyhow."

By Alan Sloan

WEBB SCHOOL OF KNOXVILLE SPARTANS



Photo submitted by Webb School of Knoxville

Webb

3/3	Lakeway Christian Academy	.....Away
3/6	The King's Academy	.....Home
3/7	East Robertson High School	.....Away
3/8	Hardin Valley Academy	.....Away
3/10	Baylor School * (DH)	.....Away
3/11	Baylor School *	.....Home
3/14	Concord Christian School	.....Home
3/26	McEwen High School	.....Home
3/27	William Blount High School	.....Away
3/29	Concord Christian School *	.....Away
3/31	Chattanooga Christian (DH) *	.....Home
4/1	Chattanooga Christian *	.....Away
4/5	Friendship Christian School	.....Home
4/10	Lakeway Christian Academy	.....Home
4/11	Maryville High School	.....Away
4/14	Knoxville Cholic High School *	.....Home
4/15	Knoxville Cholic High School *	.....Away
4/16	Knoxville Cholic High School *	.....Home
4/19	Sweetwater High School	.....Away
4/21	McCallie School * (DH)	.....Away
4/22	McCallie School *	.....Home
4/24	Union Co. High School	.....Home

* Denotes Division II-AA East Region District games

As the 2025 high school baseball season looms, Webb School of Knoxville is hoping to rebound from a disappointing campaign last year.

But head coach Jordan Wormsley, who opens his 14th season with the Spartans, knows things will be anything but easy as his team contends with life in one of the state's toughest regions.

Webb is in the East Region of Division II-AA, which features the likes of Baylor, McCallie, Chattanooga Christian School and Knoxville Catholic.

Despite facing the rigors of a 2025 campaign, Wormsley said he is looking forward to the upcoming campaign.

"We have a lot to figure out, but we're going to go out there and give it a go," Wormsley said. "I love coaching these guys."

"We have a lot to determine but we also have a lot of potential and we have the potential to surprise some people," he added. "I don't think we're the team that people are going to look at us as a team that they're really going to look to surprise some people."

Thought the Spartans went 8-17 last season, they have a bevy of experienced returners back.

Top returners include: Ash-

er Harness (a senior who will play both corner infield positions and pitch. He was All-Region Honorable Mention last year.); Colten Collier (a junior outfielder and pitcher who can play both right field and center field); Wilson Luton (a junior pitcher and middle infielder who will look to be a contributor in the heart of the Spartans' lineup); and Hunter Rayson (a junior left-handed pitcher who threw a large number of innings in 2024).

Wormsley said he's expecting Rayson to fill multiple roles on the mound for Webb.

"Hunter's a left-handed pitcher who pitched a large number of innings last year," Wormsley said. "He pitched a ton of innings in relief last season. He'll be a key guy out of the bullpen and he could be part of our (starting) rotation."

The Spartans have a number of newcomers looking to make an impact in 2025 as well as other players who have been in the program who are looking to play an expanded role and make significant contributions in 2025.

"We have some newcomers who have potential to make a big impact for us early," Wormsley said.

Those players include: Ethan Walls (junior, pitcher/infield-

ROSTER

1	Wilson Luton	Jr	15	Brayden Rivers	So
2	Hunter Rayson	Jr	16	Blake Shelor	Jr
3	Grayson Gregory	Jr	17	Asher Harness	Sr
4	Parks Lederer	Fr	18	Andrew Pruett	So
5	Colten Collier	Jr	19	Hudson Woods	So
6	Ben Lupo	Fr	20	Emmett Melton	Sr
7	Hamilton Martin	Jr	21	Cooper Lyvers	8th
8	Ethan Walls	Jr	22	Cullen Heck	Fr
9	Jackson White	Sr	23	Brady Morgan	Jr
10	Liam Justice	Jr	26	Quinn Saunders	Fr
11	Beckett Rivers	Fr	27	Evan Rivera	8th
13	Jackson Dye	Fr	29	Mcafee Sprouse	8th
14	Turner Stevens	So	30	Tyler Morgan	Fr

er); Grayson Gregory (junior catcher/outfielder/infielder); Liam Justice (junior catcher/infielder); Brady Morgan (a junior utility player who will swing a key left-handed bat for Webb); Braden Rivers (a sophomore outfielder who transferred from Kingston and will be eligible in April); Beckett Rivers (a freshman outfielder who's Braden's brother); Hamilton Martin (a junior outfielder, who has been in the program but will play a bigger role this season); Parks Lederer (freshman, first baseman, outfielder/designated hitter); Blake Shelor (junior, pitcher); Jackson White (senior, infielder) and Emmett Melton (senior, first baseman).

The team's key strength, according to Wormsley, is a solid work ethic.

"This is a group that's coming together and they have a good work ethic, and that's a key for us," he said. "They've played together in the summer and they've been together a long time and they're familiar with the game."

Collier agreed. "We have some younger guys and we're still figuring things out," he said. "But we have a good baseball IQ and we've played a lot in the summer together."

"Being familiar with the game helps our younger guys know how they're going to have to step up," the junior added. "We're going to have to be a

scrappy team and we're going to have to go out there and do what we have to do to win and get it done."

Team chemistry has increased for the Spartans, according to Harness.

"I feel like we have more chemistry this season, and that's not really something that we've had in the past," Harness said. "I look forward to developing relationships and being a better leader for our younger guys. I want to be a role model for our freshmen, our sophomores and our juniors."

The Spartans opened the season at Lakeway Christian School Monday, March 3.

By Ken Lay

KNOXVILLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL IRISH

Two years ago, Knoxville Catholic High School's baseball team won a state championship. Last year, the Irish fell one game short of returning to the state tournament.

Entering his 10th season as the Irish skipper, Caleb Moore is confident heading into this year's campaign. Last year's graduation losses, however, will present challenges.

"We're looking at a lot of new faces, maybe guys who haven't had the opportunity to play much previously," Moore said. "We lost key positions, but I think these guys are coming along pretty well."

Senior Hutson Oakes returns as a starter at first base. "He's a good stick. Can drive the gap; really came on strong last year at the end," the coach said.

Senior Nick Turner will likely play second base, but the position also will be by committee. "I'm looking for Nick to have a strong season for us," Moore said. "But middle infield is likely to be a rotating thing."

Sophomore DJ Lowery played various positions last year, but finished the season at shortstop, where he'll start this year. "Athletic," the coach said. "Gonna be a huge piece of the puzzle."

Moore's third baseman, senior Alex Ditmore, returns to the position. "Good bat," he said. "Very consistent, good pitch selection, line-drive style hitter. He has the highest returning average."

