

# SARALAND: 'Senior-dominated team' has high hopes

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four players headed to Coastal Alabama at Alabama Southern — Mac Boutwell, Ty Bunch, T.J. Kervin and Jackson Sikes. Catcher Michael Milner signed with West Alabama, Dylan McFarland signed with Millsaps, Levi Clark signed with Lurleen B. Wallace in Hanceville, Trent Brannan signed with Coastal Alabama-Faulkner State, Laiten Hudson signed with Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City, Fla., Konner Copeland signed with East Mississippi Community College and Jo Jo McDonald signed with Covenant College.

“We’ve got a ton of innings back (players with pitching experience), Boutwell said. “Each one of them has experience; Luke Turner was our ace two years ago and T.J. Kervin became our ace this past year, so we’re looking to have a lot of depth on the mound (with both of them back). Our one through seven hitters (in the lineup) are all back from last year’s team.”

Boutwell said he didn’t see a problem in making sure playing time is provided for all the experienced players he has on the roster. The Spartans use a good rotation across the board that provides several options and opportunities for the team as a whole.

“I think we got that out of the way last year,” he said of the playing rotation and how to handle an abundance of experienced players. “We had five seniors last year and only one of those was a starter and we’re replacing our centerfielder, and Sikes has moved over to centerfield so we’re just looking for some depth.”

One aspect of this year’s season that will be prominent is the number of talented teams the Spartans will face. Boutwell said he wants this year’s team to play against the best in an effort to prepare the Spartans for a hoped-for long postseason run.



Saraland’s Ty Bunch gets instruction from coach Brett Boutwell.

“We’ve always tried to schedule a really tough schedule and I think that this year’s is the toughest schedule that we’ve ever had here,” Boutwell said. “You add to the mix that Faith Academy is moving up to 6A in baseball (Class 5A state champs last year) and we’ll have to battle them for the region title. We’ve got Helena, Central-Phenix City and Hartselle on the schedule too. We want to play the best competition we can play and whatever our record is at the end of the year we’ll take it and get ready for the playoffs.”

Saraland is in the same area with Faith Academy, B.C. Rain and Blount.

“We’ve got to take another step here at Saraland,” Boutwell said. “We were close last year and we lost to Russell County in the second round — we lost the first game after leading 6-3 in the sixth and everybody knows if we had won that first game we would have won (the series). That one kind of stung and stayed with us so we’re looking forward to getting back on the field this year.”

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