



PREVIEW

Blevins

Garrett

Hope

Nevada

Prescott

Spring Hill

TRACK SEASON HAS ARRIVED AND LOCAL TALENT IS READY TO SHINE

Track and field season is officially underway, and once again, our area is loaded with talent. From experienced state medalists to rising young athletes ready to make their mark, several local programs have their eyes set on conference titles, state medals, and even overall team championships.

One of the teams to watch is Prescott, which is coming off a runner-up finish at the state meet last season. That strong showing has only added fuel to the fire for a program that has built a reputation for excellence year after year. Coaches Brian Glass and Jeremy Glass return with deep, competitive rosters on both the boys and girls sides. With a mix of proven veterans and emerging contributors, Prescott looks poised to make another serious run at stacking up state championships. Their strength across multiple disciplines (sprints, distance, field events, and relays) gives them the versatility needed to compete at the highest level.

Hope will also showcase plenty of speed and athleticism

this spring. The Bobcats and Lady Cats bring depth across the board, particularly in the sprint relays, where several combinations are expected to make noise throughout the season. Their explosiveness in the short distances, combined with strength in field events and middle-distance races, should make them strong contenders at both conference and state competitions. Don't be surprised to see a large number of Hope athletes qualifying for the state meet and bringing home hardware.

Spring Hill enters the season with momentum as well. Both the boys and girls teams feature athletes capable of competing near the top in multiple events. Whether it's in the sprints, hurdles, distance races, or field events, Spring Hill's versatility should translate into consistent podium finishes throughout the year. Expect the Bears and Lady Bears to be in the medal hunt at nearly every meet, building confidence as the postseason approaches.

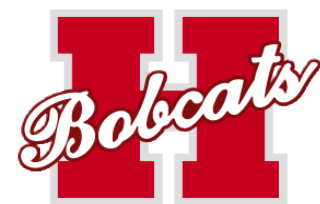
Nevada and Blevins are still wrapping up basketball

season, but once their athletes transition fully to track, they will add even more excitement to the 1A ranks. Both programs traditionally produce tough competitors who peak at the right time. While they may not always have the largest rosters, they consistently send athletes to the District and State meets. With strong individual performers capable of scoring big points, both schools could make their presence felt as the championship season unfolds.

Across Southwest Arkansas, the level of competition continues to rise. Many of these athletes train year-round, compete in multiple sports, and bring a relentless work ethic to the track. As the weather warms up and times begin to drop, expect thrilling finishes, broken school records, and intense battles for state qualification spots.

With so much local talent on display, this track season promises to be one filled with excitement, standout performances, and potentially several trips to the podium at the state meet.

HOPE BOBCCATS



LADY CATS READY TO ATTACK THE SEASON AND MAKE SOME NOISE

The Lady Cats are energized and ready for another competitive spring because of the arrival of softball season. With a strong core of returning players from last year's squad, Coach Daniel and his team have their sights set firmly on earning a berth in the regional tournament.

Leading the way in the pitcher's circle is Maddison Brown, who returns to anchor the staff. Brown brings valuable experience and competitiveness, and with additional arms available to provide depth, the Lady Cats expect their pitching to be a strength this season. Consistency in the circle will be key as Hope looks to

compete in a challenging conference.

Defensively, the Lady Cats anticipate noticeable improvement. Much of the infield returns, giving the team valuable chemistry and experience. Bella Elliott and Mycah Bradley are two infielders expected to make a significant impact, not only with their defensive play but also at the plate. Their ability to contribute on both sides of the ball will be important in close games.

Offensively, Hope aims to be more aggressive and disciplined, focusing on timely hitting and cutting down on mistakes. With several returning starters who understand the speed and intensity of conference play, the Lady Cats hope to turn experience into wins.

The conference schedule will once again be demanding, featuring strong programs such as Nashville, DeQueen, Fairview, Magnolia, and Arkadelphia. Each matchup will present a challenge, but Hope is embracing the opportunity to compete against some of the top teams in the area.

With experience returning, improved defense, and determination to raise the program's profile, the Lady Cats are ready to attack the season and make noise in conference play.

