



Wildcat Soccer

“Because of our history of playing together as teammates we know what to expect of each other. It gives us a lot of chemistry on the field together.”

Hicks’ fellow team captain Gregory Pierce also believes the Cats have what it takes to have a special year.

“We do have more combined talent and experience than we’ve ever have,” Pierce said. “And we are determined to make this year memorable.”

“I believe we can not only make the playoffs, but be successful when we do.”

Hicks tallied one assist as a junior, but his big contributions came on the opposite end of the field as a strong defender who Martin says “never gets out-worked”. Pierce on the other hand was the third leading scorer a year ago and does a solid job defending and creating offensive opportunities. Martin says both are highly skilled, hardworking and lead the team by example.

The top returnig scorer is senior Bradley Snyder, who posted six goals last year and is one of the most diverse talents on the field.

“Bradley can not just play every position on the field,” Martin said. “He plays them all well. He is a quite young man but speaks with his actions.”

Snyder is off to a good start in his final GCHS campaign and put his diverse skill set on display in the Cats’ 3-0 win over Sumrall to start the regular season. Snyder had an assist on the opening goal but made his biggest contribution as a defender due to several injuries to starters along the GCHS back line.

Snyder he had a big goal against Petal on Monday as GCHS came up with a big road win (2-1) at Petal.

Martin says senior Nathan Mathis is his most improved player and calls him a hard worker that just makes the team better. Mathis earned two goals against Sumrall, including on from what Martin called “an impossible angle.”

Another senior making big strides this year is Logan McCalip. He posted two goals and two assists last season and earned his team’s first goal of this season off the assist by Snyder at Sumrall.

“Logans pace and strength make him a very dangerous center forward,” Martin said. “We are hoping for a lot out of him and Mathis this year.”

Senior Dylan Tribble is also expected to come on strong in the Cats’ offensive scheme this season. Martin calls Tribble “a tireless worker with a great left foot” and adds that his understanding of the game from a tactical perspective helps set him apart. Tribble was a key in the Sumrall win even though he didn’t score as he kept pressure on the Bobcats’ back line making runs and serving in dangerous crosses to keep pressure off his own team’s back line that was missing 3-of-4 starters. He had a key assist in the Cats’ win at Petal.

Senior Kennedy Moore, who saw action in nine games last year, is a wing player who has worked hard to develop a strong crossing shot. Like Tribble, Moore came alive when he was needed most at Sumrall and put up several good shots in the second half against the Bobcats to help maintain the Wildcats’ attack.

Two other seniors will see time as key roll players this season, both on the field and off.

“Lane Cooley and Tahj Johnson are seniors, who picked up soccer late, but are such wonderful young men and great teammates,” Martin said.

Martin’s junior class is small compared to the other classes, but will be a big key to the Cats’ success. Andrew Backstrom had a solid sophomore campaign and will return at right defender. Along with the ability

to make stops, Backstrom’s athleticism allows him to make good crossing shots and strong runs when he takes possession of the ball on the back line.

Lawson Merritt had a strong sophomore year as well, appearing in every game and putting up two goals and two assists. Martins says Merritt is “very skillful and quick forward/midfielder that can score goals.” He proved his scoring ability with a goal in the win over Petal.

Rylie Turner saw a good bit of action as a sophomore, but will play a bigger role this season as a stopper on the defensive end.

“Rylee is a steady center back that is a solid defender and good at clearing away danger with headers,” Martin added. “Nicholas McCann is such an athletic young man that can help us moving forward.”

Among the sophomores expected to shine this season is returning goal keeper Jerry Franks. Martin says the young goalie is talented and has also worked very hard to improve his game.

“He’s our first goalkeeper to have the foot skills needed to play at the next level,” Martin said.

Sophomore Oscar Whalen is the team’s Swiss army knife, according to his coach. Whalen can play in the midfield or any of the defender positions. He was called on to play the latter at Sumrall and had a very strong game to help post the shutout.

Logan Husley is another sophomore Martin expects to play a key role this year. He is currently recovering from an injury, but shows tremendous potential.

“He will make us better when healthy,” Martin noted.

Orlando Polk, Blaine Eubanks and Braylon Denson round out the sophomore group and have earned good reviews from their coach.

“Polk is a hard working, physical presence and ball winner,” Martin said. “Blaine just picked up soccer, but has showed much improvement in a short period of time. Braylon also recently started playing and has improved and can help us in the future.”

Freshmen Daniel Pridgen and Logan Smith will gain a lot of experience this season and have made some early contributions on the varsity squad. Pridgen is a solid defender who has stepped up and contributed early, playing a key role on the back line in the Sumrall win. Martin says Smith is a skillful forward/midfielder who has also contributed early and one to watch in the future. He came in against Sumrall and provided quality minutes to help rest starters.

Other freshmen are Trey Roberts, who Martin credits for having tremendous pace and potential, and Rylee Brewer and Will Nichols, who are hard working players who will lead the junior vasily team.

The Cats got off to a bit of a slow start, suffering through some early injuries and growing pains schematic changes, in two preseason tournaments. But, they won their season opener and appear to be starting to click.

“We played in preseason tournaments the last two weekends playing some quality programs and have lost a couple of starters to injuries,” Martin said. “This has opened the door for playing time and opportunity for players getting looks at different positions.”

“We started the (regular) season traveling to Sumrall and defeating the Bobcats 3-0.”

Martin said he was extremely happy with the win as his team overcame a lot of diversity in claming in.

“The halftime score was 2-0 Wildcats,” Martin said. “Our back four did a very good job last night considering three of the four were playing in different positions.”

“Everyone stepped up. I was

Continued from Page 1C

very proud of players like Gregory Pierce and Lawson Merritt who had to play in deeper positions to control the Bobcat attack. Gregory and Lawson are more attacking type players, but stepped up and worked very hard so we could win the midfield.”

Martin called it a complete team win and pointed not only to the ones who unselfishly played out of position, but also the youngsters who came on to play key roles as well.

Last week’s game at Pascagoula and Tuesday’s home opener against Perry Central were cancelled due to weather. The Wildcats will host Wayne County on Thursday and have other non-region battles set with Resurrection, George County, East Central, and Gautier, before getting region play underway at home on Dec. 9 against Forrest County AHS.



Photos by Joni McMillon - Herald Staff
GCHS senior captain Gregory Pierce is shown (8, Above) trying to cut off a drive by a West Jones player in tournament action earlier this season.



Shown (Inset) is sophomore Oscar Whalen tracking down a loose ball in the same game.

One Team ... One Goal !



Shown above are senior basketball and soccer players from Greene County High School.

Good Luck To All Our 2019-2020 Student Athletes

District Administrators

- Duston Turner
- Kelly West
- Dennis Cochran
- April Scarborough
- Leshia Lott
- Scott Bray
- Ricky Dickson
- Jennifer Pulliam
- Angela Jones
- Shalonda Hollingsworth
- Tyler Watkins
- Carolyn H. Bishop

- Greene County High School
- Greene County Vocational Technical Center
- McLain Attendance Center
- Sand Hill School
- Leakesville Elementary School
- Leakesville Jr. High School

- SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION Charles L. Breland
- and the members of the GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION Sue Eubanks Curtis J. Hill Dorothy Clark Shannon Denmark Robin McCoy



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