

# BASEBALL



AN INSIDE LOOK  
AT TEAMS ON  
LOCAL DIAMONDS

## EAST COWETA HIGH SCHOOL

### INDIANS 'STRONGER' AFTER RETURNING BULK OF LAST YEAR'S ROSTER THIS SPRING

**T**he adjective used most to describe East Coweta's baseball team — at least by its head coach — is “stronger.”

Whether that translates into more victories or a run at reclaiming a region title still remains to be decided.

But the Indians seem well ahead of where they were heading into the 2-7A schedule at this point last year.

East Coweta's 2018 lineup was on a learning curve with new faces at just about every position except catcher, where four-year starter and Auburn signee Ryan Dyal routinely found himself at other positions.

Dyal found himself at first, third and center field while the Indians coaching staff moved players around the lineup trying to plug holes left by the previous graduating class.

“We should be stronger physically and a year older from last year,” Indians head coach Franklin DeLoach said.

There's not as much movement this year, though Dyal has already rotated between behind home plate and first, but equally less uncertainty.

The front-end of East Coweta's pitching staff, which was green at the varsity level a year ago, is now well established while led by junior Austin Bunn,



Logan Frady has helped bolster a pitching staff that made strides last spring in their first varsity action.

who most recently shut out McEachern in a complete-game, four-hit shutout.

As a 10th grader, Bunn posted a 1.78 ERA with 73 strikeouts in 51 innings pitched. A 5-4 record was indicative more of a Indians team that was greener than in 2017 while having to replace seniors at nearly every position, most notably among six on the mound.

So far, Bunn's been even tougher to hit, going 1-0 in his first 16 2/3 innings with a 0.42 ERA and 19 strikeouts compared to two walks.

He was among three underclassmen that were also named to the 2018 All-County First Team while joining Dyal and senior second baseman Tony Player.

At least nine position players are back with starting time on the varsity, with some already getting

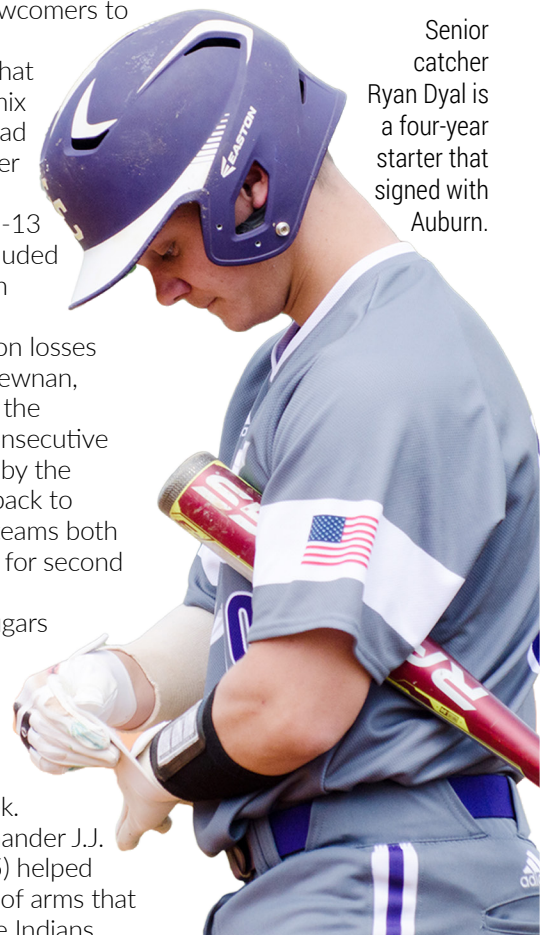
a push from newcomers to the roster.

The hope is that a competitive mix internally will lead to taking another step forward following an 18-13 season that included a 12-3 record in Region 2-7A.

All three region losses came to rival Newnan, which snapped the string of five consecutive championships by the Indians dating back to when the two teams both finished in a tie for second behind Luella.

Only the Cougars may have the pitching depth to match East Coweta's as region play begins this week.

Junior right-hander J.J. Freed (6-2, 175) helped extend a string of arms that have helped the Indians



Senior catcher Ryan Dyal is a four-year starter that signed with Auburn.

## GHSA REGION 2-7A

hold opponents to four or fewer runs over the first seven games of the season.

After being limited to less than an inning through six games, Freed struck out six while combining with Levi Wilson on a no-hit performance over Pebblebrook to open Region 2-7A play at home.

A 14-1 victory saw the two Indians combine for nine strikeouts over five innings to continue a strong start for East Coweta pitchers.

Junior right-hander Jacob Howell, at 6-4, 190 pounds, has stepped in and posted a sub 1.00 ERA through his first 9 ½ innings in two starts, both of which went for no-decisions.

Another junior, Logan Frady, is equally getting comfortable in his first varsity season. The younger brother of former All-County Pitcher of the Year Mason Frady, now at Liberty, has a 1.68 ERA through 8 ½ innings, allowing two earned runs and striking out nine.

Logan Frady joins Daniel Smith and Jeff Sangster as position players who can rotate in on the mound, with Frady playing center. Smith has experience at third and Sangster at both corner infield positions.

Frady and Howell each went three innings in a 3-1 loss against Lassiter on Friday, Feb. 22., with sophomore Quinlan Wiley pitching the final inning. Two of Frady's three runs allowed were earned.

Internal competition, along with depth, has seen only three Indians start all six games heading into Tuesday's win over Pebblebrook.

They include Player and



Seniors William Kelley, left, and Mark Sangster both return in 2019.

“We should be stronger physically and a year older from last year”

— East Coweta head coach Franklin DeLoach



outfielders William Kelley and Landon Underhill.

Kelley is coming off an All-County Second Team Selection after batting .287 with 24 runs and 19 RBIs. The senior signed in February with Florence-Darlington College.

Underhill, who appeared in 13 games as a freshman while batting .353 in 34 at-bats, has picked up where

he left off, leading the Indians through six games with a .313 pace. The sophomore has also drawn a team-high five walks so far this spring.

Player returns at second base and currently leads East Coweta with 4 RBIs through the team's 3-3 start.

East Coweta's middle infield remains intact

### 2019 EAST COWETA INDIANS ROSTER

No.	Player	Yr.
1	Logan Frady	Jr.
2	Daniel Smith	Jr.
3	Landon Underhill	So.
5	Quinlan Wiley	So.
6	Tanner Floyd	Jr.
7	Jordan Kenty	Jr.
8	J.J. Freed	Jr.
9	Tony Player	Sr.
11	Brayden Carey	Sr.
12	Caleb Cashion	Jr.
15	Austin Bunn	Jr.
16	Keegan Rich	Jr.
17	Jeff Sangster	Sr.
19	Ryan Dyal	Sr.
20	Nico Senese	Fr.
21	Ashton DeLoach	Jr.
22	William Kelley	Sr.
23	Jacob Howell	Jr.
31	Levi Wilson	Jr.

Head Coach: Franklin DeLoach  
 Assistant Coaches: Brandon Blair, Mark Bowles, Tyler Ridgeway, Roc Coleman, Kyle Bowman, Lee Heaberlin, Matt Wilson

between Player and junior shortstop Caleb Cashion. A rotation at first includes Dyal, Sangster and Keegan Rich, with junior Jordan Kenty gaining starts behind the plate.