BOBCCATS EXCITED TO CONTINUE BUILDING BASEBALL PROGRAM

Coach Brandon Martindale is eager to get the 2026 baseball campaign underway. Returning eight of nine starters from last year's team provides a strong foundation for the Bobcats as they look to build on their progress.

"Extremely excited. We're proud of the development they've shown. They've been working hard, we've got good numbers out this year, and it's a great group," Coach Martindale said when asked about the upcoming season.

Hope brings back plenty of talent on the mound. Austin Courtney, a crafty left-hander whose velocity has ticked up, returns to lead the staff. Israel Juarez is back after turning in several solid outings last season. Jaiden Brown, Sam Johnson, Drake Mathis, Cayden Heywood, Riley Bramlett, and Aiden Dean round out a deep pitching corps. Each arm was challenged in the offseason to improve in key areas, and according to Martindale, they've responded with hard work and noticeable growth.

Behind the plate, junior Sam Johnson will handle the bulk of the catching duties after logging significant innings last season. Johnson provides a physical presence and strong knowledge of the game. Trey Hoglund and Aiden Dean will also see time at catcher.

On the infield, Israel Juarez and Cayden Heywood will split time at third base. Jaiden Brown anchors the middle at shortstop, with Riley Bramlett at second. Heywood is also expected to see innings at second. Drake Mathis will hold down first base.

In the outfield, Austin Courtney will patrol center field. Donny Reaves and Aiden Dean are expected to fill the corner spots. Hoglund's versatility makes him a valuable asset, as he is capable of playing multiple positions across the diamond.

The Bobcats' lineup features plenty of experience, beginning with Jaiden Brown and Austin Courtney at the top of the order. Both are disciplined hitters who work counts and apply pressure to opposing pitchers.

Sam Johnson and Israel Juarez provide power in the middle of the lineup, while Drake Mathis and Riley Bramlett are poised to take the next step this season. Speed throughout the order gives Martindale's team another weapon offensively.

When asked what he wants his lineup to be known for, Martindale said, "We want to execute, put the ball in play, work counts, run the bases, and really cut down on mistakes."

Hope competes in one of the toughest conferences in the state, and the non-conference schedule will present additional challenges with several strong teams across Southwest Arkansas.

With only two seniors, Aiden Dean and Israel Juarez, this Bobcats squad blends experience with youth, making them an exciting team to watch as they continue building the program this season.

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EXPERIENCED SENIOR CLASS HAS LADYCATS SIGHTS SET ON CONFERENCE TITLE, STATE TOURNAMENT

Another season of Lady Cat soccer has arrived, and the team has put in tremendous work this offseason to ensure this year is more successful than the last. This senior class missed the State Tournament for the first time last season and is hungry for another opportunity to compete on that stage.

Senior Bri MacLaughlin was asked what the Lady Cats must do to contend for a conference title and return to State.

"How we approach the game, our mentality and our attitude, will determine how this season goes," she said. "We have a really good opportunity to make it far this season. We just have to show up and play to win."

The Lady Cats are senior-heavy, returning a strong core from last year's squad, including leading goal scorer Madelyne MacLaughlin, who has led Hope in goals each of the past three seasons. Also returning is Crystal Ortiz, a talented player with tremendous potential who will have a major impact on the team's success. Cristal Aguilar is back for another season after starting since her sophomore year and will anchor the Lady Cats' defense in the middle. Brianna MacLaughlin returns after missing last season due to injury, and her presence on the pitch will be a welcomed boost.

Other seniors expected to play key roles include Reyna Martinez, Allison Yhoss, Esme Reyes, and Sophia Gonzalez.

"We're trying to make a run at the State Tournament," Head Coach Edmundo Dominguez said. "We were

disappointed last year missing out. We dealt with a lot of injuries, but we feel really good about this group of seniors."

