

# Lady Cats feature young roster as they look to rebound after missed season



*Louisburg junior Mia Wilson will be one of three starting pitchers for the Wildcats this season. The Louisburg roster features six freshmen that will see a lot of playing time throughout the year.*

The last time the Louisburg softball team took the field for an official game, the Lady Cats were competing in a state tournament.

Louisburg had just come off a thrilling regional championship and put together a memorable run at just the right time.

That was almost two years ago.

COVID-19 ended the Lady Cats' hopes of trying to get back to another state tournament as they watched their season cancelled due to the pandemic.

Nick Chapman was all set for his first season as head coach in 2020, but instead will make his debut in today's season opener against Piper along with the rest of the Lady Cats.

Now, after such a long time off, Louisburg is ready to make another run at it and the Lady Cats are excited to get going.

"To say I'm excited is an understatement," Chapman said. "Losing my first year as head coach has left me in a place of

wonder. We didn't get to see if what we are doing, and our philosophy, is going to work or not. I'm excited to finally play a game and to see the girls step on the diamond together, as a team. Especially this year, we have a young group. Half of our varsity squad is either a freshman or a sophomore.

"We have a completely different dynamic than we would have had last year. There are two girls that played at state two years ago. We are starting fresh and beginning to build this program from the ground up."

Those two girls are senior Brooklyn Diederich and junior Mia Wilson.

Diederich has been a fixture on the varsity lineup for the Lady Cats and will look to lead a young group of players. She is just one of three seniors, along with Jenna Terry and Maggie Ming.

After pitching her first two years, Diederich will shift to centerfield and will join Ming, Wilson, sophomore Brylee Diederich and freshman Maddy Rhamy in the outfield.



***Brooklyn Diederich is one of three seniors on this year's Lady Cat softball team.***

Youth will be a big factor for the Lady Cats this season as six freshmen will see a lot of playing time as Chapman looks to build the program back up.

"We had a big group of freshmen come in and we are asking six of them to step up to the varsity level full-time and they will see a lot of time," Chapman said. "We are going to be super young, which is not a bad thing for the future, but it will leave us inexperienced a little this year. We also have a lot of girls coming in that play on different club teams all over. With that being said, every single girl has accepted the challenge and we have gotten better every single day and I feel confident we are about to do big things this year.

"The biggest thing I wanted to accomplish at the beginning of the year is getting them to play together and be a team that

cares about each other and will do anything for each other. If that happens, it will carry over into the game setting where they will be willing to sacrifice their stats to help the team win and help each other be successful.”

It all starts on the mound where Wilson will lead the Wildcats after earning several starts as a freshman. She will be joined by a pair of freshmen in Megan Quinn and Izzy Moreland.

“We finally have pitching this year,” Chapman said. “We will have the luxury of having three varsity pitchers and three JV pitchers. The three we have at the varsity level bring their own style and different abilities. Megan and Izzy are both freshmen but do not pitch like freshmen. Mia and Megan bring some heat and then Izzy brings some nasty off-speed stuff. I’m super pleased with all three of them and what they bring to our team.”

Moreland will also share the catching responsibilities with junior Jada Frazier, while Frazier and Quinn will also split time at first base.

Terry and freshman Rylee Hickey will split time at second base, while freshman Ashley Moreau will be the team’s starting shortstop. Another freshman, Jenna Cauthon, will start at third base for Louisburg.

“Our offense is going to be one that is really strong together,” Chapman said. “Our philosophy is get on, get ’em over, and get ’em in; team softball. We work everyday on situational hitting vs. just hitting the softball for fun. We have a few girls that can get a hold of the ball and we have a few that have great speed and we are going to utilize both of those things. They have really bought into this idea and are finding success when we scrimmage. We just need to play a game at this point.”

The Lady Cats will get that chance today as they travel to Piper for a doubleheader to open the season.