

Winter Sports Spotlight

November 15, 2018

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT GIRLS' AND BOYS' SOCCER IN GREENE COUNTY

Cats rebuild with eye on region repeat

Martin looking for new faces to make impact for GCHS this season

By **RUSSELL TURNER**
Herald Staff

The GCHS men's soccer team started last season with the goal of winning a region championship and advancing past the first round of the MHSAA playoffs. Coach Paul Martin's team reached part of that goal by claiming the Region 8-4A title with a 7-1 record, but fell victim to a strong Florence team in the opening round of the playoffs to fall short of the second goal.

Helping his team exceed those accomplishments will be a tough draw for Martin after losing nine players to graduation. Several of them were big contributors, like the school's all-time leading scorer Justis Casey, who is now at Jones College. But Martin, who is beginning his third year at the head of the program, isn't making excuses and hasn't dialed back what his expectations are for the 2018-2019 campaign.

"Our goals are to continue to develop our soccer program by focusing on skills instead of results," Martin said. "We are to the point of implementing a new style of possession soccer and have a talented group that I am very proud of."

"We are returning only five starters and that will be a chal-

lenge, but our goal is to win the region title again this year."

Leading the way for the Wildcats will be seniors such as Alex Henderson and Daniel Zehner, along with a big group of returning juniors. Henderson, a team captain, is the anchor on the GCHS defense and a leader on the team. Zehner is moving from midfield to forward to help produce more scoring. Both are multi-year lettermen with high expectations for their senior campaigns.

"I feel really good where we stand for the upcoming season," Henderson said. "We came up a little short last season, but played our hearts out. And, while we lost some exceptional seniors, we kept a lot with great potential."

"We have good teamwork and persistence and show a lot of room for improvement. We've altered our playing style to a more tactical style of play and I think we can surpass the accomplishments we had last year."

Zehner too said he feels good about the team's prospects, especially if the in-game communication continues to

See SOCCER CATS

Page 2C



Photos by Russell Turner / Herald Editor

Shown (Above) is the Greene County High School varsity soccer team for the 2018/2019 campaign with head men's coach Paul Martin.



GCHS junior defender Dylan Tribble is shown (Left) battling his way to a loose ball in the Wildcats' home opener against Resurrection last Tuesday. The Wildcats lost that match, but are off to a 2-2 start with hopes of defending the Region Championship they claimed a year ago. Also shown is senior GCHS defender and team captain Alex Henderson.

GCHS hoping to make it back to postseason



Photos by Russell Turner / Herald Editor

Shown (Above) are the 2018/2019 Greene County High School Lady Wildcats, with head soccer coach Janna Sullivan Maxwell.

Greene County High School forward/midfielder Lisa Johnson, an eighth grader at LJHS, is shown pushing a pass past a Resurrection defender last week, while junior standout Chloe Strickland approaches from behind. Johnson has three goals and one assist through three games this season, while Strickland has two goals and two assists to her credit.



Lady Wildcats like experience and talent level for 2018/19 season

By **RUSSELL TURNER**
Herald Staff

The Greene County Lady Cats soccer team had a bit of a rebuilding year last season, finishing with a 5-9-1 record and out of the postseason for the first time in four seasons.

Coach Janna Sullivan Maxwell lost four seniors off that squad, including two who started for Pearl River Community College this fall and a third who is running track and cross country at the collegiate level for the Choctaws of Mississippi College this year. With that many starting spots to fill it would be easy to see this season as a rebuilding year for the Lady Cats. But, with the leading producers returning and several underclassmen expected to play expanded roles, Coach Maxwell has reason to be optimistic her team can make it back to the playoffs this year.

The Lady Cats are off to a 2-0-1 start after blowouts of Kosciusko and Wesson in the Sumrall Tournament and a 1-1 tie in the home opener last week versus Resurrection.

Leading the way for the Lady Cats is senior Tylee McCann. The Pearl River commit led her

team with 17 goals on 28 shots as a junior. A letterman since the seventh grade, McCann has posted 52 goals in 53 career games. She has played forward for GCHS throughout her career, but will be making the move to the midfield this season. Maxwell said the move will still allow McCann to produce goals, but also put her in a position to expand the offensive attack and get others involved.

McCann is embracing the move to a new position and has performed well thus far, scoring two goals and adding an assist in each of the Lady Cats' two wins this season.

"Playing in the midfield is different to what I am used to, but I think it helps the team a lot because we put more passes together and have more opportunities to score," McCann said. "I think we are in a pretty good spot right now and, if we continue to play as a team and work to improve, we definitely have a shot at winning our region and going far this season."

Senior Jamya Moody will take

See LADY CATS

Page 3C