There is also a new goalkeeper in town, Lucero Arroyo. Multi-year starter Angelica Soto graduated last season, but the team is excited about Arroyo's ability to step in and make big saves. Leading the defensive effort in front of her will be Aguilar, who has been a key piece of the back line the past several seasons. "I'm very excited about this season," Aguilar said on media day. "I'm ready to see the new players step up. We have to attack every practice with the same level of intensity as we do in a game." Another player to watch is Samantha Castillo. After making significant improvements last season, Castillo is poised to make a major impact in the midfield.

Offensively, there is plenty of excitement surrounding this group. "We're really excited about this team," Coach Dominguez said. "With the players we have up top and on the wings, we should score a lot of goals."

Madelyne MacLaughlin returns for her fourth year as a starter and is eager to build on her already impressive scoring record. "We've been working hard on playing more as a team and finding new ways to score," Madelyne said. "We're excited about our speed and playing style up top. Our intensity has been strong."

Crystal Ortiz also returns after scoring key goals last season and appears ready to take the next step offensively. Known for her speed and playmaking ability, she adds another scoring threat to Hope's attack. "We've

been working on our footwork and playing different positions," Ortiz said. "We have a good group, and our chemistry is really coming together."

Bri MacLaughlin is back after recovering from an ACL injury and is eager to contribute.

"I've been working hard," she said. "I want to be the best teammate I can be. I expect a lot from this team and from myself. We just have to play simple soccer."

The trio of Bri, Crystal, and Madelyne should be one of the most exciting attacking groups in the conference. With their talent and chemistry, expect plenty of goals this season.

The Lady Cats face a challenging schedule, including matchups against Robinson, Hot Springs, and Lake Hamilton, as well as a tournament featuring several 5A and 6A programs. "We want to face tough competition to prepare us for later in the season," Coach Dominguez said.

Conference play will once again be competitive. DeQueen and Bauxite have dominated in recent years, but the Lady Cats aim to put the league on notice. Magnolia, Mena, Arkadelphia, Malvern, and Nashville will also present tough challenges.

The season opener is set for February 27 at home against Hot Springs. The Lady Cats begin their journey with high expectations and the confidence to meet them. This experienced group believes it is capable of overcoming any obstacle in pursuit of its goals.

BOBCATS HAVE BITTER TASTE FROM LAST SEASON, HUNGRY FOR ANOTHER DEEP STATE TOURNAMENT RUN

This year's Bobcat soccer squad will feature plenty of new faces. But with the talent and work ethic this team possesses, fans will get to know them quickly.

After graduating a large and talented senior class last season, the Bobcats are ready to build on the foundation left by the Class of 2025, which ended its run with a heartbreaking semifinal loss in extra time to eventual state champion Robinson.

"When you lose 12-plus seniors from last season, it's tough to replace," Head Coach Josh Marshall said. "But we have a group that's ready to go, and I'm excited to see what they can do."

A major piece returning to the Bobcats' lineup is sophomore goalkeeper Jacob Pacheco. "Jacob Pacheco is back for his sophomore year, and he may be one of the best I've ever coached," Marshall said. "He can control the game from the goalkeeper position."

Pacheco stepped up in a big way during his freshman season, recording multiple clean sheets and proving the moment was never too big for him. He helped lead the Bobcats to two wins in the state tournament.

At media day, Pacheco shared his offseason focus. "I've spent a lot of time in the weight room this offseason," he said. "I promised myself I'd come back better this year. We're excited about the defense, and communication will be key."

The defense lost a couple of contributors from last year's squad but still features one of the top defensive players in 4A in Gio Ruiz. Ruiz was outstanding as a sophomore and took another step forward during his junior campaign. With Ruiz anchoring the back line, the

Bobcats expect to remain strong defensively. "Gio is a three-year starter, and when you have a guy like him that you can trust, you know you have something good back there," Marshall said.

Soyne Munoz and Giovanni Piza are expected to play key roles on defense, while Yair Munoz returns as another important piece. Known for his high soccer IQ, Yair brings leadership and stability to the unit. The Bobcats will be without Nathan Sanchez, who will miss his junior season due to injury.

