

Juniors come up short

Written by Mike Kelly
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The Watauga Juniors suffered a disappointing loss in the opening round of the state tournament on Saturday afternoon.

A slow start and missed opportunities allowed King (the District 2 champion) to beat Watauga 7-5 at the Brevard Sports Complex in Pisgah Forest, NC. King scored three times in the first inning and hung on to win the game.

"We definitely had our chances," said Watauga Juniors coach Andy Gainey. "They scored three on us early and it put us a hole. But the kids fought back, and they play hard, but we just couldn't get that clutch hit."

Watauga, the District 7 champions, left ten men on base, and they left the bases loaded three times.

"We just left too many men on base," Gainey said. "But we hit the ball well. We just couldn't get the big hit in those situations."

Watauga made nine hits. Clay Mizner was Watauga's most productive hitter with two hits and two runs-batted-in. Jeffrey Gainey had a hit, walked twice and scored two runs.

Tyler Sturgell suffered the loss. He went five innings and he threw 84 pitches. He coughed up five runs on six hits and struck out two.

"He's a great kid and a great player," Gainey said. "He's smart and he works hard. He really battled today. He never gave up on himself after the slow start.

"He did a good job keeping us in the game, but we just couldn't pull it out."

Watauga will now play either Transylvania County or East Asheville in a losers bracket game Sunday afternoon at 3:30 pm. Matt Lambert is Watauga's scheduled starter.