



STAFF PHOTO BY OWEN HASSELL

Perquimans' Nate Gardner (left) and Kolby Walker (right) are part of the Pirates' 11-player senior class.

Perquimans baseball to lean on 11 seniors

PIRATES ROUNDUP

From staff reports

The Perquimans baseball team has more upperclassmen than spots on the diamond this spring.

It's a good dilemma for coach Justin Roberson and the Pirates, who are favored to repeat as Coastal 10 Conference champions (16-0 in conference last season, 24-4 overall) and make another deep run in the 1A state playoffs.

Two of those seniors were All-Area players a season ago in Nate Gardner and Kolby Walker.

Gardner will play shortstop and pitch while Walker will also be on the mound and see time at first base.

Five seniors will also vie for innings in the outfield: Mason White, Josh Parker, Ethan Winslow, Will Berry and Landon Symons.

Versatile seniors include Mitchell Byrum (outfield, infield and designated hitter) and Dustin Edwards (first baseman, left-handed pitcher, designated hitter).

Caden Trueblood can also pitch and play in the infield.

Catcher Ryan Colson — yes, another senior — returns from an ankle injury that cost him nearly all of 2014 and to Roberson "is no doubt the heart and soul of this team."

The remaining three non-seniors on the roster also look to contribute.

Sophomore Wes Phthi-

ca pitched five innings last Wednesday in a 7-0 win against Pasquotank. Perquimans is already 2-0 overall and won its Coastal 10 opener at Manteo.

Junior infielders Kyle Midgett and Gevin Nixon (who can also pitch) round out the team.

"Our pitching should be solid and defense as well," said Roberson, who is entering his fourth year coaching his alma mater. "Leadership should not be an issue with 11 seniors. I would like to see us become more mentally tough as a team. We lost a lot of offense from last year's team and will have to have some guys step it up offensively."

SOFTBALL

The Lady Pirates welcome first-year coach Dave Noble with an 18-player roster.

Perquimans (14-6, 14-2 Coastal 10 last season) is already off to a strong start, beating Manteo last week 18-6 in its opener.

Three Lady Pirates will be available to pitch: junior Chelsea Worley, sophomore Amanda Pulley and freshman Kaitlyn Christian.

The team has four seniors in outfielder Jordan Chappell, catcher/shortstop Haley Cooper, outfielder Sarah Marriner and infielder Amber Stallings, who could return off an injury during basketball season in time to play.

Utility players include Chelsea Nixon, Kayley Ron-

ca and Kele Younger. Molly Winslow, Kinlee Chappell, Rachael Lane, Brooke Wheeler, Taylor Green and Jordan Chappell are set as outfielders.

Taylor Chappell will be an infielder and freshman McRae Knapp could also be in the infield as well as catch.

TRACK

Football coach Elvin James now pulls double duty in also leading the boys and girls track teams this spring.

The Lady Pirates have more than 10 athletes led by the trio of Kenya Downing, Ashli Felton and Dazha Harvey, all past state qualifiers.

Downing will compete in the 100, relays and high jump, Felton in the 200, 300 hurdles and relays and Harvey the 100, 200 and relays.

Other relay competitors include Alexis Evans and Latori Gregory. Sarah Baker, Tomeeka White, McKenzie Twine, Shontasia Lee, Denvell Sutton, Emily Palone and Kylee Frink-Kendrick round out the group.

For the boys, James said numbers are down, but the team will have strengths in distance and field events.

"Because of our youth, this year will be a learning experience and a test of our resiliency as a team," James said.

Some of those athletes include Cole Phthisic, Charles Maus and Miles Chaulk. Da'One Mallory will be a thrower.

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A turkey grand slam may just have to wait

Are you as tired of the cold, rainy, snowy, sleety and generally bad weather as I am? This depressing weather got me to thinking about heading south. Florida has Osceolas and turkey season comes in early down there. Taking an Osceola would put me halfway to a grand slam.

There are four subspecies of wild turkey in the U.S. We have eastern turkeys here in N.C. The only state where Osceolas (meleagris gallopavo osceola) are found is Florida. Rio Grande (meleagris gallopavo intermedia) turkeys are native to Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas; the Merriam's subspecies (meleagris gallopavo merriami) are turkeys of the southeastern United States. There is some cross breeding, resulting in hybrid turkeys and some turkeys have been transplanted in areas out of their native ranges. The Eastern (meleagris gallopavo silvestris) is the most widely distributed and therefore hunted of the four. Easterns are found in 38 states and four Canadian provinces. A grand slam is taking a turkey of each subspecies. There is also a world slam that includes the two sub-species that live primarily in Mexico. The kills do not have to be completed in the same year.

The big difference in the appearance of the subspecies is the color of the tips of the tail feathers and coverts. Coverts are the feathers that form the base of the tail fan. Eastern gobblers have dark buff or chocolate brown tips. Rio's tips are more

Do It Outdoors



Wade Betts

buff or yellowish and Merriam's are pretty much white. Osceolas look mostly like easterns but are slightly smaller.

To succeed in taking a grand slam all you need is time and money, oh yeah, and luck and skill. As I understand it most of the turkeys in Florida are on private land. That means you either have to know somebody or hire a guide. Since I don't "know a guy" in Florida this one would have to be a guided hunt. Let's see; time

off from work, travel, meals, lodging, guide service and tips. That could add up to thousands of dollars. The second leg of my slam will have to wait.

Some states out west have both Merriam's and Rios on public land, other than the travel time and distance those might be easier. I just need to plan it around a family vacation. My dream road trip would be to kill an Eastern in the mountains of NC, head to Florida, go on a fully guided hunt and take an Osceola. Next stop on my odyssey would be Texas for a Rio. Then I'd head on to Arizona for my Merriam's and a beer at Big Nose Kate's. A grand slam is definitely on my bucket list, but for now I'll continue to pursue eastern gobblers in North Carolina.

If you want to learn how to cook a wild turkey, come visit me at the Perquimans County Library on March 24 at 6 p.m.. I'll have a bag full of props, some wild game recipes and maybe some campfire cooking tips and tricks.