In the win over Pebblebrook, Dyal connected for his second triple of the season to help ignite a seven-run rally that opened the scoring in the bottom of the second.

A four-year varsity contributor, Dyal as pitched around in the order much of last season, but still batted .292 with 15 extra-base hits including

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## NEWNAN HIGH SCHOOL

### COUGARS LOOKING TO KEEP THE BAR SET HIGH WHILE DEFENDING TITLE

It's one thing to raise the bar higher than where it had been before. It's another to keep it where it needs to be.

With the talent on its roster, Newnan would like nothing better to both stay on top in Region 2-7A and continue to make a push in the Class 7A state playoffs in 2019 following a trip to the second round.

But head coach Marc Gilmore has been adamant with the Cougars that last year's success won't carry over through complacency.

"I told them last year doesn't matter anymore," he said. "If you were terrible last year, you better be pretty good. If you were pretty good, you better be great. And if you were great last year, you better be elite."

While now heading into Region 2-7A play, Newnan's already been tested while experiencing some highs and a few lows of a tough non-region schedule. The Cougars experienced both ends during a Saturday doubleheader where they defeated McEachern 3-2 on a walk-off single by senior Woody Waters and then struggled defensively in a 13-5 loss to Fannin County despite Tucker Barnett's first varsity homer.

"The real season begins Tuesday," Gilmore said of a region opener at home



Michael Maginnis and Jaxon O'Neal welcome Jett Lovett back to the dugout after scoring a run.



Shortstop Michael Maginnis and Thomas Collins make up two of Newnan's four starting infielder positions this season.

against Campbell that ended with a 3-0 shutout win. "I know our schedule will prepare us, especially our non-region schedule. You want to win the first 15 games, but if you don't and you win the last 15 region games you still accomplish our goals."

Mother Nature, as she tends to do in February, hasn't been kind to high

school baseball, creating an in balance in routines that should become a bit steadier as March arrives.

Newnan certainly helps itself with a front-line group of pitchers that is led by three playoff-tested seniors that were at the forefront of last year's trip to the Class 7A Sweet 16.

Senior Jaxon O'Neal, who signed with Gordon

State after being named All-County Co-Pitcher of the Year in 2018, opened the year with scoreless outings against Northgate and Spalding before blanking Campbell through six innings and striking out 11 batters.

The left-hander emerged into the role of an ace in his junior season, finishing with a 7-1 record and a 1.47 ERA for the Cougars with 80 strikeouts in 62 innings.

Senior right-hander Jake Martin was just as strong as the other-half of Newnan's top-two pairing during last year's perfect 15-0 run en route to the 2-7A championship. The Georgia Southern signee has a 2.75 ERA to go with five victories including a no-hitter against rival East Coweta at home.

Add a third top-line pitcher in senior lefty Logan Hudson — whose heroic effort in Game 3 of a first-round series with eight

## GHSA REGION 2-7A

scoreless innings against Roswell — highlighted a 2018 season that included a 4-2 record and two saves to go with a 2.25 ERA.

Depth, however, is the area where Newnan's coaching staff have worked hardest to build on in the first three weeks. Cougars pitching coach Mitch Williams has implemented a program in between starts that Gilmore feels will pay "huge dividends for us as the season goes on to keep us healthy."

"I do have questions when it comes to depth. Where are we going to be on the back end of our bullpen?" Gilmore asked. "I think that's what caught up to us at the end last year, was the fact that we did rely heavily on those guys throughout the year. We're doing a much better job of being conscious of that this year."

Much of Newnan's success was a combination

of top-level standouts like outfielder Wil Wilbanks, an All-County selection now at Columbus State, and key contributions from former seniors who were effective in their role.

Graduating senior James Hawk gave Newnan 25 solid innings behind the top trio of starters and picked up the save to close the first-round series win against Roswell.

Gilmore is hoping senior Lyle Johnson can fit into Hawk's former role among only four other returning varsity players that recorded innings pitched last year. They include seniors Anthony Darrow and Johnny Cash.

"We've only got three other guys on the varsity that we look to pitch, so we're going to be looking at some younger guys getting some opportunities, especially the guys on JV," Gilmore said. "My big thing is if they maximize their

### 2019 NEWNAN COUGARS ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos	Yr.
1	Woody Waters	OF	Sr.
2	Mason McKibbin	2B	Sr.
3	Everett Davis	3B	Sr.
4	Jett Lovett	OF/P	Fr.
5	Austin Roberts	C	Jr.
7	Lyle Johnston	P	Sr.
9	Cole Merry	C	Sr.
10	Jake Martin	P	Sr.
11	Aaron Brumby	P	Sr.
13	Johnny Cash	3B/OF	Sr.
15	Logan Hudson	P	Sr.
16	Tucker Barnett	1B	Sr.
17	Michael Maginnis	INF	So.
19	Thomas Collins	INF	Jr.
20	Nicholas Crossing	1B	Sr.
21	Seth Bruce	INF	Jr.
22	Christian Winskie	OF	Jr.
23	Jaxon O'Neal	P	Sr.
24	Anthony Darrow	P	Sr.
28	Max Wilson	C	Sr.

Head coach: Marc Gilmore  
 Assistants: Braden Griner, Mitch Williams, T.C. Boyd, Brett Butts, Richard Warren, Brian Morgan



Senior outfielder Woody Waters was an All-County selection in 2018

"I know our schedule will prepare us, especially our non-region schedule. You want to win the first 15 games, but if you don't and you win the last 15 region games you still accomplish our goals."

— Newnan head coach  
 Marc Gilmore

opportunities on the JV and ninth grade team, they deserve a shot at the next level up."

Losing a large and productive senior class, new faces were already expected, some of which are already becoming mainstays during the first month of the season. A group of 14 seniors returns with hopes of keeping leadership qualities intact.

Sophomore Michael Maginnis steps into a starting shortstop position held last year by senior Elliott Schubert. Along with twin brother Hamilton, a starting right fielder, the Flagler signees combined for 61 hits and 58 runs while both batting over .300.

## NORTHGATE HIGH SCHOOL

### ALL THE RIGHT NUMBERS COULD ADD UP TO BIG YEAR FOR VIKINGS

**T**he saying goes there's strength in numbers. Such has been the case so far for Northgate, which is off to a 5-2 start heading toward its Region 5-6A opener.

Depth is a strength in nearly every area a baseball lineup needs for success, including head coach Todd Herrington's staff.

Now in his fourth season with the Vikings, Herrington welcomed back former assistant Tim Lowery to a leadership core that already included Lee McDermott, Justin Crews and Matt Ross.

From Northgate's pitching staff to its starting lineup, there are equally enough returning talent to comprise a roster entirely of seniors and juniors that has the potential to improve on last year's third-place region finish.

"We feel real confident in our pitching staff and we have some depth there. And we also have depth everywhere else. I think it's the first year we've had as much depth as we've had in the last four years. Right now it's just juniors and seniors and I'm real proud of our senior class. They were freshmen my first year and they've really taken over a leadership role in our program."

The Vikings won 9 of 10 games to close the regular season in 2018, but while unable to repair some of



Northgate's varsity baseball roster is dominated by seniors and juniors with a large core group of returners.

the damage from a stretch in March where the team dropped four of five in region play between South Paulding, Alexander and Creekside.

It left Northgate having to finish a 23-win campaign on the road against Region 6-6A runner-up River Ridge, which blazed a path to the state semifinals before the Knights were knocked out by eventual GHSA champion Pope.

