

UPDATED: WHS Softball Clinches Playoff Spot

Written by Mike Kelly
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The Watauga High softball team marched its way into the state playoffs Friday night.

And the Pioneers got it done in dramatic fashion as they wiped out an early 4-0 deficit and defeated South Caldwell 12-5 in Sawmills. The win clinches the No.2 seed in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference and guarantees WHS a home game in the opening round of the state playoffs, which begin on Tuesday, May 17.

The Pioneers, a No.4 seed, will play Hibriten, the No.5 seed, at home on Monday night in the opening round of the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference tournament at 6 pm. The semifinals and finals will be played at Alexander Central. And if the Pioneers win, they will play the Cougars in Taylorsville in the semifinal round on Tuesday at 4:30 pm.

Riley Pudney, who is making a strong argument for all-conference honors, backboned the attack. She belted her first career home run---a two-run shot---that snapped a 4-4 tie. The Pioneers (8-11 overall; 6-6 NW3A/4A) proceeded to score seven runs in the inning and put the game out of reach.

"It was a great way for us to end the regular season," said WHS coach Stephanie Long. "It's been a project all season, but things are really starting to come together. Our goal is to make a strong showing in the playoffs. My goal is to get us to the state finals."

Pudney was 3-4 with two singles, a home run and two runs scored. Kim Robinson, who also homered in that seven-run fourth inning, was 3-5 with a pair of singles, a home run, and two runs scored. Taylor Drummonds had two hits and scored three times; Shelby Drummonds had two hits and scored twice; Hope LaPointe had two hits; Nicole Dollar and Elizabeth Dollar each had one hit. Shelby Drummonds got the win. She gave up a run on two hits in five innings of work.

The Pioneers, who will most likely play the No.3 seed from the MEGA 7 Conference in the opening round of the state playoffs.

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WHS SOCCER:

The WHS women's soccer team snapped its three-game losing streak in a big way Friday night. The Pioneer pounded South Caldwell 9-2 in Sawmills. Hannah Younger scored four goals to pace the attack. Kendyl Baird had two goals and assists. The Pioneers (12-5-1), the No.1 seed among the Class 4A schools in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference, will host a first-round state playoff game on Wednesday. The Pioneers will possibly play the No.4 seed from the I-Meck Conference out of Charlotte.

Bethany Miller, Tori Derrick, and Ivy Wilcox closed out the scoring. Jeanette Vines had two assists; Jazymine Maxwell also had an assist.

"I am so proud of the way the girls played tonight," said WHS coach Brittany Bolick. "We had great possession and beautiful goals, and we played like a team and really got back on track and ready for playoffs."

The JV team won 3-0. Maddie Parrish had a goal and an assist. Marcie Mahoney and Hali Wood-Miller had the other goals. Cole Ellis had an assist.