

## Hardee Announces Watts To Start Tuesday

Written by Mike Kelly  
Monday, 02 May 2011 12:45

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Watauga High baseball coach Pete Hardee has announced that Jake Watts will get the starting nod Tuesday against St. Stephens in the opening round of the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference tournament.

Ethan Greene was originally scheduled to start, but Hardee has decided to go with Watts. "It's nothing personal," Hardee said. Ethan has thrown the ball well, and he's been solid, but Jake is our ace right now. I can't take any chances. We've got to go deep in this tournament. I really want to win it, but if we don't, I want to make sure we make the state playoffs."

Watts leads the team in numerous pitching categories---earned-run-average, wins, appearances, games started, complete games, shutout and innings pitched. Watts, who threw a shut out against R.S. Central last Wednesday, is 6-3 with a 3.20 ERA. And he's 1-0 in two appearances against St. Stephens. In 9 1/3 innings of work, he's give up five earned runs for a 3.85 ERA.

But he struggled in his last outing against the Indians. Watts, who got the win on April 21, went 4 2/3 innings, gave up three earned runs, struck out seven and walked five. The Pioneers find themselves in a two-way battle for the final playoff spot in the NW3A/4A with Alexander Central. The teams will most likely meet Friday night in a must-win, semifinal match-up Friday night at MS Deal Stadium in Granite Falls, NC.

Now, there's rain in the forecast for Tuesday. The game is scheduled to begin at 7 pm. If we play, our coverage begins at 6:30 pm on Oldies 100.7 FM.

**WHS TENNIS OPENS STATE PLAYOFFS TUESDAY**

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The Watauga High men's tennis team opens the state playoffs at home Tuesday. The Pioneers, the No.1 seed from the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference, take on Davie County, the No.2 seed from the Central Piedmont 4A Conference.

The Pioneers are 15-4. The Class 4A Western Regional will be played this Friday and Saturday Ardrey Kell High School in Charlotte. Competition begins at 2 pm Friday afternoon. The Pioneers will have six regional qualifiers in the field.

Steve Lake and Michael Smith; Landon Taylor and Harrison Battle will represent WHS in doubles play. Patrick O'Neal and Chris Ludwig will represent WHS in singles play. Lake and Smith were conference champions in doubles play; O'Neal was conference champion in singles play.