

Warriors hope tough times behind them

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(Editor's Note: This is the sixth in a series of preseason stories about Metro softball teams. Next: Xavier)

The Washington softball program has fallen on tough times.

But after last season, when the Warriors went 2-36, Coach Fanaye Kifletsadik said she thinks the team is continually improving and hopes they can cause some problems for teams this season that pay off with a few extra wins.

“When I came in here four years ago, this was a program that was not in very good shape, but we are to the point where we are competing,” Kifletsadik said. “Last year we lost eight games by three runs or less. We didn’t have a fabulous record, but we had kids working their way to get to that next step.”

Kifletsadik said she thinks that her girls' work ethic will help them to reach their expectations, namely to get better every day and to compete in every game.

“We have a group that wants to work extremely hard, no matter the situation,” Kifletsadik said. “There are a lot of people that probably don’t expect too much from us, but we have expectations for ourselves.”

The team will be led by their four seniors, the largest senior class in Kifletsadik’s tenure as coach.

“We all got moved up eighth grade year, so we have all been here since the start,” said senior shortstop Jordan Carr, who batted .299 with 12 RBIs.

“Our strength this year is definitely going to be our seniors,” Kifletsadik said. “They have been

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through a lot in the past four years, so they know where we have come from and they know where we want to go, so having them is going to be a big bright spot for us.”

Although the team has four seniors, there are no juniors on the roster, so Washington will be a young team again this season. Despite their youth, Kifletsadik said they have experience up the middle that could help them win some games this year.

“We have experience at a lot of key positions, at shortstop, in center field and behind the plate,” Kifletsadik said. “We are hoping that that experience on the field is going to help the younger kids that we have to plug in, to help them move along seamlessly without us having to teach them everything.”

Another strength of this year's team is its chemistry. Even though the Warriors haven't had a lot of success, they stay upbeat.

“We work well together,” said centerfielder Jordon Pilcher, who batted .171 last season and will play softball at Buena Vista next season. “We like each other a lot, and we are pretty loud from the dugout and on the field.”

The Warriors have set some modest goals for themselves this year -- winning multiple conference games, sweeping a doubleheader and winning the first game at regionals. They open their season May 24 with a doubleheader at Franklin Field against Xavier.