

# SATSUMA: Gators have the ingredients for success

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players are back from the team that finished 17-16 and bowed out of the playoffs after dropping a best-of-three series to St. James of Montgomery.

Banashak says the foundation is in place.

“I think we’re going to have a pretty solid team,” he said. “We’ve got a lot of guys with a lot of experience and I think we’re going to be able to hit it and catch it pretty good,” he said. “The real test is going to be can we get that real ace on the mound, and can our pitching staff accept the role they’re going to have to pound the strike zone and let the defense help them out.

“I definitely think we have a pretty solid defensive team and I’ve got some guys who can swing it a little bit.”

The ace of the pitching staff is likely to be senior lefty Deion Pickens, who’ll also split time in centerfield and has already signed to play next year at Coastal Alabama Community College (formerly Alabama Southern) in Monroeville.

He’ll get help from seniors Conner Pierce (SS), Jackson Verkouille (C) and juniors Kyle Douville (IF/P) and 6-foot-3 power hitter T.J. Davis (3B/P). Banashak said he is also excited about the pending addition of ex-South Alabama player and former Bishop State coach Mark Johnston as the pitching coach.

“I’m excited about things,” Banashak said.

And what about stepping into baseball in Gator Country? Why does it always seem to be so good?



Satsuma senior shortstop Conner Pierce

“There’s a lot of opportunity (to play) at a young age and truthfully, despite saying football is king, in the south baseball rules, in my opinion,” he said. “I think these kids have been doing it here for so long and have had so many opportunities that it’s just in them.

“We kept around 28 or 29 players for JV and varsity and we had a large number of kids come try out. You just don’t see that in a lot of places.”

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