

# Mix of experience, youth ready to lead Wildcat softball



***Louisburg senior Addy Stohs is one of four returning starters to the Wildcat softball team this season.***

This year's version of the Louisburg softball team will look much different than the year before, and for good reason.

The Wildcats had to say goodbye to five senior starters, including both of their starting pitchers, who played on the varsity level since they were freshmen.

It will be a difficult core to replace, but Louisburg coach Nick Chapman is optimistic about the group he has coming back, including four returning starters and 5-member senior class.

"I'm excited for this season," Chapman said. "We lost some



seniors with a lot of experience last year, but our seniors this year have taken on the leadership role and done a great job with it. They have been positive leaders and role models for our younger girls. Our team culture is fantastic right now. Every girl is bought in and they encourage each other to help our team grow.”

The Wildcats will be led by their four returning starters in seniors Addy Stohs, Katie McKain, Brynley Bauer and junior Shyloh Waite. All four saw a lot of varsity competition last season and Stohs is the team’s returning middle of the order bat.

McKain will start in centerfield for the Wildcats, while Bauer will resume her duties as the team’s starting catcher. Waite will move from her outfield spot a year ago and is the starting shortstop.



***Louisburg senior Brynley Bauer gets a hit during a game last season. Bauer returns as the team’s starting catcher.***

“I have high expectations for this group,” Chapman said. “We are still chasing a season of being .500 or better and I want us to win a regional game and find our way into the state tournament. The best part about this group is that they are in it for each other. They don’t come with drama. They want to get better at practice everyday and they help each other get better everyday.”

Brotherton, who is in her first year of varsity action, will start at third base, while Stohs will return as the team’s starting first baseman. Junior Raeya Keagle and Brotherton will share time at second base, while freshman Annabelle Hathaway could also see time at third.

Junior Paytyn Van Tyle, sophomore McKinley Harmon and freshman Lydia Copeland will share time in the corner outfield spots. Copeland will also catch alongside Bauer.

“We’ll be fairly young, but we will still have



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“Offensively, I think we have a great mix of girls who can hit the ball hard anywhere and girls who can play small ball really well. It’s not going to be one girl who we are going to rely on. We are going to rely on 1-9 to make our offense move. Every girl in the lineup is important.”

Louisburg will also feature some new faces on the mound. Keagle and Van Tyle will start for the Wildcats, while Harmon and Hathaway will also see some varsity innings.

“They each offer something a little different and they work hard to hone their craft,” Chapman said. “We are going to put a solid defense behind them and work together as a unit to have as clean of a defense as possible.”

The Wildcats will open their season Thursday when they travel to Frontenac for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4 p.m.