

# Wildcat baseball hopes mix of experience, youth produce success



*Louisburg senior Jackson Kush is one of four seniors on the Wildcat baseball team in 2023. The Wildcats open their season today in Harrisonville.*

A season ago, the Louisburg baseball team found itself just a couple runs away from a state tournament berth.

To try and take that next step, the Wildcats have several returners from a season ago to lead them in 2023 after losing five seniors from a season ago, including three all-league players. They also have a good mix of youth to fill in the holes as well.

Overall, the Wildcats are a deeper team and they hope it will be beneficial for them as they begin their season today in Harrisonville.

“Practice is going really well,” Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. “We have some big shoes to fill from last year, but also have some great returners that have really stepped up to lead. Starting earlier has been a little hectic, but getting those first games out of the way and see how we do will be great. We have got some young guys ready to step up and I am excited to see how they do this year.”

Pitching is going to be important, as it is every year, and

the Wildcats will lean on a senior in that regard. Corbin Hamman is the team's lone returning pitcher from a season ago, but was a bright spot for the Wildcats.



***Louisburg senior Corbin Hamman returns to lead the Wildcat pitching staff.***

Hamman, who was an honorable mention all-league player a year ago, was one of the Wildcats' top arms as he pitched a team-high 33 innings and led Louisburg with 43 strikeouts on the year. There will also be several underclassmen who will help fill that rotation.

Junior Declan Battle will see time on the mound and sophomore Alex Saad will fill the top three of the rotation. The Wildcats also have several others in sophomores Luke Schultz, Jayce Toms, junior Jack Anderson and freshman Bristol Barbour that will see varsity action throughout the year.

"I think we have some great pitchers this year," Larson said. "Corbin Hamman is coming off a great season last year. A few players to watch this year on the mound are Alex, Declan and Luke. We have some returners, but a lot of depth this year."

The Wildcats will also feature a pair of all-league returners around the diamond as well. Senior Jackson Kush and junior Jackson Howard, who earned honorable mention selections last year, along with Hamman, will look to lead a group of young players.



***Senior Cade Driskell will play the corners for Louisburg this season.***

Senior Cade Driskell, who is in his third year at the varsity level, will play at the corners in the infield and will switch between first and third base. Howard will see time at first base and as the team's backup catcher.

Freshman Danny Napier will be the starting catcher for the Wildcats and could also see time at first and third base.

Returning starter Brody McGreer will resume his spot from last year at second base and senior Kaleb Carter will also see time at that spot. Schultz will be the team's starting shortstop.

Battle, Kush and Saad will start in the outfield, while Anderson, Wyatt Holland and Nathaniel Lamm will also compete

for spots. Battle and Kush are returning starters at those positions.



***Junior Declan Battle returns as the team's starting centerfielder and will also see plenty of time on the mound.***

Louisburg will also feature an offense that lost three all-league hitters a season ago, but Larson has liked what he has seen so far.

"We have some returners but a lot of depth this year," Larson said. "It will be a battle for who is starting this season all over the diamond. Whoever is making plays will get the start. We definitely have a lot to replace, but I think we have the players to do so."

The Wildcats open their season with a doubleheader today in Harrisonville. Louisburg will have its home opener Thursday as it hosts Spring Hill in a single game at 6:15 p.m.