"I would say one of my biggest goals is hitting over .350," Ditmore said. "Last year, I was around .330, so just getting over .350 would be a big goal for me."

Senior Jameson Hussey likely will start behind the plate for Moore, where he had some starts last year. "Catcher is a position where we want them to take a leadership role. Jameson's working hard at that and



Alan Sloan

Knoxville Catholic baseball seniors Alex Ditmore, left, and Cooper Williamson with Irish head coach Caleb Moore

Catholic

3/3	Farragut High School	.....Away
3/7	Powell High School	.....Home
3/8	Grace Christian Academy	.....Home
3/10	Chattanooga Christian *	.....Home
3/13	Concord Christian School	.....Home
3/24	McCallie School *	.....Away
3/25	McCallie School * (DH)	.....Home
3/29	Providence Academy	.....Home
4/4	Bearden High School	.....Home
4/7	Baylor School * (DH)	.....Home
4/8	Baylor School *	.....Away
4/11	West High School	.....Home
4/12	Concord Christian School	.....Away
4/14	Webb School of Knoxville *	.....Away
4/15	Webb School of Knoxville *	.....Home
4/16	Webb School of Knoxville *	.....Away
4/21	Lakeway Christian Academy	.....Home

* Denotes Division II-AA East Region District games

ROSTER

0	Eli Dryjanski	Fr	12	Cooper Ackermann	Jr
1	DJ Lowery	So	13	Jamie Bentley	Jr
2	JB Moore	So	14	Hutson Oakes	Sr
3	Cole Scraggs	So	15	Logan Tompkins	So
4	Alex Ditmore	Sr	16	Davis Pitman	Fr
5	Nick Turner	Sr	17	Charlie Chady	Jr
6	Caiden Layman	Fr	19	Alex Ferguson	So
7	Cooper Williamson	Sr	20	Manny Maurer	Sr
8	Declan Brickner	So	21	Edward Brabham	Fr
9	Jameson Hussey	Sr	23	Emilio Maurer	Fr
10	Luke Brown	Fr	24	Kemp Avans	Jr
11	Tyler Slatas	Sr	25	Harrison Vieira	Sr

Among the team strengths according to Williamson, "we just have a great bond," he said. "We're always getting food after practice, and we're just a really tight-knit team."

Any number of players will man right field for Moore this year, the coach said. Junior Kemp Avans, senior Nate O'Donnell and sophomores JB Moore and Cole Scraggs all could see time at the position.

"They're all talented," Moore said. "Just trying to figure out what's best."

Players in prep baseball commonly pitch as well as play in

the field. Williamson likely will lead the pitching staff when he's not in center. He went 6-2 in 2024, had 68 strikeouts and an ERA around 3.2.

"He knows how to pitch, has a good feel for some offspeed pitches," Moore said.

Senior lefty Manny Maurer is another likely starter. "He's thrown extremely well so far this year," the coach said. "He has experience ... looking for him to take the next step."

Oates, another lefthander, and righthander Turner fill out the starting rotation.

"Turner has thrown the ball

phenomenally in the fall and this spring," Moore said. "He's got some good stuff ... looking for big innings from him."

Moore has senior righthander Ty Slatas and junior righty Lex Lucier to come out of the bullpen. "It's an uphill battle, but our kids embrace that," Moore said. "They wanna prove to everyone they belong."

"We might take some lumps, but it's gonna be exciting to watch. I think this group has a good mentality ... we might shock some people," he added.

By Bill Howard

FHS baseball

From page 1C

pressure. I think we have more internal pressure.

"I'll be honest, that group that graduated last year, they were a phenomenal group," he added, but quickly pointed to how the FHS program reloaded after a 42-3 state championship season in 2019 upon losing outstanding talent from the Class of 2020.

The new Admirals skipper said that following four straight Farragut state championships (2008-2011), "They did a good job continuing the legacy after that, and I think this class is trying to do the same.

"Our guys have really worked hard. I think I have no complaints," Copeland added. "These are guys that push themselves. These are guys that hold themselves accountable and want the best for themselves.

"But we'll see what the outcomes are once we start playing."

Pitching ace

The biggest name returning is senior starting pitcher Cole Draper, winning pitcher in each of Farragut's state championship games against rival Hardin Valley in 2023 — shut-out performance as a sophomore — while allowing just one run as a junior starter, helping lead his Ads to a 3-1 state title win versus Nolensville last season.

"Cole is a good senior leader ... will be at the top of the rotation," Copeland said. "... I think Cole can be as good as he wants to be. I don't think there will be a downturn from anything that he's done so far. I expect an uptick and I expect similar results to what we're used to seeing."

However, "There's always something to improve on," the senior said during Media Day Wednesday, Feb. 26, in Dick's

Sporting Goods, West Town Mall. "But I think just at a personal level, I'm just trying to get ahead of hitters and attack them early on. ... I'm just trying to dominate and help lead a team to another state championship."

Other pitchers

Overall among his starting pitchers, "I think it's a good mix," the coach said. "We've got a couple of young guys that I expect to do pretty well, sophomores. We've got some good relievers that will come in.

"You've got Connell Driver (senior) behind (Draper)," Copeland added. "We've got a couple of sophomores that I think have some promise in Braiden Meredith and Corey Cole."

In the bullpen, "... We've got a little bit of experience on the back end — maybe not much — but I think we're pretty good on the back end as well," Copeland said.

"Again, they're young play-

ers," the coach added. "I think they've got some potential, but we'll see if we can turn it into some predicted results.

Team defense

"Defense is something that I think that you can always expect," Copeland said. "I think my expectation of defense is something where you show up every single day. In the high school game, offensive production can come and go, but I think pitching and defense is something that you can hang your hat on, and I don't expect that to be any different this year."

Position-by-position

In the outfield, junior Zain Kureshi-Smith should be the center fielder, with junior Aiden Flag the right fielder.

Battling in left field are juniors Neyland Williams and Eli Tittle. "It'll probably be a little bit of a platoon, but all that's subject to change," Copeland said. "We'll see how it goes. Like I said, it's all new

faces and see what happens once we start rolling."

As for the Ads' infield. "I think we'll be fine; but I think, again, there's a little bit of inexperience there," he said.

"Probably fairly young on the left side. Possibly a freshman starter on the left side at third (Cole Creasman) and a sophomore at shortstop (Braxton Tye)," Copeland added.

"I think we've got a good second baseman (senior Owen Stelzer). He does a good job, and I think he'll be a good leader on the infield and hold those guys together.

"Then first base will be a platoon, as well, between Jackson Zeller (junior), Jake Harris (senior), Nash Spurgeon and maybe another person or two in there."