A first-round state playoff series at home would fit the bill of a Viking lineup that remains largely intact despite losing three All-County players to graduation.

Six other selections, however, are back this spring for a lineup that already has shown the ability to put up big numbers offensively.

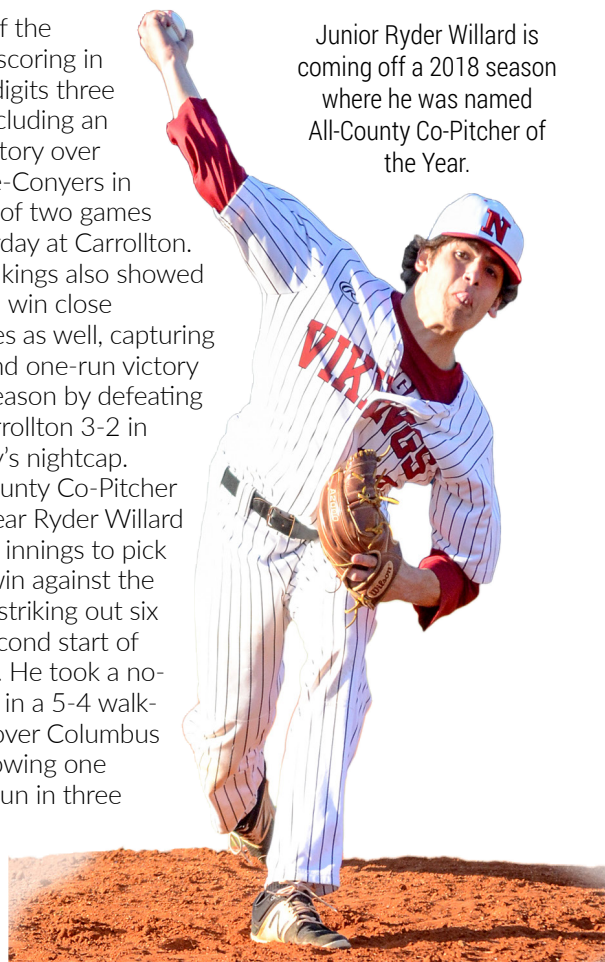
Northgate's been held under three runs just once through the first seven

games of the season, scoring in double digits three times including an 11-7 victory over Heritage-Conyers in the first of two games on Saturday at Carrollton.

The Vikings also showed they can win close ballgames as well, capturing its second one-run victory of the season by defeating host Carrollton 3-2 in Saturday's nightcap.

All-County Co-Pitcher of the Year Ryder Willard went six innings to pick up the win against the Trojans, striking out six in his second start of the year. He took a no-decision in a 5-4 walk-off win over Columbus after allowing one earned run in three innings.

Junior Ryder Willard is coming off a 2018 season where he was named All-County Co-Pitcher of the Year.



## GHSB REGION 5-6A

“We’re doing a lot of good things, staying positive. We’re hitting the ball a lot better right now and I hope that continues,” Herrington said. “Coach McDermott is doing an outstanding job with our hitters and he’s buying into what he’s telling them. It’s an aggressive philosophy, but it’s a simple philosophy. [It’s] basic

mechanics and have confidence swinging the bat.”

Of eight positions outside the mound, only one had a major vacancy in shortstop where seniors Will Queen and Chase Bevil both graduated. Junior Juniors Christian Dyer and Elliott Vickery have both stepped in so far, alternating starts in Saturday’s victories.

A rotation of two and even three follows at nearly every position on the field with a core group that’s been interchangeable so far depending who’s on the mound.

Willard won’t have to go it alone while joined by returning All-County selections Reid Fagerstrom and Dalton Brooks among last year’s staff.

As a sophomore, Willard was dominating while finishing with a 6-0 record

and a 2.00 ERA. The right-hander posted 74 strikeouts over 49 innings.

Fagerstrom, who has verbally committed to Georgia State, is also back for his junior year after going 5-2 with a 1.80 ERA and 56 strikeouts in 38 ½ innings last year.

Both Fagerstrom and Brooks, a senior, are capable of holding down first base when not on the mound. Brooks joined Willard in posting an unbeaten record in 2018, going 5-0 with a 0.60 ERA and 43 strikeouts.

Brooks got a win in relief in Saturday’s 11-6 win over Heritage-Conyers that had Northgate rallying for five runs in the bottom of the fifth to break open a tie game.

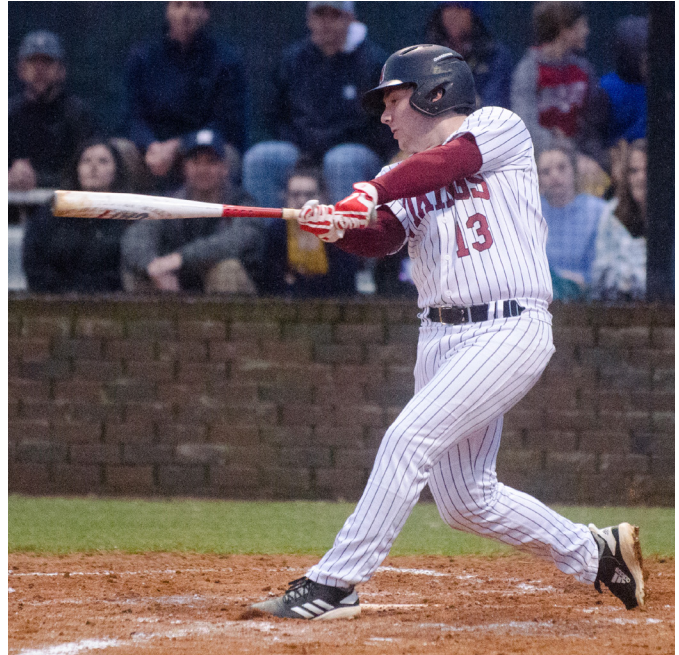
So far, however, Herrington hasn’t been shy in trotting out

as many arms as he can while getting ready for the start of the region schedule on March 4 at home against Langston Hughes.

“The biggest thing I wanted to see out of this team was a focus on leadership and having good character,” Herrington said. “We had some guys with some bad body language and we focused on things like that. You have to stay consistent.”

“The biggest thing I wanted to see out of this team was a focus on leadership and having good character. “We had some guys with some bad body language and we focused on things like that. You have to stay consistent.”

— Northgate head coach  
**Todd Herrington**



Senior third baseman Shawn Ragan was an All-County selection in 2018 and has continued a hot start at the plate this spring.

### 2019 NORTHGATE VIKINGS ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos	Yr.
2	Christian Dyer	MIF	Jr.
4	Myles Cook	OF	Jr.
5	Eric Henderson	2B/P	Sr.
6	Elliott Vickery	MIF	Jr.
8	Conner Mask	C/IF/OF	Sr.
8	Reid Fagerstrom	P/1B	Jr.
10	Sam Jennings	OF	Sr.
11	Dalton Brooks	P/1B/OF	Sr.
12	Darren Kirkley	P/1B	Sr.
13	Shawn Ragan	3B	Sr.
14	Jacob Reiter	P/1B	Jr.
15	Cam Freeman	P/1B	Jr.
16	Matthew Henderson	C/1B	Sr.
17	Robert Smith	P/INF	Sr.
18	Isaac Corbitt	P/OF	Jr.
22	Andrew Baldwin	C	Jr.
23	Tanner Hughes	P/OF	Jr.
24	Jake Queen	IF/OF	Jr.
25	Donovan Cash	IF	Jr.
32	Ryder Willard	P/OF	Jr.
33	Colin Schmits	C	Jr.

