

Warriors confident they can compete in the Big 5 this spring

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The Del Norte Warriors have reason to feel excited about the 2022 high school baseball season, and a young roster appears to have taken some big steps since last spring.

The Warriors got the new campaign off to a winning start last week when they rolled over Hoopa 13-2 in six innings, and head coach Roger Schultz has an assortment of weapons at his disposal this year, particularly on the mound.

The Warriors have nine pitchers on the roster, including four strong lefties who will give their head coach plenty of options when league play rolls around.

And because of that depth, Schultz believes his team can compete with the rest of the league.

“Our defense should be strong, our pitching should be strong,” he said. “I don’t see any reason we can’t compete in the Big 5.”

Another reason this team appears to have taken some big steps from last season is the amount of work a core group of players have put in during the offseason after spending the summer months honing their talents while playing for the successful Northern Humboldt Giants American Legion team.

Seniors Jared Dixon and Isaac Arriola and juniors Brody Mattz and William Bommelyn have all benefited from playing Legion ball for the past few years and all four appear ready to lead the way for the Warriors this spring.

Dixon will split time between the mound and shortstop and is expected to be one of the most dangerous players in the Big 5.

“Jared Dixon is my guy,” Schultz said. “He’s the kid who will do anything you want. He just grabs his glove and goes out and doesn’t care what he has to do.”

Arriola, Mattz and Bommelyn are all lefties and will present a lot of matchup problems pitching wise for the rest of the Big 5.

“I really like our pitching this year,” Schultz said. “My pitching roster is extremely deep.”

Tyler Starcher is another senior left-handed pitcher who returns to the team this year after sitting out last season and is also expected to provide some much-needed depth on the mound.

And that depth is just a part of what Schultz likes about this year’s team.

“I like their youthful exuberance, and their willingness to go out there and compete,” he said. “I’m all about effort and being positive, and I really like these guys’ work ethic. They’re baseball players. Their baseball IQ is good.”

Mattz got the new season off to an impressive start in last week’s win, pitching four strong innings for the victory.

The junior standout held the visitors to just one hit and no walks, while also striking out eight.

Five of his teammates had multiple hits in the win, including sophomore Collin Tromble who finished 3-for-4.

Bommelyn and Cole Blackburn each went 2-for-4 with a double, while Arriola and freshman Preston Daniels each finished 2-for-2, with Arriola hitting a double.

Next up, the Warriors travel to play at the Yreka tournament, which begins on Friday.