



Ashlynn Stewart and the rest of the Satsuma team will try to build on their success from last year, when they went 30-15.

Lady Gators hungry for more success

BY **DARRON PATTERSON**
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SATSUMA —When Gene Darawich tells you there's no place like home, he's not just repeating that famous line from *The Wizard of Oz*.

He really means it.

"For me, I'm a home-grown guy. I graduated in 2004 from here and am going into my fourth season as the coach," said the Satsuma Lady Gators' softball coach who took his team to a second straight state tourney appearance last season.

"We've made it to Montgomery the past two years in 4A and now we're jumping up classifications to 5A in a really tough area and a really tough region. In the area is Faith Academy, and they've got a really good young pitching staff as well as St. Paul's who's got another really good young pitching staff. That'll be a

challenge for us offensively.

"The things we'd like to improve on is just continuing to be the best we can be. We've got kids that work and stay hungry. If we can continue that, and creating that good family atmosphere inside our program, we'll be fine."

The Lady Gators lost their first two games at the state tourney (to Bibb County and Cordova) and ended their season at 30-15 in 2018.

"At the end of the day, making it to the state tournament is about all you can ask for," said Darawich. "You hope you can get hot when you get there, but we overcame some things last year with some injuries and some other things. If you're there (state tourney), you're good ... you're extremely competitive and bring some-

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