Head Coach: Todd Herrington

Assistants: Lee McDermott, Tim Lowery, Justin Crews, Matt Ross

**See VIKINGS on page 14**

## TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

### STATE TITLE IN TOW, LIONS HAVE CHANCE TO EARN RESPECT IN MOVE TO GHSA

**I**t's not often that a baseball team coming off a dominating season that ended with a state championship may feel like it still has something to prove.

But it might very well be the case with Trinity Christian, which even with a trophy in hand, may not be getting the respect it seemed to earn last year on the field.

"There's a lot of people that I read at night before I'm about to go to bed," said head coach Blake Austin.

The Lions tried to answer critics in every way possible in 2018, returning to the GISA Class AAA finals during a 24-2-1 season and finishing the job at Mercer University by capturing a state title.

A new season, however, brings new surroundings. Now as a member of the GHSA, Trinity Christian has gained some attention with a preseason state ranking, but while sitting behind a group of schools led by Tattnall Square, another former GISA powerhouse.

With two Region 5-A opponents also ranked ahead of them prior including Holy Innocents, whom the Lions face Friday to open March's schedule on the road, Trinity suddenly has gone back from the hunted to the role of the hunter.



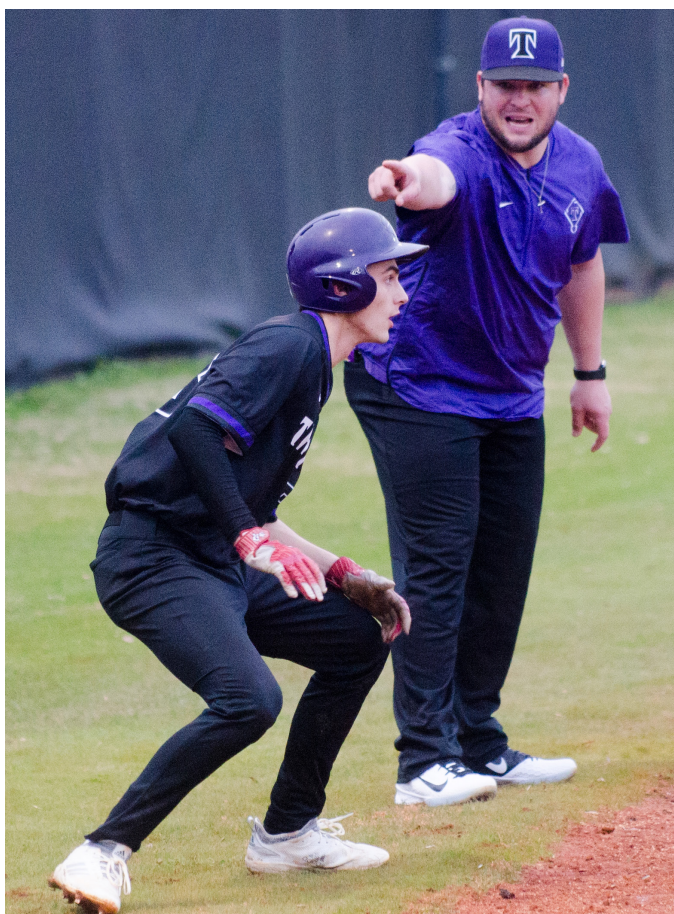
Senior shortstop Maury Weaver returns this spring following an All-County season where Trinity won a title.

That itself could be a positive considering the difficulties that teams sometime face when trying to put a state championship season behind them.

"It's a tough question. I thought we were over it until that Coweta County [Sports Hall of Fame] Banquet," Austin said, where the Lions were invited as a special guest to honor its GISA championship.

Opponents have tried to take their best swing at Trinity so far, including Landmark, which jumped ahead 2-0 in the first only to have the Lions score 12 of the final 13 runs of a victory.

The pieces are definitely in place to make another playoff run in Trinity's GHSA debut, even with taking hard hits through graduation. Pitchers Jake Estes and Charles Fuller along with catcher Alex



Trinity Christian head coach Blake Austin has a large nucleus of contributors from last year's GISA title including Thomas Cordier .



## GHSA REGION 5-A

### TRINITY CHRISTIAN 2019 ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.
2	Stephen Spurgeon	P/1B	Sr.
3	Thomas Cordier	P/OF	Sr.
4	Chaz Crawford	OF/P	So.
5	Kyle Riesselmann	OF/P	Sr.
6	Brenan Burks	2B	Sr.
7	Bryce Wilcox	Util	Fr.
8	Shep Hancock	P/3B	Jr.
9	Brady Anderson	C/Util	Jr.
10	Christian Allen	OF/P	Jr.
11	Maury Weaver	SS	Sr.
12	Clay Stephenson	C	Jr.
15	Austin Whitaker	INF	Jr.
17	Luke Aycock	P/1B	Jr.
18	Derek Mitchell	1B	Sr.
19	Cal Smith	OF/P	Sr.
21	Jake Lyle	P/3B	Sr.
22	Kyle Stephenson	P	So.
23	Josh Bellflower	C/INF	Jr.
24	Chase Metcalf	P/INF	Sr.
25	Carson Beach	3B	Fr.
34	Colin Rader	3B	Jr.
42	Jayce Blalock	Util.	Fr.

Head coach: Blake Austin

Assistants: Kevin Elrod, Brooks Austin, Bobby Totten

finished with more homers than anyone outside Valdosta's Colby Thomas among returning varsity players in Georgia, having now both made college decisions.

Smith signed with Northwest Florida State and opened the year 6-for-12 with 3 RBIs in his first four games.

Riesselmann has a .416 average and has been unhittable as a reliever while expecting to take a bigger role on the mound than a year ago.

In five innings, the Georgia State baseball signee has yet to allow a run, striking out 12 batters including six straight to close a 12-3 win over Landmark.

Top to bottom, however, Trinity has the makeup of a problem for opponents that can't be solved by pitching around two batters or chasing one arm off the mound.

Junior Shep Hancock heads into March as the Lions' on a roll, racking up a .538 average with 14 RBIs. He has three homers in Trinity's last two victories after also starting the season with a shutout performance on the mound with eight strikeouts in five innings.

The list of returning

starters doesn't end there. Shortstop Maury Weaver and second baseman Brenan Burks, who batted .473 among the pair of All-County middle infielders in 2018, provide strength up the middle.

Thomas Cordier adds a third returning starter in the outfield with Smith and Riesselmann. Senior Chase Metcalf, who closed out the deciding Game 3 against Frederica in last year's GISA championship series, has made a quick recovery from a broken leg suffered midway through football season.

He made consecutive appearances in relief against Vidalia and Landmark, working more than an inning in both games.

**See LIONS on page 15**

Williford were major contributors in addition to key leaders.

The losses from last year also include GISA Pitcher of the Year Trevor Crews.

"It's hard to replace guys like that. They've been the program since they were like in sixth grade," said Austin. "That's all we know. Williford, Estes, Fuller, all guys who are around in this program. So it's a learning curve."

Through four games, however, Trinity has answered the call in 2019, outscoring its first four GHSA opponents 33-10 during an undefeated start.

