

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL SPOTLIGHT ——— 3-B

Lady Wildcats expecting big things out of potent offensive lineup



Photo by Courtney Crosby - Herald Contributor

Senior Tiana Caver is shown being congratulated at home plate by classmate Hannah Hillman and sophomore Taylor Brewer after blasting a 2-run home run in the opener at Pascagoula. Hillman (shown above, middle) also had a homer and seven RBIs in the game.

By **RUSSELL TURNER**
Herald Staff

The Lady Wildcats were really starting to come alive offensively when the season was shut down last March. They were averaging over seven runs per game in 2020 and had put up some fairly gawdy offensive numbers in the last five games they played. With most of the top performers back this season, GCHS has the potential to be even more explosive this year. Coach Tyler Barham's team came storming out of the

gates with 20 hits and 22 runs in their opener at Pascagoula. They were missing a couple of players in game two against Taylorsville and cooled off considerably against a strong Tartar pitcher. "I thought it did us a lot of good to see that level of pitching," Barham said. "We didn't look as comfortable at the plate as we did at Pascagoula, but it was a good learning experience and I think will help us down the road." "We were without Kat (Garrett) and I think it really

showed us how much the rest of the team feeds off her. We are still looking at our lineup and will probably keep adjusting the batting order a bit, but I feel good about where we are offensively. With Garrett, along with returning leaders CharLee Meadows, Hannah Hillman and Tiana Caver, it may be somewhat of a surprise that a seventh grader would earn the role of leadoff hitter for GCHS, but that appears to be the case as Zamiah Knight has emerged as the probable

starter at the top of the lineup. While Barham says the youngster is still trying to figure things out and adjust to the role, he has confidence she can be the table setter for the Lady Cats. "The speed and aggressiveness is certainly there," Barham says. "She brings a ton of energy to the table and has real potential for hitting with power." Hitting second in the lineup is Garrett. With a career average just under .500, Garrett can hit for average and for power. She was 2-for-5 in her only game so far this season with three runs and two RBI. "Kat hits with power to all fields," Barham said. "She can change the tone of a game with one swing and is also a very good base runner." "We have high expectations for her and depend on her to get things going for us." Meadows, who has hit for a .431 average since the seventh grade, will hit third. She was on fire in 2020 with a .606 average through 11 games and is 5-of-7 as a junior with a RBI and four runs scored. "CharLee has a ton of confidence in the batter's box and rightfully so," Barham said. "She is just a solid, all-around player and like Kat hits with power and percentage. We are hoping she will drive in a lot of runs for us this year."

"Having Hannah batting behind her in the No. 4 spot should make it harder for opposing teams to pitch around her. Hannah can really hit for power when she gets it going, but is also one of our better bunters on the team." Hillman is 4-for-8 thus far on the season and looked the part of cleanup hitter in the

opener, pounding out a homer and two doubles en route to driving in seven runs. She has improved her batting average every season and Barham expects her to improve on her career .327 average.

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