



# Senior-laden Wildcats have lofty expectations for 2022

*GCHS looks to have the talent and experience on its roster to make some noise in Class 4A*

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*Herald Staff*

Anticipation and excitement are high for GCHS baseball as the 2022 season is getting into full swing. With a lineup that's littered with talent and experience, expectations are high among the Wildcat faithful and others taking notice from around the state.

The Wildcats entered this season thrilled for the chance to turn potential into production and carve out their own place in the program's storied history. Coach Nick

Chatham, who is in his 15th year of coaching baseball and sixth as the top Wildcat, says his team is looking to capitalize on lessons learned and experience gained from a 2021 campaign. The up-and-down season ended with a 2-1 series loss to North Pike in the first round of the playoffs and served as a curtain call for five senior team members.

In hindsight, head coach Nick Chatham believes last spring was a valuable season of growth and development that will greatly benefit the Wildcats in the days ahead.

"Last year was a huge learning curve for them, and I think it did just that — it helped them learn," Chatham said. "We were a young team playing one of the toughest schedules in the state."

"These guys got some play-off experience and even got to see what it takes to win a play-off game. All of those opportunities could help spring-board this group in 2022."

While there were exits from the roster at graduation, the Wildcats have welcomed back four returning players who were selected to last year's Region 7-4A All-District team. Brayden Brewer, Phillip Herring, Jace Lott and Collin Pipkins are back. The team is also thrilled for the long-awaited return of senior standout Conner West, who was expected to lead the team as a junior a year ago, but was instead sidelined by an injury. West is healthy as the 2022 campaign gets going and is eager to help lead the way for the Wildcats in his first full season with the squad since 2019.

"I'm pretty excited for this year," West shared. "I've only really played one full year of baseball, and that was my freshman year because COVID canceled my sophomore season and then last year I was out due to my injury. So I'm excited to get back out there and play."

Heading into this week's scheduled matchups with Forrest County AHS, the

Wildcats were off to a 4-3 start to the 2022 campaign. The team looked good in

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