Catching duties will be split between Zeller and Harris, "both highly capable and qualified catchers," Copeland said.

By Alan Sloan

Hawks baseball

From page 1C

players that held strong on their positions, and we've got Jaxon Jones here at second base.

Senior standout Colton Denton returns and will catch in 2025. "Colton here is going to be a leader," Simmons said.

Sophomore Mason Shelton, or possibly either Denton or junior Jax Sparks, will man first base.

"Shortstop is going to be led by Cameron Dillon," Simmons said. "There's another one, Caleb Van Lant (sophomore), who can play as well. Boone Fields (senior) is another one that can play at any given moment. It's all who's playing right at the right time, depending on the day.

"We've got three or four guys that can play that position depending on the day ... they all can play up the middle," the new boss added. "Again, a wide variety who can play wherever at different times of

the day.

At third base, "You've got Jax Sparks, Caleb Van Lant, Colton Denton can all play the position," Simmons said. "Jaxon Jones could play it if he had to.

"It's just one of those times where we can play anywhere at any given moment," he added.

Outfield

In the outfield, "Each day could be different out there, too," the coach said. "You've got a couple of positions pretty much set, but at the same time we're finishing out our pre-season, trying to determine what we want and how we want to do it. Again, going into it on a day-to-day basis where we want to be.

"We've got a senior, Isaac Worley, who started last year."

Other outfield Hawks looking to secure a starting spot include seniors Neels Schoonbee and Andrew Lewis and junior Tyler Sowards.

"You've got a wild variety of people that can play the position," the new Hawks head

coach said.

Biggest concern, goal

The biggest concern? "Mental aspect, keeping their heads on right in certain positions at certain times of the game," Simmons said. "Just playing 100 per, that's all I can ask out of them."

By Alan Sloan

“Pressure’s always there. I mean, it’s go out there, do your job, try and your best not to make errors. I think we have a solid infield this year,”

— Aaron Simmons
new HVA head coach



Alan Sloan

Hardin Valley Academy baseball seniors Colton Denton, left, and Jaxon Jones, right, with new head coach Aaron Simmons.

BHS baseball

From page 2C

field, pitch and occupy the leadoff spot in the batting order); Sammy Greene (senior, infielder); Jack Fennell (junior, catcher/pitcher); Matt Schroeffel (a junior who will be in the starting rotation and play at both corner infield positions); Connor Sipe (senior, pitcher/infielder); Grayson Wright (junior, infielder/pitcher) and Tyler Cline (a junior outfielder and pitcher who will also split time behind the plate with Fennell).

"We have some good arms and Cameron is our leadoff hitter and he'll be our spark plug," Prichard said. "Logan will be one of our top hitters and Matt was our best hitter last year."

Schroeffel "will primarily play first base," the coach added. "He can play third, but we're moving him to first to save his arm a little bit."

Benko said he's eager to take an expanded leadership role.

"I'm looking forward to competing with these guys in this district ev-

ery day," he said. "We have good team chemistry. I'm looking forward to being a leader and a role model for the younger guys.

"I know what it's like to be a freshman in this league," he added.

In addition to having a strong pitching staff and solid defense, Prichard said the Bulldogs feature good team chemistry.

"I really like the chemistry on this team," he said. "We really don't have any stars; we're just solid in our lineup, one through nine."

Elsewhere, the district has four new head coaches this season as Garrett Copeland takes the reins at Farragut. Rob Stacy takes over at West after a successful tenure at Clinton. Jason Lambert replaces Adam Sullivan at Maryville and Aaron Simmons is now head coach of the Hawks.

Expectations, however, remain high at every school in the league and Stacy looks to reverse the recent fortunes along Sutherland Avenue.

By Ken Lay



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SOFTBALL PREVIEW

Stories by Alan Sloan, editor@farragutpress.com, and Ken Lay

FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL ADMIRALS



Photo courtesy of Mark Mustard

Farragut

3/4	Maryville High School *	Home
3/6	West High School *	Away
3/7-3/8	Megan McCray Tournament	Away
3/11	Hardin Valley Academy *	Home
3/12	Powell High School	Home
3/13	Bearden High School *	Home
3/21-3/22	Wildcat Classic	Away
3/25	West High School *	Home
3/27	Hardin Valley Academy *	Away
3/28	Heritage High School	Away
3/28	Gibbs High School (N)	Away
3/31	Crescent High School (SC)	Home
4/1	Bearden High School *	Away
4/3	William Blount High School *	Away
4/4	Knoxville Central High School	Home
4/8	Maryville High School *	Away
4/9	Alcoa High School	Home
4/10	William Blount High School *	Home
4/14	Christian Academy of Knoxville	Away
4/16	Karns High School	Home
4/17	Grace Christian Academy	Away
4/21	Alcoa High School	Away
4/22	Heritage High School	Home
4/24-4/26	Region II Challenge	Home
4/28	Gibbs High School	Away

*Denotes Division I District 4-4A game

It raises eyebrows when Farragut High School softball doesn't reach the Division I Class 4A State Tournament.

Earning back-to-back state crowns in 2021 and 2022, then making a strong state run in 2023 before falling, Nick Green's 2024 Lady Admirals failed to reach Murfreesboro in late May.

While known for reloading, not rebuilding his team each season, "We don't have a lot of starters back," Green said about his 2025 team. "We graduated six starters from last year's roster. ... So, I have six upperclassmen and 17 underclassmen — we've got 10 sophomores and seven freshmen."

25	Ava Barnes	Sr.
23	Amelia Dorset	Sr.
35	Audrey Ginel	Sr.
22	Elsa Morrison	Sr.
14	Bridget Kovacs	Jr.
3	Alexa Shrader	Jr.
5	Taylor Albright	So.
44	Effy Armstrong	So.

Senior Ava Barnes returns as an experienced starting pitcher. But she's so much more.

"She ended up winning MVP in the district tournament last year because she was hitting the ball so well," the coach said.

ROSTER

20	Hudson Bradford	So.
7	Callie Brown	So.
18	Dajah Means	So.
24	Hallie Grace Johnson	So.
10	Rylee Raby	So.
32	Eleena Ralston	So.
30	Alyssa Rohn	So.
27	Taylor Woody	So.

"So we'll be counting on her in the middle of the lineup to help drive in some runs right there," Green added.

"Pitching-wise, she was 4-2 last year with 12 appearances. Hopefully, the numbers of her innings will go up — she only had about 35 innings last year."

