

*Coach Robbins says one thing is sure ...*

# Saints will work hard in search of a crown

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MOBILE — For St. Paul's, there is no hidden agenda going into the 2019 season; no magic dust, nothing behind the curtain or anything unexpected.

As a matter of fact, just about the only thing that would be surprising is if the Saints don't have just as good a season or better as a follow-up to last year when they finished 30-10, losing in the semifinals of the state tournament to eventual state champion Faith Academy.

"I'm very blessed here at St. Paul's. I've been here a long time," said 30-year veteran Saints coach Andy Robbins. "And our kids have an incredible work ethic and they're smart kids. They know it takes a lot of hard work and discipline, physically and mentally, to have a good season. They know what's at stake and know they've got to get out there and execute."

Gone is pitcher Herndon Akridge, now at the University of South Alabama, a player Jags coach Mark Calvi called on signing day "the best pitcher in this area, and one of the best, if not the best, in the state of Alabama."

But as good as Akridge was for the Saints, there could be an equally shining gem waiting to be uncovered from among seven seniors back from that stellar 2018 team.

Pitcher John Snyder, already signed with William Carey College, headlines the group, and he'll be joined by fellow seniors Richard Skipper (OF), Southern Miss signee Jake Holifield (P\1B), Peyton Henderson (P\OF), multi-talented infielder Blake Ellison (whom Robbins describes as "one of our best hitters"), Grant Taylor (P\1B) and catcher Lance Chavers.

They'll get help from a superbly talented group of juniors including catcher Jake Farrell, Jacob Peavy (IF\OF, son of Major League pitcher Jake



Jake Holifield will be one of the pitching mainstays for St. Paul's this season. The Southern Miss signee will also play first base for the Saints.

Peavy), starting infielder Hayden Smith and shortstop Myles White.

Robbins said the sky's the limit for his team.

"That's your goal every year, to work

hard enough to win a state championship," he said. "But our area is really tough. We've got UMS and Satsuma, so you have to take care of business first with them. It's a tough area."