

## 2019 Pope Fastpitch Outlook

2019 marks the final season that the Greyhounds will compete in region 7-AAAAAA prior to the GHSA reclassification that will occur prior to the 2020 season. The Greyhounds have had a successful run in the region capturing back to back region championships over rival Cambridge High School in 2017 and 2018 and finishing runner up to Cambridge in 2016. The Greyhounds made their 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive trip to Columbus in 2018 finishing state runner up in 6A after a final 4 finish in 2016 and a top 5 finish in 2017. Pope has been to the finals in Columbus 6 of the past 7 years and played in the state championship game 3 times over the 7 year span.



The 2018 region championship was the 3<sup>rd</sup> region championship that Pope has captured in its storied history with the other two coming in 2012 and 2017. The 2018 squad also set a new school record with 33 wins, besting the previous record of 32 held by the 2014 state championship squad. Pope posted 8 wins in the 2018 playoffs with 4 of those wins coming in Columbus all in elimination games after the Hounds faltered in the 1<sup>st</sup> game of the double elimination tournament. The beleaguered Greyhounds fell in extra innings to Harrison in the state championship game of the after posting 4 wins in less than a 24 hour, including a double header on championship Saturday to reach the final game.

If the Greyhounds hope to ascend to the heights of the 2018 team, they will have their work cut out for them as another challenging schedule faces the Hounds this season. 9 of the Hounds' 15 opponents qualified for the playoffs in 2018 and these 9 teams do not include perennial powers RiverRidge who qualified for Columbus in 2017 and return a strong team in 2019 and Lambert who is a perennial Forsyth county power who also made a trip to Columbus in 2017 and is hungry to return. Pope will start the year off with a state championship rematch that pits the 2019 Hounds vs. the 2019 Harrison Hoyas.

If the Hounds hope to pull off a 3 peat in the region and qualify for Columbus for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year some big shoes will have to be filled as the 105 win class of 2018 contributed mightily to last years runner up campaign. The middle INF will have to be replaced as starting SS and 4 year letter winner **Gracie Kittrell (Campbell University)** and 2b **Hannah Dodd** have moved on as well as 4 year letter winner **RF Jodie Smith** and one of the Greyhounds pitching aces, 4 year letter winner **Trinity Pizzuti (Emory University)**. **Caitlin Burrows**, the 2018 Greyhound of the year award winner, has also graduated leaving a leadership void that must be filled.



Fortunately, the Greyhounds return 11 players from the 2018 squad, 6 starters, including 5 All State players, **Zoe Laneaux(3b)**, **Katie Ward(OF)**, **Bailey Chapin(1b)**, **Hallie Adams(P)**, **Carolyn Deady(C)**. Rising seniors **Laneaux and Deady** were named to the 2018 – 2019 NFCA All Southeast Region team for their efforts during last years softball season. Laneaux led the Hounds with a .494 batting average, .660 on base percentage and a state best 37 BB while Deady chipped in 10 HRs and a state leading 58 RBIs. IN all, the 2019 squad will consist of 16 players, 6 seniors, 5 juniors, 3 sophomores, and 2 freshman.

### PITCHERS AND CATCHERS



Although the graduation of Pizzuti is a big loss for the Greyhounds, the Hounds do return their innings leader and wins leader from 2018 with Junior **Hallie Adams**. Adams is a 20 game winner from a season ago posting a paltry 1.2 ERA over 132 2/3 innings and has been named 1<sup>st</sup> team All State and Region pitcher of the year 2 consecutive years. Bolstering the pitching staff with Adams will be junior **Morgan Herman**. Herman logged 2 innings pitched on the varsity in 2018 and will have an expanded role in 2019. Junior **Abby Rocco** will add depth in the circle for the Hounds helping to eat up some innings for the staff. The battery mates for the pitchers will consist of **senior Carolyn Deady**, sophomore **Katie Ward**, and freshman **Emily Ricci**. Deady caught 90% of the Hounds innings in 2018 with Ward catching the rest. Between the 2, the Hounds were able to erase the opposition running game throwing out 80% of all would be base stealers. **Ricci** is a hard nosed grinder who is very polished behind the dish and will see innings when Deady is catching a breather.

### INFIELD

The infield should serve as an offensive and defensive strength for the Hounds as the Greyhounds return corner infielders **Zoe Laneaux** and **Bailey Chapin** and the Hounds add uber talented freshman **Jadyn**



**Laneaux** who will slide into the SS position to replace the loss of **Kittrell**. **Zoe Laneaux** is a fearless third baseman who has lightning quick reflexes and unmatched arm strength to go with one of the most feared bats in the state. **Chapin** is the All-Time single season HR leader for the Hounds as her 14 round trippers in 2018 set the school record. Chapin is also a stellar defender posting 1 error in 193 chances, good for a .995 fielding %. Battling it out for the 2<sup>nd</sup> base position are returning varsity player **Abby Rocco** (jr) and 1<sup>st</sup> year varsity player **Peyton McCormack** (SO). Depth in the infield will be provided by senior **Mackenzie Pease** (3b), senior **Alyssa Eman** (1b), sophomore **Katie Ward** (utility), and freshman **Emily Ricci** (utility).

### Outfield



The Greyhounds return a solid outfield with all state performer **Katie Ward** (SO), all region **Kaitlyn Wells** (JR), and sophomore **Kate East** who played a significant role in the OF and spent a ton of time in the starting lineup. **Ward** hit a stellar .424 with 8 HRs in 2018 while lighting up the highlight reels with gold glove plays. **Wells** was a .374 hitter with 5 HR and 38 RBI's in 2018 and **East** hit .375 from the left side getting on base in a variety of ways utilizing her hitting and slapping ability. Fighting for playing time in the outfield will be newcomers **Emily Ricci** (FR), **Lela Landry** (SR), and **Maura Foreman** (SR). **Jadyn Laneaux** and **Abby Rocco** could also see playing time in the Greyhounds outfield.

The Greyhounds open up on August 7<sup>th</sup> at Harrison High School at 5:30 PM and will open up region play vs. Northview at August 13<sup>th</sup> which will also mark the Greyhounds home opener for the season.