8	Taylor Wolfram	Fr.
4	Logan Jameson	Fr.
28	Jade Buckner	Fr.
2	Wesley Green	Fr.
12	Camryn Shrader	Fr.
9	Anna McLean	Fr.
21	Sydney Branson	Fr.

Staff ace, however, "is probably going to be Hallie Grace Johnson, a sophomore," the coach said. "She threw about 60 innings for us last year, had a record of 8-3. We'll look for her to step into probably the lead role. Barnes will be supporting that role."

Also returning on the mound is sophomore Hudson Bradford. "Didn't see very much varsity time last year, so we'll see how she develops," Green said. "I do have a freshman, Taylor Wolfram, and we'll see how fast she can develop — and hopefully, maybe, she can take on some of the varsity innings this year. We'll see."

Other positions
Then freshman catcher

See FHS SOFTBALL on Page 6C

HARDIN VALLEY ACADEMY HAWKS



Hardin Valley

3/3	West *	Away
3/4	Bearden High School *	Home
3/6	William Blount High School *	Away
3/7	Oak Ridge High School	Away
3/10	Karns High School	Away
3/11	Farragut High School *	Away
3/12	Knox Catholic	Away
3/13	Maryville High School *	Away
3/20	Pigeon Forge High School	Away
3/21-3/22	Anderson Co Tourney	Away
3/24	Webb School of Knoxville	Away
3/25	William Blount High School *	Home
3/26	Heritage High School	Away
3/27	Farragut High School *	Home
3/31	Lenoir City High School	Away
4/1	Maryville High School *	Home
4/3	Bearden High School *	Away
4/7	Lenoir City High School	Home
4/8	West High School *	Home
4/10	Grace Christian Academy	Home
4/14	Carter High School	Away
4/16	Knoxville Central High School	Home
4/17	Oak Ridge High School	Home
4/22	Powell High School	Away
4/24-4/25	BSN Tournament	Home
4/28	Heritage High School	Home

*Denotes Division I District 4-4A game

Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Wiggs/
Jeremy Wiggs Photography

Being fortified by experienced and talented pitchers is always nice.

Chris Snyder, new Hardin Valley Academy softball head coach who served as the program's assistant coach the previous two seasons, will enjoy that advantage in the circle.

"I've got two returning starters in the circle this year," Snyder said of junior Kayla Sosebee and sophomore Elsie Hatcher. "I'm excited about what we have in the circle."

However, "We got hit with injuries," the coach said. "We lost one of our top incoming freshmen (Avery Gran) to a knee injury."

"I'm excited about what's to come with Avery whenever she gets healthy," he added. "If she was healthy this year, that would be a different story. We would have three strong pitchers coming to the circle."

"All three of those I would probably put in the spectrum of just power pitchers. They've got some good speed on them. Even my freshman coming up ... I'd say she's probably about

mid-60s (mph)."

Hatcher, in particular, "has control," Snyder said. "... She's hitting her spots, and she's a mature pitcher."

As a bottom line, "I'm hoping that with the strength that we have with our pitching, that we can start competing this year at district play," Snyder said, adding District 4-4A "is probably one of the toughest districts in East Tennessee — it's just insane."

Other positions
Around the infield on defense, senior Alex Souders returns as catcher.

"She's obviously been with the program for many years," the coach said. "She would probably be the No. 1 catcher. She's the one that committed to Belmont-Abbey (University)."

"First base would probably be Madison Mann; she's also a returning starter," Snyder added about this senior. "She's been around here for a long time and has played often, between third (base) and first. I think last year she played

00	Elsie Hatcher
1	Corley Vaughn
2	Zoie Driver
3	Kayla Sosebee
4	Nathalia Rodriguez
6	Madison Mann
8	Natalie Nettles
11	Bella Garcia

some third, but this year we're going to try to transition her to first base more."

However, "she would also be sharing time with Kayla" when Sosebee isn't pitching.

Meanwhile, "second base is up in the air; I don't know 100 percent, but what I've got right now, when she's not pitching, would be Elsie Hatcher," Snyder said, adding she brings "just pure athleticism."

"The other one that would play behind her would probably be Kate Smith, a senior. She played some varsity in spots last year."

Shortstop is returning starter Addison Chandler, a senior,

ROSTER

12	Kate Smith
13	Emma Diggs
14	Lilli Cagley
15	Avery Snyder
16	Kami Taylor
17	Bella Ford
19	Jenna Hagee
20	Addison Chandler

having shared shortstop duties last season with Ayla Perry, another 2025 senior, while Chandler moved to third base.

But Perry is expected to miss the entire season due to an ACL injury, "So Addison will probably be controlling shortstop the entire season now."

Snyder said Chandler brings "just solid athleticism" who "can play anywhere."

At third base for 2025 is senior Nathalia Rodriguez.

"With Ayla going down with her injury, that's probably going to put Nathalia into the lineup," the coach said.

In left field, junior Ashlynn Storms is a strong candidate

according to Snyder.

"The other candidate I have for left field would be Josie Smith, who is a sophomore."

Sophomore Avery Snyder returns in centerfield. "She's got speed, can cover a lot of ground in center field — that's what I was looking at," the coach said. "Last year, she played off and on between left field, center field and second (base)."

The right fielder is expected to be senior Emma Kate Schneider. "She committed to Pellissippi State last year," Snyder said. "Honestly, of all the girls on my team,

See LADY HAWKS on Page 10C

BEARDEN HIGH SCHOOL BULLDOGS



Photo courtesy of Tammy Kreger

Bearden

3/4	Hardin Valley Academy *	.....	Away
3/6	Maryville High School *	.....	Away
3/7	Seymour High School	.....	Away
3/10	Knoxville Halls High School	.....	Away
3/11	West High School *	.....	Away
3/13	Farragut High School *	.....	Away
3/20-3/22	Cal Ripken Tournament	.....	Away
3/25	Maryville High School *	.....	Home
3/27	West High School *	.....	Home
3/28	Seymour High School	.....	Home
3/31	William Blount High School *	.....	Away
4/1	Farragut High School *	.....	Home
4/3	Hardin Valley Academy *	.....	Home
4/7	Christian Academy of Knoxville	.....	Away
4/8	William Blount High School *	.....	Home
4/9	Heritage High School	.....	Home
4/10	Christian Academy of Knoxville	.....	Home
4/14	Knoxville Halls High School	.....	Home
4/21	Carter High School	.....	Home
4/22	Jefferson Co. High School	.....	Away
4/23	Heritage High School	.....	Away
4/24	Jefferson Co. High School	.....	Home

*Denotes Division I District 4-4A game

Every new prep sports season brings a certain degree of turnover. Seniors graduate and must be replaced by others whom the coach hopes will “take that next step.”

