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Bearcat Baseball Begins Season March 18th

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports

The Dexter Bearcats have announced the Varsity baseball roster for the 2011 season. Head coach Brian Becker typically fills his roster with veteran players, but that's not the case this season. The Bearcats lost six Seniors last year that were all solid ballplayers.

This year's team will have only two Seniors, and Becker is looking for many of the younger kids to step in to full time positions at the Varsity level.

The Seniors this season are Bryn Hester and Josh Sifford. Hester will be in the "hot box" at 3rd Base for the Bearcats this season. Hester has been a solid fielder and been very useful to the team as a utility player in past seasons. As a switch hitter, Hester has been one of the top hitters for the Bearcats and will anchor the team at the plate.

Josh "SIFF" Sifford rounds out the Bearcats Senior leadership this season, and all expectations are pointing to a tremendous year. As a Sophomore, Sifford was awarded both All-Conference and All-District honors. However, a broken leg suffered in football during his Junior year limited his playing time and he didn't fully recover until late in the 2010 Season, when he got valuable playing time at 1st Base. The most notable highlight from last season was his performance at the plate. This year, Sifford will be in center field and will look to continue his outstanding work at the plate.

There will be a lot of Sophomores on the field this season for Becker and assistant coach Aaron Pixley. Chase Young comes into this season with high expectations after getting some playing time at the end of last year's season. Young also battled back from an injury during basketball and didn't become healthy until the end of the season, but batted over .400 in the final few games. Young is quick and has an excellent glove on the infield. It is expected that he will fill the shortstop role for the 'Cats this season.

Jordan Miller will be one of the sophomores to watch this season, and he will be taking command of the catcher position for the Bearcats.

"He's a good kid and very coachable", Becker said.

Miller has a strong arm that continues to improve, and he is noted as a young man that will do anything he is asked by the coaching staff.

There will be a battle between several excellent athletes to see who will join Sifford in the outfield. Daniel Fitts brings a lot of speed to the team. Zach Watson has also shown a lot of promise in Spring workouts, as he has been swinging the bat really well. Brad Potts, D.J. Dowdy and Alex Cliff have also performed well in all sports and will be an asset to the team wherever they are positioned.

The slashing, dashing running back for the Bearcat Football team, Josh Overall will move to 2nd Base position this season. Overall has always been a strong infielder and should perform very well at the position.

The greatest challenge facing the Bearcats this season is in a very young and inexperienced pitching staff. Of 130 innings pitched last season, 122 of those innings graduated with last years Seniors.

"We are currently searching for arms on the mound to go along with an inexperienced team overall." Becker commented.

The good news is that there are nine kids that have thrown from the mound in the past, but several are Freshman.

"So far, the freshman haven't looked too bad and have shown great potential." says Becker.

Owen Flowers will likely be at the head of the Bearcats' rotation this season.

"Owen is not a flamethrower," Becker commented, "but he has worked hard in the off season to become a pitcher. He spots the ball really well, has a good change up and his breaking ball keeps getting better."

The weather has not helped the practice schedule thus far, as the Baseball Bearcats have held most of their practices indoors at Southwest Elementary and the Bearcat Event Center.

"We have only had one day on the field due to the weather," Becker commented, "and we may not get back out until the first game."

The 'Cats will be in action next Friday (March 18) at Doniphan. First pitch is scheduled for 4:15 p.m.

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