In the midfield, Elliott Vazquez returns for his sophomore season after earning All-State honors as a freshman. "Elliott led our team in assists," Marshall said. "He's a playmaker. Whatever we need, he can make it happen."

Another sophomore expected to make an impact is Bradley Brown, who gained valuable experience last season and is poised for an expanded role. Joseph Santamaria will also see increased minutes this year, bringing athleticism and physicality to the middle of the field. Freshman Javier Martinez could make an immediate impact as well, as coaches have been impressed with his early performances.

Dylan Mercado is a name to watch across the state. A versatile talent, Mercado served as an elite defender last year but will move around the field this season. He is one of the Bobcats' most dangerous scoring threats and can line up at midfield, wing, or defense. "He's gotten bigger and stronger," Marshall said. "He's very physical and can play midfield, wing, or defense. He's a playmaker — one of those kids you can put anywhere."

Mercado also shared the team's mindset for the year. "We're ready to compete for a conference title and make a run at the state tournament," he said. "We were so close last year, and we want to get back. I just want to help this team in any way they need me."

Up top, Lucas Sanchez returns as the Bobcats' leading scorer from last season and remains a proven goal-scorer. Johnathan Hernandez, who showed flashes of scoring ability during his freshman and sophomore seasons, could be poised for a breakout junior year. Chris Alvarado adds speed to the attack and demonstrated his potential in key moments last season.

Seniors Omar Cardona and Kevin Lozano are also expected to have strong final seasons for Hope. "We're ready to get this season going," Cardona said at media day. "We're looking to improve and get back to where we were last year. Our chemistry with the wings and the players up top should help us score a lot of goals."

The Bobcats will be battle-tested with a challenging non-conference schedule that includes Robinson, Hot Springs, Lake Hamilton, and several larger schools in the Clarksville Tournament. In conference play, De Queen will be the team to beat, while Nashville will present another tough challenge. Mena, Arkadelphia, Malvern, Magnolia, and Bauxite round out a competitive league.

"If you don't bring it every night, you can get beat," Marshall said. "Our league is tough from top to bottom."

With high expectations and plenty of young talent, the Bobcats are set to open their season at home on Feb. 27 against Hot Springs.

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GMCS SAINTS



LADY SAINTS RETURN CORE PLAYERS FROM FINAL FOUR TEAM, SET SIGHTS ON STATE TITLE

Head softball coach Marty Porter is more than excited about what lies ahead for the Lady Saints. After advancing to the Final Four last season, GMCS returns its entire starting lineup and enters the year with high expectations.

"We have everybody back this year, so that's a good thing. We're going to play defense and score runs," Porter said when asked about the upcoming season.

Leading the Lady Saints in the pitcher's circle is junior Silbi Jones. Jones was outstanding last season and is poised for another strong year.

"We have a great group out here. I've been working on my mechanics and getting stronger. Kylie is great behind the plate, she's a natural back there," Jones said when discussing her junior campaign and her catcher, Kylie Bullock.

Also returning to the circle are Gracie Bullock and Heaven Garcia, both of whom logged valuable innings last season.

Behind the plate, junior Kylie Bullock will once again

anchor the defense. Bullock was excellent defensively last year and is just as dangerous at the plate. She is expected to hit in the heart of the order, giving the Lady Saints a rare combination of strong catching and offensive production from the same position.

The infield will look very similar to last season. Senior Baylee Pogue returns at first base. A multi-year starter, Pogue is expected to be one of the team's top run producers.

"Very excited. We have a lot of players back, and we believe we can win state. We just have to put in the work. We feel like we have a lot of good players on this team," Pogue said about her senior season.

Up the middle, Blayklee Glass will start at second base and Gracie Bullock will handle shortstop duties. Both are returning starters who were rock-solid defensively for the Lady Saints last year. At third base, Lainee Almand appears ready to step into a starting role, showing early in practice that she is prepared to take over for her sister Brailyn, who will miss the season due to injury.

In the outfield, Heaven Garcia returns to patrol center field. With her speed and instincts, Garcia covers plenty of ground.

"I'm looking forward to getting out there and making plays. We have a good group, and I'm excited for the challenge in center field to make plays for my team," Garcia said.