According to Kenneth Boles, head coach of Bearden High School’s softball team, the 2025 Lady Bulldogs will have their share — and then some — of work to replace lost talent.

“We lost a bunch of talent from last year,” Boles said. “We’re revamping the whole situation ... rebuild and reload. We’ve got some good seniors, but trying to rebuild.”

Position-by-position

Sophomore Jenna Gonzalez was a designated hitter last year, but will play first base this year. “A lot of great upside,” the coach said. “Learn-

2	Kendall Hubbs	Sr.
83	Kendyl May	Sr.
13	Elizabeth Newman	Sr.
99	Jaycie Overton	Sr.
77	Abby Thompson	Sr.
25	Bailey Hauge	Jr.
11	Makhia Nickerson	Jr.
39	Catherine Smith	Jr.
21	Aleksandra Walker	Jr.

ing the position and doing the work. It won’t take her long.”

The right side of the infield stays young as freshman Raya Inge, who came to Bearden this year from California, will play second. “Spark plug for us,” Boles said. “Played travel ball; gonna roll with that.”

Boles will have returning experience on the infield’s left

ROSTER

27	Kaylynn Wood	Jr.
14	Megan Lawson	Jr.
5	Audrey Gayle	Jr.
95	Jenna Gonzales	So.
20	Ly’Ryah Ivy	So.
10	Kylie Dutton	So.
8	Addison Ruzecki	So.
3	KaeBree Aiello	So.
7	Ada Daniels	Fr.

side: junior Megan Lawson at shortstop and senior Jaycie Overton at third. “Great footwork, really covers a lot of ground in the middle,” the coach said of Lawson. “Girls follow her; she and Inge turning two in the middle will be key.”

About Overton, Boles said, “great bat, quiet leader; doesn’t

say a lot, but when she speaks she says a lot.”

Boles should feel confident about his catcher, Kendall Hubbs. The senior will return to play the position for the third year. “She’s a vocal lead and probably team captain,” the coach said. “Cornerstone back there.”

Boles will have both matu-

rity and experience in his outfield this season.

Returning senior left fielder Kendyl May’s bat, according to Boles, has “really come around this spring. She’s getting where she needs to be.”

In center field, returning senior Abby Thompson “covers (ground) like nobody,” the coach said. “Really quick, takes control of the outfield ... played since she was a

See LADY BULLDOGS, Page 8C

CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF KNOXVILLE WARRIORS



CAK

3/3	Campbell Co. High School	.....	Away
3/4	Webb School of Knoxville	.....	Away
3/7	William Blount High School	.....	Away
3/8	The King’s Academy *	.....	Home
3/10	Concord Christian School *	.....	Away
3/11	Webb School of Knoxville	.....	Home
3/13	The King’s Academy *	.....	Away
3/24	I.A.M Ravens	.....	Home
3/25	Providence Christian School	.....	Home
3/26	Clinton	.....	Away
3/28	Lakeway Christian Academy *	.....	Away
3/31	Campbell Co. High School	.....	Home
4/3	Midway High School	.....	Away
4/4	Grace Christian Academy	.....	Away
4/7	Bearden High School	.....	Home
4/8	Midway High School	.....	Home
4/9	Concord Christian School *	.....	Home
4/10	Bearden High School	.....	Away
4/11/12	Gibbs Tournament	.....	Away
4/17	Lakeway Christian Academy *	.....	Home
4/24	Grace Christian Academy	.....	Home

*Denotes Division II-A East Region District game

Photo courtesy of Bobby Lewis/Pro Photo

It’s a solid nucleus of returning talent for Christian Academy of Knoxville softball and head coach Charles Matthews.

Seven starters return, with the roster including five seniors who helped the Lady Warriors finish with a 16-14 record and No. 3 finish in its Division II-A East Region district in 2024.

Position-by-position

All-District senior catcher Caroline Rogers, who also played some third base in 2024, is expected to be a full-time catcher this season.

“She has a real strong arm and hits for a high average,” Matthews said.

M.G. Matthews, the coach’s daughter, is a three-time All-District and All-Region player who returns to play first base as a senior. “A power hitter; and she’s committed to go to Asbury (College, Kentucky) to play softball,” her coach and father said.

“Second base will probably be a battle of eighth-graders to be truthful,” Matthews said. “We’ve got two really young, talented kids. One of them is

27	M.G. Matthews	Sr.
10	Halley Bedwell	Sr.
9	Gracie Kringen	Sr.
18	Kate Myers	Sr.
23	Emili Bogoski	Fr.
14	Caroline Rogers	Sr.

Shayler Becker, and then the other one is Emily Mount.”

At shortstop, Emili Bogoski, another All-district/All-Region player, returns despite being only a freshman. “As an

ROSTER

11	Claire Marshall	So.
3	Sophie Carroll	Jr.
21	Ella Borbeck	Fr.
26	Shayler Becker	8th
28	Emily Mount	8th
2	Amelia Williams	8th

one of my pitchers.”

When Bogoski is pitching, “it’ll either be (junior) Sophie Carroll, my third baseman, or

See LADY WARRIORS on Page 10C

FHS Softball

From page 5C

Rylee Raby shared time behind the plate early in 2024 with then junior star catcher Elsa Morrison, a Tennessee Lady Vols signee. However, Raby took over the job a couple of weeks into the season when Green, looking to strengthen his infield defense, moved Morrison to shortstop.

“In terms of catchers, that is a pretty good strength for us right there,” Green said. “Elsa’s probably projected to be the starting shortstop again this year. We’ll see if we can get her some innings behind the plate, but I think defensively we’re going to need her at shortstop to be able to lock down that position because we graduated all our infielders.”

Another catcher is sophomore Callie Brown.

“And then I’ve got a really promising freshman, Jade

Buckner — not related to (coach) Matt Buckner,” the coach said. “A really good, promising catcher, infielder, a good-size kid whose strong.”

As for Morrison, who as a sophomore in 2023 came one home run short of tying the state single-season record, “she’s a pretty special kid,” Green said. “I mean, she’s arguably one of the best softball players to come out of Knoxville, maybe the state of Tennessee, in several years.”

Returning outfielders Audrey Ginel and Amelia Dorset “are looking to probably project to be the starting corner outfielders this year,” Green said about the seniors.

“They both played in 20 games last year,” he added. “The year before that, Audrey played in 31 games, Amelia played in 32 games. They’re not inexperienced, but they’ve never had to carry the load. Now, instead of being a de-

fensive substitution or an offensive substitution, they’re projected to be the starters out there.

