

WINTER SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

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

November 14, 2019

Shuffled lineup looks strong for GCHS

Position moves meant to bolster chances for experienced and talented Lady Wildcats

By **RUSSELL TURNER**
Herald Staff

It has been a few seasons since the GCHS Lady Wildcats have made a push for the MHSAA soccer playoffs. In fact, the four seniors on this year's squad were freshmen the last time GCHS earned a playoff berth. They were junior high players during the 2015-2016 campaign when the program last claimed a region championship.

But as the 2019-2020 season gets underway, Coach Janna Sullivan Maxwell and her squad have their sights set on putting things back in the right order with GCHS at the top of their region standings and the one team nobody wants to meet up with in the playoffs. It appears Maxwell may have the roster to make that happen.

The Lady Cats have a host of experienced upperclassmen with a compliment of youthful talent. They have strength, they have speed and they have talent. Most of all, the group is hungry for success and Maxwell hopes she can turn that into a dominant combination.

"We have all been so excited for this season," Maxwell said

last week. "We want our first season at our new facilities to be the start of a tradition that will surpass all other seasons."

"Of course, our ultimate goal is to win a state title, which I think all teams want to achieve, but we have decided to concentrate on our attitude and effort each game. If we keep these two things where they should be we can see huge success from this talented group of girls."

If the Lady Cats are to reach their goals, they will have to replace some key components lost to graduation in May. That includes well over half of their offensive firepower, including Pearl River Community College freshman Tylee McCann, who scored 20 goals during an All-Star senior season a year ago.

Doing so will start with Maxwell's experienced group of seniors. Chloe Strickland, Laykin Beech and Zaria Crumpton have been GCHS teammates since junior high school and have been lettermen in the program since that time.

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Photos by Russell Turner / Herald Editor

Shown (Above) is the Greene County High School women's soccer team for the 2019/2020 campaign with head coach Janna Sullivan Maxwell.



GCHS senior Zaria Crumpton is shown trying to push past a Pascagoula defender in a match last week. Crumpton is making the move from defender to forward/midfielder this season. The match was called due to severe weather after 20 minutes of play.

Photos by Randy Whitley Photography for the Greene County Herald.

Wildcats looking to get back to postseason



Photo by Russell Turner / Herald Editor

Shown (Above) are the 2019/2020 Greene County High School soccer Wildcats, with head soccer coach Paul Martin.

Wildcat senior Kennedy Moore is shown (Right) dribbling ahead of two West Jones defenders in the Sumrall Tournament at Laurel earlier this month. Moore is one of nine seniors on the GCHS squad this season.



Photo by Joni McMillon / Herald Staff

Cats looking for large, experienced senior group to lead the way

By **RUSSELL TURNER**
Herald Staff

The Greene County men's soccer team posted a successful 2018-2019 season, finishing with an overall 8-6-1 record and 5-3 in Region 8-4A. But, that effort left the Wildcats one game behind Poplarville and East Central in the region standings and therefore out of the MHSAA playoff picture.

Despite losing two key players to graduation and a third who will graduate at Christmas to pursue a scholarship to play college football, Coach Paul Martin says he and his team have their sights set on getting back on top of the region standings and back into the postseason.

To reach that goal Martin will have to replace a lot of production from a year ago. Daniel Zehner just finished his freshman season on the roster at East Central Community College. Alex Henderson, a big key on the defensive end last year, is gone as well, taking up his college education at Jones College. Jacob Mitchell, a member of this year's senior

class will forego his final semester in high school to join a collegiate football roster in time for spring practice. Those three guys accounted for over half the Cats' scoring a year ago, but they didn't leave the cupboard bare.

"We have a talented senior class this year and we are hoping to get back in the playoffs and intent on making a run towards south state," Martin said.

That senior class includes seven returning lettermen who either started as juniors or played a lot of minutes. Mix in a handful of juniors and sophomores that were starters or regular players last year and you can see where Martin and his players find their optimism.

"I think the overall skill level and experience level is better on this team than my previous seasons," senior Kyle Hicks said. "And, we have a coach who really helps us play better."

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