Josie Pinner is expected to see time in left field, while Kat Morris will contribute in right. The Lady Saints also have additional depth in the outfield, giving Porter multiple options.

Offensively, GMCS boasts one of the deepest lineups in its league.

"We've got a lot to like about our lineup. We have speed, some pop, and we're going to run the bases. We should be able to score some runs," Porter said.

The Lady Saints open their season on Thursday, Feb. 27, and with a talented, experienced roster and a shared goal in mind, GMCS will be aiming to bring home a state championship trophy later this year.

Saints Ready to Keep Building Their Baseball Program

The Saints baseball team is eager to get back on the diamond. After fielding a team for the first time in several years last season, the program continues to focus on growth and development as it builds toward the future.

The Saints return a solid group of pitchers, including Harrison McLain, who put together a strong season last year. He is joined on the mound by Liam Hawkins,

Hayden Chase, and Seth Hillburn, giving the Saints a rotation with the potential to be a strength. Behind the plate, Carson Vines, Luke Martin, and Seth Hillburn will handle catching duties.

Offensively, the lineup is expected to showcase speed and consistent contact. Levi Burns, Brandy Edwards, Jayden and Bryan Leyva, Micah Nipper, Christian and

Harlan Smith, John Terrell, and Hunter Simmons will anchor a group that looks to pressure opposing defenses. GMCS aims to be a competitive squad this season and will work toward making a strong push as the year progresses.

BLEVINGS HORNETS



Lady Hornets and Hornets Ready to Hit the Diamond

There's a renewed buzz surrounding Blevins baseball and softball as both programs look to bounce back after missing the regional tournament last season.

The Hornets baseball team returns several key pieces and has plenty of talent to build around. Kaden Powell, Jaxon Hinton, and Killis Woodruff headline a strong

group of returners who will be counted on to lead the way. With a challenging conference schedule ahead, the Hornets will need to be prepared and play their best each night to compete.

The Lady Hornets softball team finds itself in a similar position. There is plenty of optimism surrounding this

group, even with a new pitcher set to take the circle this season. Expect the Lady Hornets to be competitive and consistent at the plate, putting together quality at-bats as they work to return to postseason play.

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PRESCOTT CURLEY WOLVES



LADY WOLVES EXCITED FOR SEASON

After graduating a large senior class last year, the Lady Wolves softball program enters a new chapter with several fresh faces stepping into key roles. While youth will be a factor, there is plenty of excitement surrounding this year's team.

The Lady Wolves will showcase a mix of returning experience and promising young talent. Several pitchers who gained valuable innings last season are back in the circle, and they will be joined by new arms looking to make an immediate impact. Developing consistency in the circle will be a priority, but the coaching staff is confident in the potential of this group.

Defensively, Prescott expects to be fundamentally

sound. A reliable presence behind the plate should help guide the pitching staff and keep the defense organized. Around the diamond, the Lady Wolves will rely on communication, quick reactions, and steady glove work to limit mistakes and stay competitive in tight ballgames. Offensively, the lineup will feature hitters focused on putting the ball in play and applying pressure on the basepaths. Speed and aggressiveness will be part of Prescott's identity this season. By forcing defenses to make plays and capitalizing on opportunities, the Lady Wolves hope to manufacture runs and keep games within reach.

The conference schedule will present a significant

challenge. Programs such as Genoa Central and Fouke consistently field strong teams, while Bismarck, Smackover, Camden Harmony Grove, and Centerpoint are all capable of winning on any given night. Competing in one of the toughest conferences around will test Prescott throughout the season.

Despite the challenges, the Lady Wolves are embracing the opportunity. With young talent, developing depth, and a hunger to prove themselves, Prescott is ready to compete, secure key wins, and make a push toward postseason play.

CURLEY WOLVES READY TO HIT THE DIAMOND

With a strong group of returning players from last season, Coach McCauley's Curley Wolves are hungry to take the field. Prescott looks to continue building its program after graduating significant talent over the past few years.

