

UPDATED: WHS Volleyball Wins Playoff Opener

Written by Mike Kelly

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The Watauga High volleyball team won its post-season opener in convincing fashion on Saturday afternoon at Lentz-Eggers Gym.

The Pioneers (24-3 overall), the No.1 seed from the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference, defeated North Mecklenburg (8-16 and the No.4 seed from the I-Meck Conference) in a three-game sweep in the first round of the Class 4A of the state playoffs. The Pioneers, who were never seriously challenged in the match, won 25-17, 25-8, 25-14. The win moves WHS into a second-round game against McDowell on Tuesday night at home.

McDowell (16-11) advanced on Saturday by knocking off South Meck 3-0 down in Marion.

"It's a relief to finally get that first playoff win behind us," said WHS coach Kris Hagaman. "I thought we came out well prepared and got the job done."

The Pioneers featured a balanced attack. Senior Bailey Hagaman, who was named the NW 3A/4A Offensive Player of the Year, led the way with 31 assists, four digs and three kills. Colby Combs and Hannah Stewart, who were named to the NW3A/4A All-Conference squad, each had ten kills.

"Bailey makes us go, no doubt about it," Hagaman said. "And our front line is very strong. There's a lot of people we can count on up there. We did a good job moving the ball around. I was impressed with North Meck. They had some good players, but they just broke down during the course of the match."

Brooke Rhoades, an all-conference selection, had four kills and eight blocks; Channing Hagaman, who was named Honorable Mention All-Conference, had eight kills and 12 digs; Sylar Hicks had nine digs.

NOTES: The Pioneers had four all-conference selections: Bailey Hagaman, who was also the Offensive Player of the Year, Brooke Rhoades, Hannah Stewart and Colby Combs. Channing Hagaman was named honorable mention.