“They’ve both been working really hard. I think they’ve both been pretty focused on having a good senior year and going out strong.”

At first base is junior Bridget Kovacs. “She got some innings in last year, got some games in last year,” Green said. “But I think last year she just had seven at bats. So that’s going to be an unknown for us.”

The coach said Barnes might play some first base, while sophomore Taylor Woody and freshman Wesley Green look to be in the mix.

Third base appears to be set with junior Alexa Shrader. “Lex got some starts last year because Laney (Shrader, her older sister) was in and out of the lineup a little bit” due to injury, Green said.

“We look for her to be hope-

fully even better offensively this year,” he added. “She’s been practicing over there and working over there for the past two years.

At second base, “that one’s going to be up for grabs a little bit,” the coach said. “I really don’t know.

“The two right now would be Effy Armstrong, a sophomore, and Taylor Albright, another sophomore,” he added. “Both of them are pretty solid infielders. They’ve both got a little bit of time last year on and off. But we’ll just have to see.”

Elsewhere, sophomores Eleena Ralston and Dejah Means also should see lots of time — even at the top of the batting lineup,” Green said.

Biggest strengths

“We’re young, but we’re pretty athletic,” Green said. “I’d say we’re maybe a little bit deeper (than 2024).

“For the most part, all the kids we’ve got can really play,”

he added. “And I think we got a little bit more team speed than we had last year.”

Style change

However, “The past couple of years we haven’t had to run as much because we’ve been able to hit the ball out of the ballpark a lot more,” Green said. “I don’t know if we’ll have that ability — I don’t know if we’re going to hit 50 home runs this year unless Elsa hits like 20 something to help us out. But I don’t see anybody putting up huge numbers.

“Our home run numbers might be down a little bit this coming year, so we might have to play a little bit more aggressively, maybe run in a little bit more,” he added.

“We’ll see how that goes, what style of play is going to work best for us. But my younger kids, I think, are pretty good.”

By Alan Sloan

KNOXVILLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL IRISH

ROSTER

Izzy Holleman
Ryleigh McEnery
Catie Schaad
Danielle Kaczmarek
Caitlin Brooks
HR O'Reilly
Anna Iverson
Jaylen Drazowski

Autumn Shaffer
Claudia Schaad
Charlie Blache
Anna Debusk
Emily Lemaster
Ada Ristenburg
Gracie Eunice
Hadley Troutt

Youthful enthusiasm, a demand to strive for excellence and good chemistry are three positives for Knoxville Catholic High School softball in 2025.

"This year we have a young team, but they are eager to get out there and compete," second-year KCHS head coach Hannah Seaver Logan said. "This season we put emphasis on the idea of 'excellence' and how we can make it a part of everything we do both on and off the field as student athletes."

"We are not hoping for it, we are expecting it," she added. "With that in mind, we are taking each day, practice and game one day at a time and making the most of each God-given opportunity we have."

"... This group is a special one, and I am excited to see what they do."

Good chemistry

"It sounds cliché, but even though we've only been together for a year, I feel like this team has been together for much longer because of the bond that these girls share," Logan said. "Despite having a large group of underclassmen, they blend seamlessly into the framework of what the upperclassmen have already established."

"We have leadership in every class," the KCHS head coach added. "This group has a wide

range of talents and personalities and that has made coaching them a lot fun."

Value of team captains

As for key contributors this season, Logan singled out her team captains: junior pitcher Caitlin Brooks, sophomore left fielder/shortstop Hadley Troutt and sophomore center-fielder Claudia Schaad.

"Caitlin Brooks is in her third year as the starting pitcher here at Catholic," Logan said. "She has definitely been put through the ringer," she added, "and that adversity has served as motivation for her to continue to improve and compete for her spot as a both a player and a leader."

"She has a strong arm, a strong bat and a strong heart to match." Troutt "is in her second year here — her freshman season was cut short by a wrist/hand injury — and we are excited to have her back," Logan said. "Hadley's leadership is quiet — she is focused, poised and always gives 120 percent effort."



Seaver-Logan

"Hadley is a strong contributor both in the lineup and on the field; she's one of those players you can really put about anywhere and she will do the job — and do it well," the coach added.

Schaad "is our starting center fielder and the leader of our lineup," the coach said. "She is a very intelligent, very naturally gifted player. She is constantly working to improve her game knowledge and sharpen her skills — she will contribute tremendously for us both on offense and defense."

Overall, "Top to bottom, our line-up has the potential to be solid," Logan said. "We have aggressive speed and power, but I believe our defense will be what wins us ballgames."

Facility renovations

Logan's Lady Irish will enjoy a home softball facility that has been renovated. "We have been blessed to make a number of improvements to our facil-

ity," she said. "This past summer we completed our turf infield and new fencing project per the generous donation of the Faris family — that is a total game changer for us."

"It completely changes the way we can operate as a team during different times of the year in all types of weather," the coach added. "I can't express how thankful we are for this new addition."

"Recently, we also resurfaced and expanded our warning track with the help of Chris Zurcher and his crew at American Sports Fields. We are in the process of adding a bullpen as well and remodeling our locker room. We also refreshed our backstop with new padding and our fence with a new windscreen."

In a note of gratitude, "We are so thankful for everyone that is investing their time, efforts and talents into helping us restore this field," Logan

Knoxville Catholic High School

3/4	Campbell Co. High School	Home
3/5	Concord Christian School	Away
3/6	South-Doyle High School	Home
3/7	Lakeway Christian Academy	Home
3/10	Lenoir City High School	Home
3/11	Grace Christian Academy	Home
3/12	Hardin Valley Academy	Home
3/13	Webb School of Knoxville *	Home
3/25	GPS*	Home
3/26	Baylor School *	Home
3/28	FBA	Home
3/31	Oak Ridge	Away
4/1	Concord Christian School	Home
4/2	Chattanooga Christian School *	Away
4/3	GPS*	Away
4/4	South-Doyle High School	Away
4/7	Oak Ridge High School	Home
4/8	Notre Dame High School	Away
4/9	Lenoir City High School	Away
4/14	Notre Dame High School	Home
4/16	Baylor School *	Away
4/21	Seymour	Home
4/23	Webb School of Knoxville *	Away
4/24	FBA	Away
4/28	Campbell Co. High School	Away
5/1	Anderson Co. High School	Away
5/6	Chattanooga Christian School *	Away

*Denotes Division II-AA East Region District game

said. "It is such a special place and we are committed to making sure it is treated as such."

