Bishop State softball building toward a brighter future

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By Arthur Mack

Bishop State's softball team finished 12-18 last season, and nine of the losses were by two runs or less, most coming in the last inning.

To turn that around, coach Angelo Archible beefed up his recruiting, and only two starters return. "It was a down year for us," said Archible. "We lost a lot of close games."

One returning starter is all-conference catcher Kimberly Anderson of Dothan, who hit .371 with 15 RBIs. The other is center fielder Emily Higdon, who hit only .250, but had a 1.000 fielding percentage.

"We're looking for bigger and better things from her (Higdon) this year," Archible said.

Three local players are expected to make an immediate impact -- Pamela Lenniex, a former Fairhope High standout who is a projected starter at first base; Brittanie Sayne, an ex-Mary Montgomery star who is a catcher and shortstop; and Jodie Conner, a former Citronelle star who can play shortstop or second base.

"Pamela is a great first baseman who hits the ball well," said Archible. "Brittanie has a high batting average, and Jodie plays great infield and has a good bat."

Other newcomers expected to help are ex-Davidson star Cassie Graydon, former Bryant standout Jana Stringfellow, and outfielder Hayley Stafford, formerly of Theodore.

Bishop State will play its home games at Sage Park this season while a new softball field is built at the school's Southwest Campus.

"The local talent we have should help with the crowd," said Archible. "With the new field under construction, it'll help with recruiting."

The schedule:

- **FEBRUARY:** 11-12 Gulf Shores tournament, 28 vs. Meridian CC, 29 at Judson College.
- **MARCH:** 2-3 Clark-Atlanta tournament, 5 at Meridian CC, 14 vs. Alabama Southern (DH), 31 at Jeff Davis (DH).
- **APRIL:** 3 at Faulkner CC (DH), 10 vs. Faulkner CC (DH), 11 vs. Jeff Davis (DH), 14 at Alabama Southern (DH), 17 at L.B. Wallace (DH), 19 vs. Judson College, 25 vs. L.B. Wallace (DH).
- **MAY:** 5-7 Alabama Community Colleges Conference tournament.