

GC Baseball

Continued from Page 1-B

their opening jamboree at George County and defeated the 5A Vancleave Bulldogs 4-3 to open the regular season in dramatic fashion. A walk-off single from Brewer in the bottom of the seventh capped off an exciting return to action in front of a large home crowd at Scott Bray Field.

Chatham's team didn't have their heads in the clouds for too long though as they suffered their first loss later that same evening in the second game of a double-header against the Oak Grove Warriors. Mistakes plagued GCHS in that game and the 6A Warriors took full advantage, blowing open a close game for a lopsided win.

That loss, while bitter for him and his team, will pay dividends down the road, Chatham believes.

"We purposely put together one of the toughest schedules in the state," he said. "We want to play the best competition we can. That's our mindset because we know it will prepare us for the big games that will come later in the year."

"When you play the teams we play, you learn really quickly that you can't take a single pitch for granted."

Chatham said he and his players embrace any opportunities they're given to take on top-tier competition in preparation for their run through region play in March and April. And, that was a big part of the reason for Chatham's scheduling of a week-long tournament that brought the likes of Pascagoula, Vancleave, Oak Grove, Sumrall and Lumberton to the Wildcats' complex and finished with a trip to Biloxi for a chance to play at MGM Park.

"We put feelers out there for good programs that we had relationships with, and it came together better in the first year than I expected," Chatham said. "When you have good teams involved, most people want to be a part of that. And we wanted to have it finish up at MGM Park to make it something special for those that participated."

They dropped a 6-2 decision to Gautier in their final game of the tournament at Scott Bray Field on Feb. 18, but bounced back from the loss to

the Warriors with a lopsided win over Lumberton at MGM Park the next day.

The Wildcats carried that momentum to Petal a few days later and came away with a 4-2 road win over the Panthers. They followed up last weekend with a mercy-rule win over Columbia in five innings and had George County on the ropes on Saturday, but a couple of ill-timed miscues allowed the Rebels to have a big fifth inning and steal a win.

"The George County loss was a tough one because I think we got a bit complacent with the lead and just didn't finish," Chatham said. "We pitched well enough and swung the bat well enough, but just didn't do what we needed to seal the win."

"But, that too will be a learning opportunity."

Along with this week's series with FCAHS, the Wildcats will also tangle with West Marion, make a trip to Sumrall and take on Florence at Jones College before kicking off four straight weeks of region play in mid-March. The remainder of the non-region schedule includes a stint in the Stringer Tournament, a matchup with an always-tough Taylorsville team and a trio of 2-game series with Magee, East Central and West Jones.

Their journey to reach the playoffs will look a little different this time around as Greene County will be competing in the newly-aligned Region 8-4A, which will pit them against Pass Christian, Bay High, Stone County and Moss Point in that order.

Stone boasted a 25-8 record through a phenomenal 2021 season that ended with an appearance in the 4A South State championship series. That was last year and there is opportunity for any team in the region to assert itself as the team to beat in 2022. Having paid their dues and prepared tirelessly throughout the off-season, West said he sees no reason that it can't be the Wildcats.

"I think the team this year is probably one of the best teams we've had here at Greene County in a while," West said. "We have a lot of returning players with varsity experience, so I think we can make a good playoff run."