It's not that much of a surprise.

"We're leaning on our

offensive approach to help out our pitching development," Austin said. "The first two games we faced a kid going to Mississippi State and Georgia Tech. We're facing some really good arms early on so it's challenging our hitters to be their best. We're not throwing up 15 runs, but we're scoring runs against good opponents."

Trinity had the top-two players in the state returning when it came to batting average in seniors Cal Smith (.540) and Kyle Riesselmann (.534), both of whom helped lead home-run derby when it came to Lions home games.

With 13 and 12 dingers, respectively, the duo

Trinity senior Kyle Riesselmann, who signed with Georgia State, was needed more for his bat than his arm last season, but has already shown the potential to equally dominate on the mound.



## THE HERITAGE SCHOOL

### HAWKS HOPING TO SOAR BACK INTO STATE PLAYOFFS IN DANBURY'S DEBUT

**F**irst-year Heritage School head baseball coach Ryan Danbury probably couldn't have picked a better time to come aboard in the Hawks' program.

The 2019 season will feature one of its youngest teams in recent memory with lone senior All-County pitcher Henry Arnall just now making it onto the field three weeks into the season after making an immediate transition following Heritage's GISA Class AAA state basketball championship.

Arnall should factor in the Hawks' success this spring as a returning ace. Yet he hasn't been needed out of desperation for a team that has handled itself well enough to dominate Landmark Christian 8-1 in its home opener on Saturday just a few hours before Heritage's basketball team took the court in Americus on its way to a title.

The Hawks connected for eight hits, three of which from leadoff hitter Jacob Rochester, who also belted one of two homers in the win over Landmark before shaking off an early three-run deficit against Flint River on Tuesday.

Heritage batted around in the bottom of the second inning for an eight-run rally en route to a 13-5 victory that was called after five due to darkness.

Danbury sees both youth



Despite a roster that includes only one senior this spring, Heritage School has the majority of last year's starters reuniting.

“There's so much more that goes into baseball, the mental side. We're really working on a lot of things mentally to get them thinking about situations before they come up,”

— Heritage School head coach Ryan Danbury (at right)

and depth as assets while taking over a program that's two years removed from a trip to the GISA semifinals.

“We're really young.



## GISA REGION 1-AAA

We have one senior. So I've pretty much told my juniors, you're my seniors too," he said.

While in his first year, Danbury also saw a benefit with being with a majority of his team during a successful football season where Heritage reached a GISA semifinal game.

"The expectations. I established them during football season. The culture was set," he said. "A lot of times you come in and you have to change the culture. We hit the ground running."

It's the third coaching change for Heritage in three seasons following a year where the Hawks missed qualifying for the state playoffs for the first time since at least 2004.

But Danbury isn't starting from scratch either following efforts by Jake Copeland and recent Coweta Sports Hall of Fame inductee Greg Hamilton over consecutive years.

"Most of our guys have been playing varsity two or three years already. There's really nothing new that they haven't seen," Danbury said. "I have such a good core group of guys, so it's easy to just roll with it."

Joining Danbury is pitching coach Cale Foster, with the two both having spent time as instructors at Home Plate in Peachtree City.

Danbury, who played four years at Valdosta High, has created practices where players work with position coaches. While he takes the outfielders, assistant Gatlin Curlee has the infield and Foster the pitching staff.

"We've got a college feel. The guys go with their



Heritage head coach Ryan Danbury is pleased with his team's athleticism down the middle of the field including middle infielders Brandon Scruggs, right, and Andrew Rich.

### HERITAGE SCHOOL HAWKS 2019 ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.
1	Jacob Rochester	C/INF	Jr.
2	Andrew Rich	INF	So.
3	Vinny Carnazzo	1B/P	Jr.
4	Thomas Gray	P/INF	Jr.
5	Jacob Cackett	C/3B	Jr.
6	Garrett McGee	C/INF	8th
7	Brandon Scruggs	INF/OF/P	Jr.
8	Jay Chapman	P/1B/LF	So.
10	William Bryant	P/OF/INF	So.
11	Grant Evans	P/OF	Jr.
16	David White	P/RF	So.
22	Knox Hagleston	P/OF	Jr.
23	William Booth	2B	Fr.
24	Henry Arnall	P/C/INF	Sr.
25	Thomas Morenzi	P/1B/OF	
28	Hershall Smith	OF	Jr.
30	Wyatt Anderson	1B	Fr.
35	Jon Jon Williams	OF/P	Jr.
63	Noah Meyer	OF	Fr.

Head Coach: Ryan Danbury  
 Assistants: Cale Foster, Gatlin Curlee

position coach," he said. "Every coach knows their role, every player knows who they're with."

Dividing up duties has

helped Heritage also work on both fundamental and situational aspects of the game for a roster that has a mix of athletes who play

travel ball. Danbury admits it's been a change for the group.

"It's been a huge adjustment on the baseball field. There's so much more that goes into baseball, the mental side. We're really working on a lot of things mentally to get them thinking about situations before they come up," Danbury said. "It's been really good. Some of these guys have played a ton a baseball. They're helping out with the younger guys who just play school ball."

Despite an abundance of underclassmen, there's also experience. Arnall and sophomore David White are both experienced starting pitchers.

White opened his third varsity season striking out six over four scoreless innings against Callaway.

The Hawks head coach also finds athleticism down the middle of the field. Junior Brandon Scruggs and sophomore Andrew Rich, who were standout skill position players in the

**See HAWKS on page 16**

# 2019 COMPOSITE SCHEDULE

## SATURDAY, MARCH 2

### Varsity

12:00 p.m. Lee County at Newnan  
 12:30 p.m. East Coweta vs. Denmark at Starr's Mill  
 3:00 p.m. East Coweta vs. Ola at Starr's Mill  
 6:00 p.m. Mountain View at Newnan

### JV

12:00 p.m. Newnan at Mountain View (DH)

### Ninth Grade

11:00 a.m. Woodward Academy at Newnan (DH)

## MONDAY, MARCH 4

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. Hughes at Northgate  
 6:30 p.m. Trinity Christian at Eagle's Landing Christian

### JV

4:30 p.m. Trinity Christian at Eagle's Landing Christian

### Ninth Grade Baseball

5:30 p.m. Northgate at East Coweta

## TUESDAY, MARCH 5

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Campbell at East Coweta  
 5:30 p.m. Newnan at Westlake  
 TBA Trinity Christian at Drew Charter

### JV Baseball

5:55 p.m. East Coweta at Northgate  
 5:55 p.m. Villa Rica at Newnan

### Middle School Baseball

4:00 p.m. Landmark Christian at Heritage School

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. McIntosh at East Coweta  
 5:55 p.m. Northgate at Hughes

## THURSDAY, MARCH 7

### JV Baseball

5:30 p.m. McIntosh at East Coweta

### Ninth Grade Baseball

5:30 p.m. East Coweta at McIntosh

### Middle School Baseball

4:30 p.m. St. Luke's at Heritage School

## FRIDAY, MARCH 8

### Varsity

4:00 p.m. Heritage School vs. Edgewood Academy, Golden Park  
 5:55 p.m. Westlake at Newnan  
 6:00 p.m. East Coweta at Campbell  
 8:00 p.m. Heritage School vs. Glenwood Academy

