Written by Mike Kelly
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The Watauga High men's tennis team was eliminated from the state playoffs on Tuesday afternoon. The Pioneers (16-5) came up short against Ardrey Kell in the second round of the Class 4A State Dual-Team Playoffs. The Knights (11-2), the No.2 seed from the Southwestern 4A Conference, defeated WHS 6-0 at the Sports Complex.

The Pioneers dropped three tie breakers in the match. Steve Lake dropped a three-set decision to Jim Fan of the Knights, 4-6, 7-5, 10-8 at No.1 singles; Michael Smith lost in three sets to Mike Roberts 4-6, 6-2, 10-6; and David Thompson defeated Harrison Battle 5-7, 6-2, 10-7 at No.3.

"I thought we played well today," said WHS coach Scott Taylor. "We were in 5 of the 6 singles match losing 3 in 3rd set breakers. Our guys came to play and that was all I could ask of our team. It has been a good season,and we are looking forward to next year."

Lake and Smith will represent WHS at the individual state championships this weekend in Raleigh. Lake and Smith, who won the doubles championship in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference, finished third at regionals last week and qualified for states.

Lake and Smith will face Will McDonald and Josiah Boda of Scotland County in their first match. The winner will face either Paul Yamane and Jack Riazzi of Winston-Salem R.J. Reynolds or the doubles team of Jeff Cobb and Will Burton of Raleigh Millbrook in the second round.

In Class 3A, Brad Bowman of Hickory takes on Turner Votipka of Nash Central in his first match, and Paul Hogan of Hibriten plays Nick James of Wilson Fike in the opening round. In Class 2A, Evan Day and Jesse Massucco of Wilkes Central take on Kia Brewington and Nathan Woolard of Siler City Jordan-Matthews in their first match, and Garrett Lakey of the Eagles takes on Eric Lagueruela of Trinity Wheatmore.

The state finals will be played at Raleigh-Millbrook Exchange Park. Competition begins at 9 am.

Ardrey Kell 6, WHS 0

Singles:

No.1 - Jim Fan(AK) def Steve Lake 4-6 7-5 10-8
No2 - Mike Roberts(AK) def Mike Smith 4-6 6-2 10-6
No.3 - David Thompson(AK) def Harrison Battle 5-7 6-2 10-7
No.4 - Thomas King(AK) def Landon Taylor 6-3 6-4
No.5 - Karthik Arunkumar(AK) def Chris Ludwig 6-1 6-1
No.6 - Justin Mauney(AK) def Partick O'Neal 6-3 7-5

WHS SOFTBALL:

The Watauga softball team was eliminated from the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference tournament Tuesday afternoon.

Chelsea Wilkinson of Alexander Central threw her second perfect game against the Pioneers (9-12) this season as the Cougars blasted WHS 18-0 in 4 1/2 innings in the semifinal round in Taylorsville. The Cougars broke the game open with a ten-run fourth inning.

The Cougars will play Fred T. Foard in the finals Wednesday night. The Tigers advanced by knocking off St. Stephens 4-1 in Tuesday's second semifinal game.

The state softball playoffs begin Tuesday, May 17. WHS will host a first-round game against the No.3 seed from the MEGA 7 Conference.