

## WHS Softball Earns Split

Written by Mike Kelly  
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The Watauga High softball team split its double-header with East Wilkes on Saturday afternoon at the Sports Complex.

The double-header consisted of two five-inning games. The Cardinals won the opener 5-3; the Pioneers (7-10 overall) won the night cap 2-1. Riley Pudney had a triple in game two. Kim Robinson drove in the game-winning run with an infield single in the bottom of the fourth. "I really felt that if we had those last two innings (the sixth and seventh), that we may have pulled out the first game," said WHS coach Stephanie Long. "But we managed to win the second game, and that's all that matters. Now, we can take some time off and get some rest. I really feel the girls need a break in the worst way."

Pinch-hitter Tori Wright, who will play softball at Peace College in Raleigh this fall, led off the inning with a walk. With one out, Taylor Drummonds walked and Shelby Drummonds' sacrifice bunt move the runners to second and third. That set the stage for Robinson's game-winning heroics. Pudney had a double, a triple and scored a run in Saturday's twinbill. Robinson had two doubles, a single, scored a run and drove in a run on the day; Shelby Drummonds got the win in relief in game two. She went two innings, gave up one hit and struck out five.

"The girls had a real tough week," Long said. "We really need to get away and regroup. We have two big games coming up in early May, and I want to make sure that we're fresh and ready to go."

The Pioneers celebrate Senior Day against Freedom on Thursday, May 5; they close out the regular-season with a must-win game at South Caldwell the next day. And the Pioneers, who defeated South Caldwell in Boone on April 4, must beat the Spartans to nail down the final automatic bid to the state playoffs. If the teams split their season series, it will most likely come down to a play-in game between the teams at the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference tournament. "It's going to be an interesting finish to our season, that's for sure," Long said. "But I feel we're ready. The girls have come a long way this season. We just keep improving. It's been a step-by-step process, but it's been a good experience for all of us."