

Davidson boasting 'well-balanced' squad

Coach Harrell says Warriors have competitive spirit

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Davidson baseball coach Mike Harrell admits he's looking forward to the upcoming season. His enthusiasm is tinged with a portion of confidence and mystery as he has several returning players but also some important spots that must be filled by younger players.

So as the Warriors prepare for the season, Harrell said he is eager to see how this year's team will respond to a tough schedule and the rigors of a long season.

"I know we're going to be pretty competitive," Harrell said when asked for a general opinion on this year's team.



"We've got some kids who have played since they were sophomores and of course that means they are all returning. We've got some juniors as well that will help us.

"We basically have everybody back from last year, though we did lose a couple of key guys from that team. We're trying to fill those guys' shoes."

The key question mark is pitching, especially early in the season, and that is where the emphasis will be in preparations leading up to the first game of the year.

"We've just got to find some pitching," Harrell said. "If we find some pitching I think we'll be able to make a run (in Class 7A)."

Among those whom Harrell is expecting to help lead the Warriors on the mound are Andrew Shirah, Matthew Hetzman and Gray McGowan.

"We have a kid, Andrew Shirah; he's had a little setback and he has some conditioning to do to get his arm back in shape, but he's one of our key players," Harrell said. "You've also got Matthew Hetzman and Gray McGowan, and there's a couple of other young guys that have the opportunity to step up and could be some big players for us too. But those (Shirah, Hetzman McGowan) are the three main guys we have (on the mound)."

Getting hits and scoring runs is obviously important and Harrell said this year's team should be able to accomplish those tasks with consistency. Stopping the opponent from doing those things should also be a plus with this year's team, he added.

"I think offense is going to be our strength this year and we're going to be pretty solid defensively," Harrell said. "If we can keep the games close I think we have a shot to be re-



Davidson coach Mike Harrell on this year's Warriors: "This is going to be a fun group to coach."

ally good. We've got all our guys back and we're pretty good at the top of the lineup and the middle of the lineup. We've got some holes at the bottom of the lineup, but we should be OK."

Overall, Harrell said he likes this year's team.

"I've been here 10 years and this is by far my most well-balanced, competitive guys," he said. "They get along together and they work well together and do the things you ask them to do and they don't question it. It means a lot, especially when they can get along and enjoy playing. I'm kind of interested to see how it turns out because this is going to be a fun group to coach."