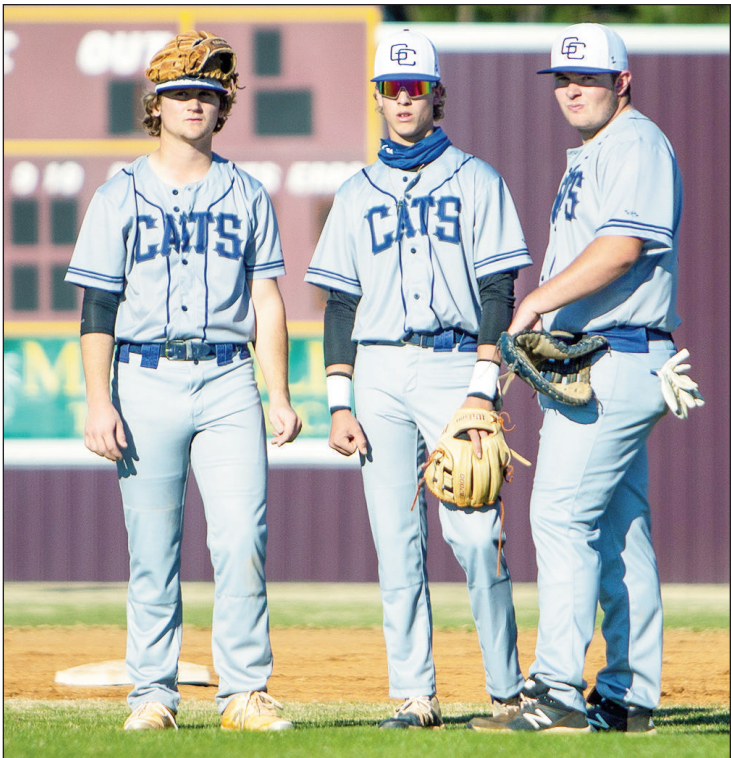


Photo by Brad Crowe / Herald Staff

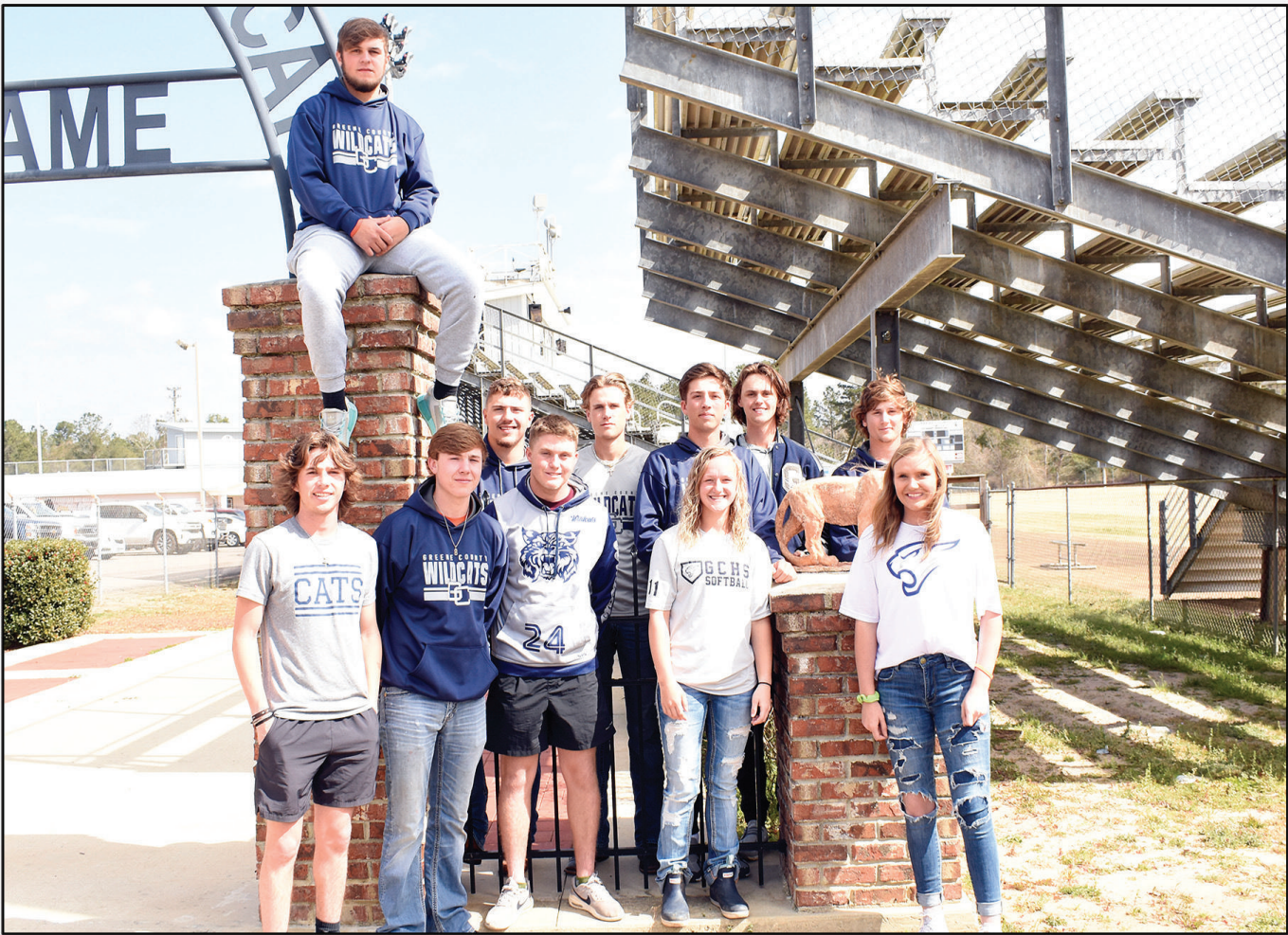
The GCHS Wildcats have an experienced roster this year with returning lettermen at nearly every position and a deep, tested pitching staff. Shown (Above, L-R) are senior Brayden Brewer and juniors Collin Pipkins and Phillip Herring watching as one of their teammates warm up on the mound during jamboree action at George County earlier this season.

DON'T QUIT  
Your FIRST pitch  
TOMORROW  
will be BETTER  
than your last pitch  
YESTERDAY



Have a great season  
**Bunkie**  
Love, Moma

Our Students & Teachers  
HIT IT OUT OF THE PARK  
Each and Every Day!



Good Luck this Season Wildcats

SCHOOLS

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

ADMINISTRATORS

Duston Turner  
Kelly West  
George Hedgepeth  
April Scarborough  
Leshia Lott  
Scott Bray  
Ricky Dickson  
Marty Noblitt  
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GOOD LUCK  
this season  
We are so PROUD of YOU  
Addie TUNGETT  
Love, Dad, Mom, Jaycie & Jack