## SATURDAY, MARCH 9

### Varsity

11:00 a.m. Heritage School vs. Lee Scott Academy, Golden Park  
 1:00 p.m. Trinity Christian at Hebron Christian  
 2:00 p.m. Heritage School vs. Glenwood Academy

### JV Baseball

11:00 a.m. Troup at East Coweta (DH)

### Ninth Grade Baseball

11:00 a.m. East Coweta at Troup County (DH)

## MONDAY, MARCH 11

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Columbus at East Coweta

### JV

4:30 p.m. Buford at Trinity Christian  
 5:30 p.m. Northgate at East Coweta

### Middle School Baseball

4:00 p.m. Trinity Christian at Heritage

## TUESDAY, MARCH 12

### Varsity

4:30 p.m. Creekside Christian at Heritage School  
 5:00 p.m. Trinity Christian at Paideia  
 5:30 p.m. Westlake at East Coweta  
 5:30 p.m. Newnan at Wheeler

### Ninth Grade

5:55 p.m. LaGrange at Newnan

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. South Paulding at Northgate  
 5:55 p.m. Newnan at Central-Carroll

### JV Baseball

5:30 p.m. Starr's Mill at East Coweta

### Ninth Grade

5:30 p.m. East Coweta at Starr's Mill

## THURSDAY, MARCH 14

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Our Lady of Mercy at Trinity Christian  
 6:00 p.m. Thomas County Central at East Coweta

### Middle School

4:00 p.m. Landmark Christian at Heritage School

## FRIDAY, MARCH 15

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. Wheeler at Newnan  
 5:55 p.m. Northgate at South Paulding  
 6:00 p.m. East Coweta at Westlake

## SATURDAY, MARCH 16

### Varsity

11:00 a.m. Trinity Christian at Tattnell Square  
 1:00 p.m. Heritage School at Flint River

2:00 p.m. Trinity Christian vs. PacelliO at Tattnell

2:30 p.m. Northgate vs. Port St. Joe, Fla. at Callaway High

### JV

10:00 a.m. East Coweta at McIntosh (DH)  
 10:00 a.m. Northgate at Newnan (DH)  
 1:00 p.m. Heritage School at Flint River

### Ninth Grade

10:00 a.m. McIntosh at East Coweta (DH)

## MONDAY, MARCH 18

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. Northgate at Mays

### JV

4:30 p.m. Drew Charter at Trinity  
 5:30 p.m. East Coweta at Newnan

### Ninth Grade

5:30 p.m. Newnan at East Coweta

## TUESDAY, MARCH 19

### Varsity

4:30 p.m. Holy Spirit at Heritage School  
 5:30 p.m. East Coweta at Wheeler  
 5:30 p.m. Pebblebrook at Newnan  
 6:30 p.m. Galloway at Trinity Christian

### JV

5:55 p.m. Newnan at Whitewater  
 5:55 p.m. Trinity Christian at Buford

### Middle School

4:30 p.m. Heritage School at St. Luke's

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. Whitewater at Newnan  
 5:55 p.m. Mays at Northgate

### JV Baseball

5:30 p.m. McIntosh at East Coweta

## THURSDAY, MARCH 21

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Troup at East Coweta  
 5:55 p.m. Newnan at Pebblebrook  
 6:30 p.m. Trinity Christian at Eagle's Landing Christian

### JV

5:30 p.m. Eagle's Landing Christian at

### Middle School

5:00 p.m. Heritage School at Flint River

## FRIDAY, MARCH 22

### Varsity

4:30 p.m. Dominion Christian at Heritage School  
 5:55 p.m. St. Thomas Aquinas at Newnan  
 5:55 p.m. Creekside at Northgate  
 6:00 p.m. Wheeler at East Coweta

### JV

5:30 p.m. Trinity Christian at Eagle's Landing Christian Academy

5:55 p.m. Newnan at Whitewater

### Ninth Grade

5:55 p.m. Newnan at Whitewater

# 2019 COMPOSITE SCHEDULE

## SATURDAY, MARCH 23

### JV

10:00 a.m. Newnan at East Coweta (DH)  
12:00 p.m. Mt. Vernon at Trinity Christian  
**Ninth Grade**  
10:00 a.m. East Coweta at Newnan (DH)

## MONDAY, MARCH 25

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Trinity Christian at Alexander  
5:55 p.m. Northgate at Creekside

### JV

5:00 p.m. Trinity Christian at Paideia

### Ninth Grade Baseball

5:30 p.m. Fayette County at East Coweta

## TUESDAY, MARCH 26

### Varsity

4:00 p.m. Heritage School at Notre Dame Prep

5:30 p.m. Trinity Christian at Wesleyan

6:00 p.m. East Coweta at Newnan

### JV

5:55 p.m. Newnan at Woodward Academy

### Ninth Grade

5:55 p.m. Newnan at Bowdon

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. Tri-Cities at Northgate

### JV

5:30 p.m. East Coweta at Starr's Mill

5:30 p.m. Newnan at Heard County

### Ninth Grade

5:30 p.m. Starr's Mill at East Coweta

5:55 p.m. Newnan at LaGrange

## THURSDAY, MARCH 28

### Varsity

4:30 p.m. Peachtree Academy at Heritage School

5:00 p.m. Weber School at Trinity Christian

### JV

5:30 p.m. Northgate at East Coweta

5:55 p.m. Woodward Academy at Newnan

### Ninth Grade

5:55 p.m. East Coweta at Northgate

### Middle School

4:00 p.m. Heritage School at Central Christian

## FRIDAY, MARCH 29

### Varsity

4:30 p.m. Heritage School vs Creekside Christian, Red Hawk Complex, McDonough

5:55 p.m. Northgate at Tri-Cities

6:00 p.m. Newnan at East Coweta

6:00 p.m. Auburn, Ala. at Trinity Christian

## SATURDAY, MARCH 30

### Varsity

1:00 p.m. Trinity Christian at James Clemons High (Ala.)

## TUESDAY, APRIL 2

### Varsity

4:00 p.m. Woodward Academy at Newnan

## WEDNESDAY APRIL 3

### Varsity

TBD Trinity Christian at Norcross Tournament

## THURSDAY, APRIL 4

### Varsity

1:00 p.m. Northgate at LaGrange  
TBD Trinity Christian at Norcross Tournament

## FRIDAY, APRIL 5

### Varsity

1:00 p.m. Northgate at East Coweta  
TBD Trinity Christian at Norcross Tournament

## MONDAY, APRIL 8

### Varsity

4:00 p.m. Flint River at Heritage School

5:30 p.m. Pebblebrook at East Coweta (DH)

5:30 p.m. Campbell at Newnan

5:55 p.m. Northgate at New Manchester

### JV

TBD Flint River at Heritage School

### Middle School

TBD Flint River at Heritage School

## TUESDAY, APRIL 9

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Trinity Christian at Strong Rock

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Campbell at East Coweta

5:55 p.m. New Manchester at Northgate

## THURSDAY, APRIL 11

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Mt. Vernon at Trinity Christian

### Middle School

5:00 p.m. Flint River at Heritage School

## FRIDAY, APRIL 12

### Varsity

4:30 p.m. Holy Spirit at Heritage School

5:30 p.m. Newnan at Wheeler

5:55 p.m. Alexander at Northgate

6:00 p.m. Westlake at East Coweta

## SATURDAY, APRIL 13

### Middle School

4:00 p.m. Heritage School at Holy Ground

## MONDAY, APRIL 15

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. Northgate at Alexander  
TBD Region 5-A Tournament, TBD