From Staff Reports

CONCORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LIONS



Concord

3/4	Oak Ridge High School	Home
3/5	Knoxville Cholic High School	Home
3/10	Christian Academy of Knoxville *	Home
3/14	Lakeway Christian Academy *	Away
3/21	The King's Academy *	Away
3/24	First Baptist Academy *	Away
3/27	Lakeway Christian Academy *	Home
4/1	Knoxville Cholic High School	Away
4/3	Harriman High School	Home
4/7	Grace Christian Academy *	Away
4/9	Christian Academy of Knoxville *	Away
4/11	Sweetwater High School	Home
4/11	First Baptist Academy	Home
4/15	Grace Christian Academy*	Home
4/17	The King's Academy *	Home
4/22	Oak Ridge High School	Home
4/24	Sweetwater High School	Away

*Denotes Division II-A East Region District game

While all coaches concern themselves with wins and losses, first-year Concord Christian School softball head coach Sammie Thomas has a focus maybe as big: changing a culture.

The Lady Lions, who play in Division II-A, District 1, East Region, went 3-15 last year. For Thomas, reestablishing enthusiasm and confidence is almost as important as practicing hitting and fielding.

"The most important part is bringing some excitement back to the girls," she said. "Making it a fun game for them. Giving them that drive and excitement to be back in the game."

Thomas has but a single senior on the squad, but some experience returns.

A youthful presence will be

Mckenna Greene, Utility 8th
Kensley Jennings, SS Jr
Rayna Scroggins, 3B Jr
Jianna Carr, OF 8th
Nell Pattison, OF Jr

at first base for CCS: freshman Hayden Lewis or eighth-grader Anna Chaveriat. "A lot of power, good arm," the coach said of Chaveriat.

At second, junior Caris Baggett returns to the position. "She's done a great job," Thomas said. "Ambidextrous hitter ... quick with the double play."

Freshman Mia Rather, new to the team, "could give Baggett a run for the money,"

Anna Chaveriat, 1B 8th
Tasi Porter, OF Jr
Ellie Thompson, Utility Jr
Chole Nester, OF Jr
Cortlyn Hedger, C Sr
Mia Rather, 2B Fr

the coach said.

Junior Kensley Jennings will return to play shortstop for the Lady Lions. "Very quick, very fast runner, great job on defense," Thomas said.

Junior Rayna Scroggins is new to the team, but has some experience. She'll play third.

"She has surprised us," the coach said. "Very reactive and quick, great arm."

Thomas's lone senior, Cortlyn Hedger, will return behind the

Baylee Johnson, P Jr
Caris Baggett, 2B Jr
Justice Phillips, OF 8th
Elizabeth Reed, CF Fr
Hayden Lewis, 1B/P Fr

plate. She has a big role to play.

"A leader," Thomas said of Hedger. "Leaning on her to help with the younger kids. Definitely a team leader. Amazing bat ... expecting really good things."

A pair of juniors will man the leftfield position for Thomas. Chloe Nestor, who's new to the team, is "very quick, fast, decent arm," the coach said. Nell Pattison played right field last year.

Elizabeth "Ekr" Reed, only a freshman, will return to centerfield this year. Thomas will be relying heavily on the youngster.

"Amazing bat, fantastic speed and really good arm; expecting lots of good things out of her this year," the coach said.

Junior Tasi Porter will be a returning starter in right field for Thomas, backed up by a trio of eighth-graders: Jianna Carr, McKenna Greene and Justice Phillips.

Thomas's daughter, junior Ellie Thompson, is a utility player who's hurt, but will contribute when healthy.

Thomas only has two pitch-

See LADY LIONS on Page 10C

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WEBB SCHOOL OF KNOXVILLE SPARTANS

A pair of team strengths have new Webb School of Knoxville softball head coach Kaitlyn Walker excited about her 2025 team.

“The thing about us this year, we’re really fortunate: we’ve got versatility in different areas,” Walker said. “We’ve got a lot of kids that play a lot of different positions, so we’re going to be able to rotate everybody around fairly well.”

In addition, “The great thing about us is we’ve got a lot of really good ballplayers that hit really well, and hitting is going to be our strong suit,” the new coach added.

Overall concerns

However, “Our overall concern this year is going to be number of bodies, keeping everybody healthy, because we are a really small roster this year,” Walker said. “So us keeping everybody healthy and injury-free and not sick is going to be of the utmost importance for us.”

Position-by-position

“At first base, we’ve got Tara Lynn Hill over there. The kid’s a vacuum,” Walker said about the sophomore’s excellent defense. “She can catch just about anything, and she’s got a great arm.”

“She’s also going to see some time behind the plate and in the outfield as well,” the coach added.

Senior catcher Geneva Mitchell, “our Miami of Ohio commit,” is labeled “a great catcher,” by Walker. “I think



Photo submitted by Webb School of Knoxville

that’s a little known fact about Geneva, that she’s exceptional behind the plate.

“At second base right now, we’re honestly not sure what we’re going to do,” the coach said.

One girl in the mix, eighth-grader Ellie Kate Barber, “also is a really good pitcher for us. ... she’ll pitch a lot and play some second base as well,” Walker said.

“We’ve got just a ton of flexibility right there, even though we’ve not had anybody fully solidify second base just yet,” she added.

Daniels “is gonna be a big help to the team,” he said. “Good bat, great speed.”

Top pitchers

To open the season, Boles will have only two pitchers taking the mound. More could be in development.

Junior Audrey Gayle has

played travel ball and is new to the team. “She’s a spot pitcher; gonna have to hit her spots,” the coach said. “We got good defense behind her ... hopefully they’ll make the plays.”

Inge also will see action on the mound. “She lets it go,” Boles said. “She’s got a lot of

movement on her fastball. She’s helping us out ‘til we have a staff built.”

third.”

Outfielders likely will include senior Libby Dunaway, “once we get her back healthy,” the coach said without mentioning any other outfielders.

Look for freshman Nora Sylvan to provide pitching depth.

Walker did not name a designated player candidate or pin-

ROSTER

Tara Lynn Hill	So.	Sophie Sylvan	Sr.	Nora Sylvan	Fr.
Geneva Mitchell	Sr.	Libby Dunaway	Sr.	Emmy Yost	Fr.
Ellie Kate Barber	8th				

Webb

3/11	CAK *	.....	Away
3/13	Knoxville Catholic •	.....	Away
3/24	Hardin Valley Academy	.....	Home
3/25	Coalfield	.....	Home
3/28	GPS •	.....	Away
3/31	Powell	.....	Home
4/1	GPS •	.....	Home
4/3	Grace Christian	.....	Away
4/8	Harriman	.....	Away
4/10	Baylor (doubleheader) •	.....	Away
4/21	Harriman	.....	Home
4/23	Knoxville Catholic •	.....	Home
4/28	Grace Christian (Senior Night)	.....	Home
5/2	Chattanooga Christian (DH)*	.....	Away

*Denotes Division II-A East Region District game

“Our No. 1 goal is to get out there and stay really close in games, and to pull out a couple of games that people don’t think that we should contend in,”

~ **Katelyn Walker**
new Webb head coach

point a staff ace pitcher
Team goal
“Our team goal is to be able to compete really well in our district,” Walker said. “We do have a strong district because we have Catholic, Chattanooga Christian, Baylor and GPS.”

