



## Softball

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GCHS traveled to Taylorsville without a couple of key players who were busy helping the school's basketball team advance in the playoffs. With two seventh graders and a few 8th and 9th graders in the starting lineup, the Lady Cats managed just four hits and dropped a 5-2 decision to the Lady Tartars.

"Our pitching kept us in the game, but we struggled at the plate against a solid pitcher and had a couple of costly mistakes," Barham said. "I am not terribly disappointed with it though. We never gave up and our girls competed well against a very good team despite the fact we had several kids making their varsity debuts."

"We would have rather gotten the win, obviously, but there were a lot of bright spots and I think we learned a lot of valuable lessons that will help us moving forward."

While Barham has a lot of experience in the lineup, he also has a lot of young talent that he expects will make big contributions and create competition for playing time. With that will likely come some growing pains, as was the case against Taylorsville.

"I really like the makeup of our team," Barham added. "We have experience, but these younger girls have come on strong and are creating a lot of competition for playing time."

Senior Tiana Caver was once one of the youngsters pushing for playing time and really likes what she is seeing out of the team's up-and-coming players.

"These young players are definitely stepping up," Caver said. "We have a couple that are already in the varsity lineup and each game they come out and help us tremendously, whether it's on the field or hitting."

The Lady Cats couldn't control the quarantine that cost them chances to play this past weekend, which is unfortunate considering the strength of their schedule moving forward. They rescheduled their region opener with FCAHS and were supposed to be back in action Tuesday at Citronelle, but the certainty of that game was unclear at press time. They have away games coming up against Wayne County and Gautier before their scheduled region opener at Sumrall on March 9.

They will see Wayne County and Citronelle again, along with games against Petal, George County and South Jones mixed in with their region games against Poplarville, Forrest County AHS, Sumrall and Purvis.

"We play a very tough non-region schedule with a lot of 5A and 6A schools, and of course, a very good Taylorsville team," Barham said. "That level of competition should help us get ready for a tough region schedule and hopefully for the post-season."

Barham said the region should be solid again this year. Their first region opponent, Sumrall, is the biggest wildcard this year, but he expects the Bobcats to be strong.



Photo by Courtney Crosby - Herald Contributor

GCHS junior shortstop CharLee Meadows and senior second baseman Kat Garrett make up one of the most formidable middle infields in Mississippi High School softball. Garrett is shown here preparing to make a throw to first base in the Lady Cat's 22-6 win over Pascagoula to start the season.

"Sumrall has a strong program and is well coached, so you always expect them to be solid," Barham said. "Forrest County will likely have the strongest pitching we will see in region play with a senior who is committed to Mississippi College."

"Poplarville probably has the best overall lineup we will face in the region, but Purvis has 4-or-5 really good players returning as well. So, we know we are going to have to play well to compete for a region title and playoff berth. But, our main focus is going to be on making sure we play our style of softball and aren't our own biggest opponents. If we do that I feel like we will have a good shot at reaching our goals."

His top players feel the same way.

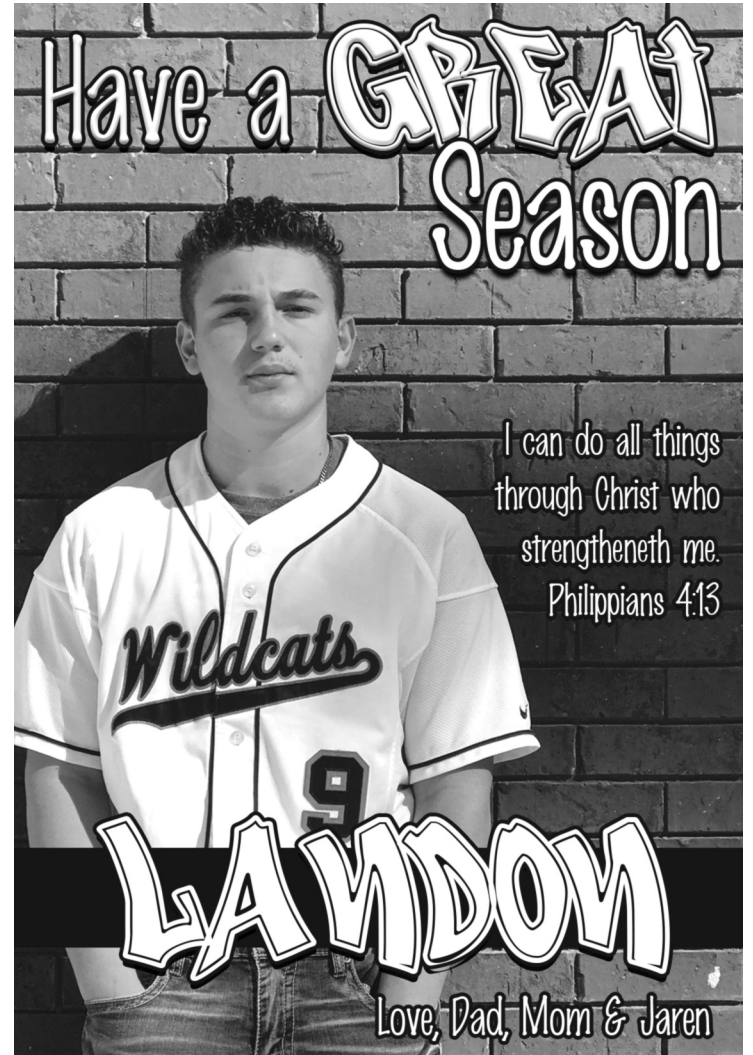
"Coach Barham put some competition on the schedule for a reason," Caver said. "It is to push us and help us get better and learn how to adjust and get up to a certain level."

"We do not want to settle down and just be okay with where we are. We're trying to go all out and improve every single day. I truly believe that we are capable of competing for a championship. As long as we can fix the simple stuff and put those little pieces together, I say we have the players to do it and the coaches to help us get there for sure."

Senior Kat Garrett, who has signed with Jones College to play softball there beginning next year, agreed.

"I have really high expectations for this team," Garrett said. "We have some really talented girls on the roster and I truly believe we can do big things this year."

"The chemistry has always been great on this team. We have our moments, but that's a normal thing. At the end of the day, we are family and always have each other's backs on and off the field."



# One Team ... One Goal !



## Good Luck To All Our 2020-2021 Student Athletes

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