## TUESDAY, APRIL 16

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. East Coweta at Wheeler  
5:55 p.m. Newnan at Pebblebrook

6:00 p.m. Heritage School at Dominion Christian

TBD Region 5-A Tournament, TBD  
Middle School

4:00 p.m. Central Christian at Heritage School

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

### Varsity

5:55 p.m. Northgate at Douglas County  
TBD Region 5-A Tournament, TBD

## THURSDAY, APRIL 18

### Varsity

4:00 p.m. Notre Dame at Heritage School  
6:00 p.m. East Coweta at Newnan

## FRIDAY, APRIL 19

### Varsity

5:30 p.m. Jones County at East Coweta  
5:55 p.m. Douglas County at Northgate

## TUESDAY, APRIL 23

### JV

6:00 p.m. Heritage School at Peachtree Academy

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

### Varsity

TBA GHSA State Playoffs First Round

## THURSDAY, APRIL 25

### Varsity

TBA GHSA Playoffs First Round

## THURSDAY, MAY 2; FRIDAY MAY 3

### Varsity

TBA GHSA Playoffs, 2nd Round

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, THURSDAY, MAY 9

### Varsity

TBA GHSA State Quarterfinals

## TUESDAY, MAY 14, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

### Varsity

TBA GHSA State Semifinals

## MONDAY, MAY 20-TUESDAY, MAY 21

### Varsity

TBA GHSA State Championships

## COUGARS

Wilbanks, last year's starter in left, was Newnan's top run producer with five homers and 50 RBIs while batting .434.

"We don't need it to be done by one person. We had 40-plus runs scored between the Schuberts. We don't need that done by one guy but we need it to be spread everything out to make up for filling that gap of losing those guys," Gilmore said.

"Usually when people try to do things by themselves usually the burden weighs them down emotionally."

Waters, a senior center-fielder who led Newnan with a .484 average a year ago, joins infielder Thomas Collins and senior catcher Max Wilson among returners who either started or were regulars in the lineup last spring.

Waters went 3-for-4 in the win over McEachern with a stolen base.

With at least five positions left by graduating seniors to fill, there have been ample opportunities in February to compete for playing time.

"That's how Thomas Collins got on the varsity [last year]," said Gilmore, who elevated Collins as a sophomore to become Newnan's starter at third through the majority of 2018. "I want to give them every opportunity to maximize. When I feel that you've had every opportunity you can and you've maximized them and it's not working out, we've got to look somewhere else."

Wilson was Newnan's DH last year and can catch or play first, where senior

Nick Crossing currently has hold of a starting job held last year by graduating All-County selection Jacob Blair (.312 average, 24 RBIs).

After batting .292 in his varsity debut, Collins has been playing both third and second base, where two other graduating seniors split time last year.

Senior Everett Davis has slotted in at third and junior Seth Bruce at second depending where Collins is playing.

Johnny Cash has seen action in left field among a group of outfielders that includes junior Christian Winskie.

Freshman Jett Lovett is getting a rare opportunity for a ninth grader under Gilmore to start in right field early on.

Lovett could also be used on the mound depending on how depth emerges throughout the lineup.

Ninth grader Chasin Cash contributed to a no-hitter against Spalding with O'Neal and Darrow.

Waiting in the wings is another talented freshman in James Thorpe, a high ranking outfielder among the Class of 2022.

Whether he's needed will depend on how well the current roster handles its opportunities to succeed.

"I'm not a fan of guys jumping classes," Gilmore said. "I think it's something in regards to loyalty and trust. You start having guys jump classes and you have a sophomore that goes, is this something that I'm going to have to constantly worry about for the next three years?"

Senior newcomer Aaron Brumby has also seen action on the mound through the first seven games. Junior Austin

Roberts has been used as a designated hitter, with Barnett, a senior first baseman, also getting playing time early during a 4-3 start to the season.

Newnan's senior class includes infielder Mason McKibbon, who has been a valuable pinch/courtesy runner. Senior Cole Merry and Roberts are also

working behind the plate with Wilson.

"Going into the season there were only 3 or 4 things I knew of for sure that I didn't think needed any changes," Gilmore said. "I think we've got some holes that we're going to need to fill in. But I don't feel like it's the time to panic."

## VIKINGS

Senior Robert Smith, a Second Team All-County honoree at second base, has pitched two scoreless innings in wins over Newnan and Carrollton.

Juniors Jacob Reiter, Tanner Hughes and Cam Freeman have also made multiple appearances so far to go with at least one in relief by senior Darren Kirkley.

Defending champion Alexander, which has seven starters returning including All-State pitcher/outfielder Austin Slate from a Cougar team that went 23-11, may again be the team to beat in 5-6A.

South Paulding also returns four senior starters from a 22-10 lineup that was last year's region runner-up.

Northgate has the bulk of its offensive leaders back from 2018. Senior Conner Mask, who batted .439 during an All-County campaign a year ago, can either catch or play outfield.

Depth at catcher continues with juniors Andrew Baldwin and Colin Schmits along with senior Matthew Henderson

Both Dyer and Smith,

who batted .316 with 15 RBIs, can rotate in at second with senior Eric Henderson.

Senior Shawn Ragan, another All-County selection, returns at third base after batting .386 with 12 RBIs in 2018. The depth among infielders also has juniors Jake Queen and Donovan Cash available.

Northgate's outfield corps include Willard when not on the mound as well as senior Sam Jennings, who also was named All-County after batting .286 with 12 RBIs. Along with Mask, juniors Miles Cook, Isaac Corbitt and Hughes all can step in among the rotation.

With as much depth on the field, Herrington is equally thrilled to have Lowery back at the high school, where he previously worked with recent Coweta Sports Hall of Fame inductee Greg Hamilton.

"He has made a tremendous difference. It's hard to coach a team with just two [varsity] coaches," Herrington said. "Especially with someone with experience like him, it's making a difference. Not only are those guys great coaches, but we all get along."

## INDIANS

five homers. He also had 28 RBIs while adding another All-County First Team selection.

Rich led last year's JV team, which finished 13-7, by batting just under .500 over the 20-game season, with Senese also hitting over .400 as an eighth grader.

At third, the Indians have used freshman Nico Senese as the primary starter, wasting no time testing his skills at the varsity level.

"We think he's got a chance to be a special player," DeLoach said of Senese, who is batting .300 over his first 15 at-bats with four walks.

Senior returner Brayden

Carey, who joins Frady, Underhill and Kelley among a rotation of outfielders, led the win over Pebblebrook at the plate while going 2-for-4 with 4 RBIs. It was highlighted by a two-run double in the second.

A massive junior class of 11 roster players also includes newcomers Tanner Floyd, Wilson and

Ashton DeLoach, all of whom played on last year's JV team.

The 2019 schedule again includes three games against five Region 2-7A opponents, with two games against Newnan on March 26 at Newnan and March 29 at home. The county rivals play for the final time on April 18 at Newnan.

## LIONS

Stephen Spurgeon also expects to be counted on even more while among Trinity's returning pitchers. The senior picked up a win against Landmark, allowing two unearned runs in 3 ½ innings and recording four strikeouts.

Cordier, who only needed to pitch three innings last year, also expects to have a much bigger role on the mound while signing with Walton State.