“Our No. 1 goal is to get out there and stay really close in games and to pull out a couple of games that people don’t think that we should contend in,” she added.

By Alan Sloan

Lady Bulldogs

From page 6C

freshman.”

Senior right fielder Elizabeth Newman also returns, and has “a lot of speed and good pop in her bat,” Boles said.

Freshman utility player Ada

the Lady Bulldogs head coach added.

Bearden opened the season at District 4-4A opponent Hardin Valley Academy Tuesday, March 4, (after deadline).

By Bill Howard



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~ Sanford Koufax

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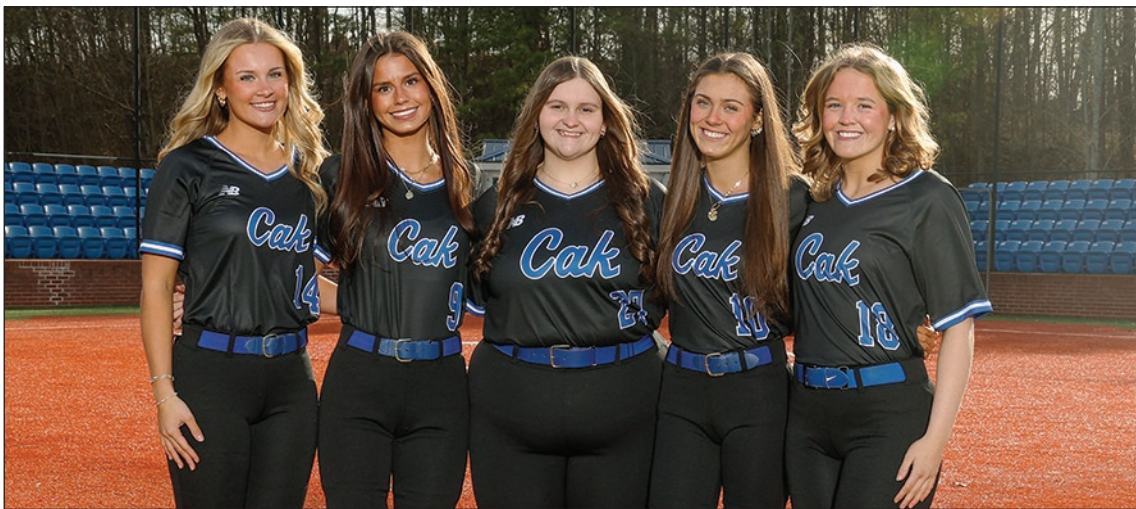


Photo courtesy of Bobby Lewis/Pro Photo

Pictured (not in order) Seniors M.G. Matthews, Halley Bedwell, Gracie Kringen, Kate Myers, Caroline Rogers

Lady Warriors

From page 6C

(senior) Halley Bedwell, one of those two, at shortstop," the coach said.

About Carroll, "She is a power hitter; she had five home runs last year," Matthews said. "She's got all the potential in the world."

"She's just young. She's a basketball player, too; a very athletic kid," he added.

In left field, a three-time All-District honoree, senior Gracie Kringen, returns. "A left-handed batter who hits for a sky-high average," the coach said.

If not at shortstop, "My starting centerfielder is Halley Bedwell, and she's a base stealer," the coach said. "I think she's probably the best centerfielders in the district."

Right field "is going to be a battle between a returning senior, Kate Myers, and a really talented eighth grader from Oregon that just moved in, a lefty named Jordyn Halleman," Matthews said.

"Kate is a very experienced player — a good, solid fielder," he added. "And Jordyn is a terrifically talented hitter that's going to be a really good player for us."

Added to the CAK line-up in 2025 is freshman pitcher Ella Borbeck, a transfer from Maryville. "She is a hard thrower, low to mid-60s; a powerful kid," Matthews said. "There's a good chance if she isn't pitching, she'll be the designated player."

Elsewhere, "I think Amelia Williams gives us some speed as a pinch runner," the coach said. "She's an eighth-grader.

"Then I think Claire Marshall (sophomore) could be somewhere; she's working really hard, and I think she has a potential to be a bat for us off the bench and play some for us.

Look for Myers, Mount and Halleman to add pitching depth, with Myers likely the No. 3 starter.

Biggest team strength?

"We've got a lot of speed and a lot of power, I think that's probably the strength of the team," Matthews said.

Biggest concern

"Just youth," the coach said. "We got five seniors, but the rest of the team is really, really young, and we're going to be relying heavily on some eighth-graders."

By Alan Sloan



Lady Hawks

From page 5C

she probably hits the ball harder than anybody. She has got tremendous power. It's just unreal."

Schneider also is back-up catcher.

Sophomore Zoie Driver provides quality depth in the outfield.

Strengths

What's the biggest team strength?

"The way these girls communicate with each other and the way these girls are, they're like a family," Snyder said. "I don't think I've ever really been around a group like that, that they just take the initiative, they take the lead, they take charge."

"From everything that I'm seeing with this group right here, to me, that's the biggest strength going into this season — the way they are, especially with the injuries, and willing to step up and take that lead and to do everything that they're

asked," he added. "It's really the core that's taking the lead and bringing these young girls in and showing them the ropes and the communication that they're having in the family-type atmosphere that they're presenting."

Challenges

With the team's injuries, "it's just going to force a lot of girls to step up and play at a higher level," Snyder said.

By Alan Sloan

Lady Lions

From page 7C

ers on the staff, but is looking to develop more.

Junior Baylee Johnson will return to the mound to anchor the staff. "Very determined starter," the coach said. "Tremendously motivated."

Lewis is new to pitching, but has promise, according to Thomas.

"I asked her if she'd be willing to learn and she said 'sure,'" he said. "She's moti-

vated and willing."

Thomas knows she has her work cut out for her, but sees changes already in her kids' approach to the game.

"You can really tell the difference in the last couple months," she said. "They listen very well. They're soaking it up. We're breaking things down with fundamentals and working on their confidence."

"We're very excited to see how it goes."

By Bill Howard

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