Despite those losses, there is plenty of optimism surrounding this year's squad. The Wolves bring back several key contributors and boast solid depth on the mound. With multiple arms capable of throwing quality innings, Prescott plans to rely on pitching depth and consistency to compete throughout the season. The focus will be simple, throw strikes, play clean defense, and secure 21 outs each night.

Defensively, the Wolves expect to be steady and reliable.

Speed in the outfield should allow them to track down balls in the gaps, while a fundamentally sound infield aims to limit mistakes and turn routine plays into outs. That defensive approach will be a key factor in staying competitive in tight ballgames.

At the plate, Prescott's lineup promises to give opposing pitchers a challenge from top to bottom. The Wolves pride themselves on tough at-bats, working counts, and refusing to give away outs. Their gritty, blue-collar mindset extends throughout the order. Combine that with an aggressive approach on the basepaths, and Prescott should be able to manufacture runs by putting pressure on opposing defenses. Taking extra bases, executing bunts, and capitalizing on mistakes will all be

part of their offensive identity.

The road ahead will not be easy. Prescott competes in one of the toughest 3A conferences in the state, featuring last year's state finalists, Ashdown and Genoa Central. The conference slate also includes strong programs such as Bismarck, Fouke, Centerpoint, Smackover, and Camden Harmony Grove. Night in and night out, the Wolves will be tested against quality competition.

However, Coach McCauley's squad embraces that challenge. With experience, depth, and a competitive edge, the Curley Wolves are ready to take the field and continue pushing their program forward this spring.

SPRING HILL BEARS



Lady Bears Aim for Return to Regional Tournament, Set Sights on Postseason Success

The Lady Bears are ready to play with renewed energy and a clear goal in mind: returning to the regional tournament and reestablishing themselves as postseason contenders.

Head coach Paige Porter is entering the 2026 season excited about the direction of the program and the potential of her roster. While the team features several

new faces, the talent level and work ethic have created optimism heading into the spring.

The Lady Bears understand that competing in a challenging conference will require consistency and focus each time they step on the field. With a blend of youth and developing experience, the team is working to build chemistry early and sharpen fundamentals in hopes of peaking at the right time.

The ultimate goal is clear, make a strong run through conference play and advance deep into the postseason. If the Lady Bears continue to grow and compete with intensity, they have the pieces in place to turn that goal into reality.

You can follow all Lady Bears softball coverage throughout the season on SWARK.Today.

Experienced Bears Ready to Hit the Diamond with High Expectations

With spring just around the corner, Bear fans are gearing up for another exciting baseball season. First-year head coach Seth Spangler is energized about the year ahead, especially with a strong core of returning players.

"Man, I'm pumped," Spangler said. "We've got a good group of guys coming back, and I'm looking forward to a great season."

One of the biggest strengths of this year's squad will be pitching. The Bears return a wealth of arms, including what Spangler calls a "Big Three" in Karson Hamilton, Mason Moore, and Andrew Carrillo, who is back from injury. With multiple pitchers expected to log significant innings, the staff looks deep and talented. Reed Fisher, Colin Overton, Jaxon Smith, and Maddox Dickson are all poised to make major contributions on the mound.

Behind the plate, much of the catching duties will fall to Moore and Hamilton, who both performed well last season. However, Spangler has emphasized building depth at the position, and Colin Overton has been taking plenty of reps to strengthen that area.

In the infield, Maddox Dickson and Andrew Carrillo both bring valuable experience at first base. Brady Rhodes returns at shortstop after an impressive season and a productive offseason focused on improvement. Jaxon Smith is expected to see significant time at second base after finishing last year there. Overton, who excelled at third base last season, will continue to see action at the hot corner when he's not catching.

The outfield returns Jackson Putz and Reed Fisher, giving the Bears stability and athleticism on the grass. "Fisher has a cannon for an arm," Spangler said of his outfielder.

Replacing the production of Reese Tarver, who graduated, will be a priority, but Spangler is confident in the depth and versatility of his roster.