"I've really been impressed with our pitching," Austin said. "I really didn't think we had as much, but we have elite arms on the mound."

The core group hasn't been complacent either.

Metcalf made a speedy recovery after breaking his leg midway through the football season and made consecutive relief appearances in wins over Landmark and Vidalia, where he threw two scoreless innings.

Riesselmann and Smith both expanded their regiment in the offseason to work on pitching even though neither expects to see time on the mound in college.

All have been examples of the dedication Austin has seen from this returners.

"They have really spent a lot of time and a lot of effort on developing their arms," Austin said. "It's really a credit to those guys and those families that they've used extra time and extra money to add a piece of their game to help Trinity out. Thomas is about the only one going to college for that. They've come to me and said, coach this is what I want to do."

Trinity's offense, which in a win over Landmark had all nine Lions hitters posting at least one of its 15 hits or recording at least one RBI, should also help newcomers ease in without having to press.

Three new faces now in the lineup include junior Josh Bellflower, who steps into Estes' former starting job at first base.

Junior Clay Stephenson,

"We're throwing our guys against tougher region opponents. The wins are great, but it's more about developing our kids," he said. "That's the plan. The plan is to develop first and worry about the wins later."

**Trinity Christian head coach Blake Austin**

whose older brother Connor is currently at West Georgia, is ready to step in behind the plate after seeing time last year to spell Williford.

Austin equally didn't hesitate to add talented freshman Jayce Blaylock right into the varsity lineup both at third and a DH.

Two years after making national news as part of Peachtree City's Little League state champions, Blaylock has hit .500 in his first four varsity games with 3 RBIs.

Even more important than his talent on the field, Blaylock's elevation to the varsity gives him a chance to be around the current crop of seniors.

"He eats up JV pitching. Plus we need to develop him quick. He's got a big freshman class behind him, so developing him as a leader around those guys is important," Austin said. "He's gets with those guys every day and he just

wants to be a sponge and soak everything up. That's one of the reasons why he's up. It's good for Trinity to have him out there."

The Lions' development seems more important than trying to match last year's 26-2 run, which included several wins against GHSA opponents. Austin has again upped the non-region schedule, though a deep 5-A lineup of schools should help the process.

"We're throwing our guys against tougher region opponents. The wins are great, but it's more about developing our kids," he said. "That's the plan. The plan is to develop first and worry about the wins later."

That's the plan of the coaching staff. The Lions may have another agenda.

"Numbers don't matter. It's about winning to them," said Austin.

## 2018 ALL-COUNTY BASEBALL TEAM

### GHSA Player of the Year

Will Wilbanks, Newnan, Outfield, Sr.

### GHSA Co-Pitchers of the Year

LHP Jaxon O'Neal, Newnan, Jr.

RHP Ryder Willard, Northgate, So.

### GISA Co-Players of the Year

Kyle Riesselmann, Trinity Christian, Outfield Jr.

Calin Smith, Trinity Christian, Outfield, Jr.

### GISA Pitcher of the Year

LHP Trevor Crews, Trinity Christian, Jr.

### First Team

### Second Team

1B	Jacob Blair	Newnan	Sr.	OF	Noah Aaron	Northgate	Sr.
2B	Brenan Burks	Trinity Christian	Jr.	P	Dalton Brooks	Northgate	Jr.
P	Austin Bunn	East Coweta	So.	3B	Thomas Collins	Newnan	So.
P	Alex Cawood	Northgate	Sr.	1B/P	Jake Estes	Trinity Christian	Sr.
C	Ryan Dyal	East Coweta	Jr.	P	J.J. Freed	East Coweta	So.
P	Reid Fagerstrom	Northgate	So.	P	Logan Hudson	Newnan	Jr.
P/3B	Shep Hancock	Trinity Christian	So.	OF	Sam Jennings	Northgate	Jr.
P	Jake Martin	Newnan	Jr.	OF	William Kelley	East Coweta	Jr.
C	Conner Mask	Northgate	Jr.	2B	Lucas Mapp	Newnan	Sr.
2B	Tony Player	East Coweta	Jr.	P	Chase Metcalf	Trinity Christian	Jr.
INF	Shawn Ragan	Northgate	Jr.	P	Peyton Ramey	East Coweta	Jr.
SS	Elliott Schubert	Newnan	Sr.	C	Chandler Retsky	Heritage School	Sr.
OF	Hamilton Schubert	Newnan	Sr.	SS	Will Queen	Northgate	Sr.
OF	Woody Waters	Newnan	Jr.	2B	Robert Smith	Northgate	Jr.
C	Alex Willford	Trinity Christian	Sr.	SS	Maury Weaver	Trinity Christian	Jr.

### Honorable Mention

East Coweta — Dooley Bunn, Sr.; Nick Daniel, Sr.; Caleb Cashion, So.; Bailey Psathas, Sr.; Jeff Sangster, Jr.; Daniel Smith, So.; Heritage School - Henry Arnall, Jr.; Brandon Scruggs, So.; Cole Stephens; David White, Fr.; Anthony Williams, Sr.; Newnan — Anthony Darrow, Jr.; Tripp Fallon, Sr.; James Hawk, Sr.; Josh Perry, Sr.; Austin White, Sr.; Northgate — Chase Bevil, Sr.; Christian Dyer, So.; Donovan DeVane, Sr.; Will Horne, Sr.; Andrew Washington, Jr.; Trinity Christian — Thomas Cordier, Jr.; Charles Fuller, Sr.;

## HAWKS

fall during football, slot in at shortstop and second base.

Scruggs, who also has experience in center, is able to focus as much on an infield spot with incoming junior Jon Jon Williams now in the middle of Heritage's outfield.

"We're really lucky to have that many athletes. Because it's so important to keep up the middle athletic." Danbury said. "We feel pretty confident moving our guys around."

Scruggs and Williams have also earned time on the mound so far, with Scruggs striking out two to close out the win against Landmark and Williams

striking out the side in an inning of relief against Flint River.

"We're going to surprise some people with our pitching," Danbury said.

Sophomores Luke Stoffle, Thomas Gray, William Bryant and Thomas Morenzi also have a chance to add to Heritage's pitching depth. Gray, who was called "an ultimate utility guy," pitched in the Hawks' two victories while earning the win against Flint River.

The staff so far has allowed nine hits over three games for a roster that has a dozen players listed as potential pitchers.

Vinny Carnazzo, who also threw a scoreless inning against Flint River,

is back at first base while Jacob Rochester returns and provides a veteran starter while moving to third among a pair of juniors at the corners.

Behind the plate, junior Jacob Cackett gets a chance to start. Arnall and Rochester equally have experience and can also play second along with Gray when Rich shifts to shortstop if Scruggs takes the mound.

Sophomore Jay Chapman and junior Hershall Smith are handling corner outfield duties while joining junior Knox Hagleston. Grant Evans, White and Bryant can also play outfield when not pitching.

Depth and experience

has also allowed Heritage to slowly pace the progression of freshmen Wyatt Anderson, William Booth, Noah Meyer as well as eighth grader Garrett McGee without having to immediately insert them into the mix.

"When we took over the job, there were some guys had never played the position that they're in now. But they've bought in and trusted me and my staff that we're going to put them in the best position to play at the next level," Danbury said. "It's been easy because at first they were nervous, but they're beginning to understand that they're now in the position to do this."