"Our lineup is really deep," Spangler said. "We have a lot to like, speed and power, but we're focusing on quality at-bats. We want to battle in the box." Rhodes was electric on the basepaths last season, while Hamilton brings power to the lineup. Moore returns as the team's on-base percentage leader. Seniors Andrew

Carrillo, Jaxon Smith, Maddox Dickson, and Reed Fisher bring leadership and competitiveness, battling for every pitch. This lineup offers a balanced mix of speed, power, and experience, making it a tough one for opponents to navigate.

The conference schedule will provide plenty of challenges. Spring Hill, Murfreesboro, and Horatio are consistently among the top contenders. Foreman and Dierks are always competitive, and Caddo Hills, Mountain Pine, and CMS each present their own obstacles.

The Bears' non-conference slate is equally demanding, featuring Genoa Central and Taylor, both of whom played in their respective state championship games. Nevada, Junction, and De Queen are also strong programs. By the time May arrives, this team should be well battle-tested. "I want this group to will their way to wins," Spangler said when asked what he wants this team to be known for. With experience, depth, and high expectations, the Bears are ready to take the field and chase championships this season.

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NEVADA BLUE JAYS



Lady Jays Ready to Make Return Trip to Regionals, Eye State Tournament Bid

There is plenty of excitement and new energy surrounding the Lady Jays softball program at Nevada High School. Head coach Coach Burton described the team, saying, "This group is hungry, hardworking, and ready to compete."

The Lady Jays will move forward after graduating starting pitcher Jill Pinner, but several young arms are ready to step into larger roles. Paxtyn Tolar spent the offseason working to improve her pitching and is expected to be one of the primary options in the circle this season.

Behind the plate, Trinity Kendall stands out as a defensive anchor while also providing production at the plate.

The infield returns strong experience. Gracie Hunt is settled in at third base, while freshman Devan Griffith brings versatility and promise wherever she is needed on the diamond. At first base, Jocelyn Autry returns after serving as a reliable presence in previous seasons. Veterans Sophie Hicks and Alisha Gulley also bring valuable experience and are expected to play important roles.

The Lady Jays also welcome several newcomers who have generated excitement within the coaching staff, including Lillian Parker, Gabby Evans, Addie Ridling, Zyrannah Vines, Zyrhun Vines, Tott Young, Aniya Beasley, and Ayana Henry.

Coach Burton emphasized the team's overall approach, saying, "We want our team to improve every day and make each other better." The Lady Jays are focused on continuing their progress and making a strong push toward another regional appearance while keeping their sights set on a state tournament berth.

GRITTY YOUNG BLUE JAYS LOOK TO MAKE SOME NOISE THIS SPRING

After losing a large senior class to graduation last year, Nevada enters the season with a fresh look and Coach Bryson Rhodes is excited about his young Blue Jays squad. Despite the losses, Rhodes is optimistic about the growth he has seen from both his returning players and the younger group stepping into bigger roles.

"We've got a lot of new players coming up, and we brought back four starters from last season. There's a lot to look forward to around here," Coach Rhodes said about his ball club.

On the mound, the Blue Jays will rely on a pitching-by-committee approach after graduating several key arms. While there is plenty of development still

to come, Rhodes is encouraged by the potential and competitiveness of this group.

Behind the plate, Colin Nelson returns as the primary catcher after an impressive freshman season. Freshman Riley Wall is also expected to see innings at catcher. At first base, sophomore Ethan Almand will anchor the infield, while Brandon Wilson takes over at second. Freshman Ayden Pennington will handle duties at third base. Justin Myrick and Colin Nelson will both see time at shortstop.

In the outfield, Braylon Srebalus will patrol center field. He was a standout performer last season and is expected to be a playmaker again this year. The corner outfield

spots will be filled by several players who will compete and share reps as the season progresses.

Kadden Dowdle and Payton Smith are two more names to watch for the Blue Jays this season.

"We want this team to be known for pitching and our depth on the mound, throwing strikes and competing every inning," Rhodes said.

There is plenty of excitement surrounding this Nevada team as they aim to return to the Regional Tournament, secure a win, and position themselves to make some noise at the state level.

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