Written by Mike Kelly
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Watauga High baseball coach Pete Hardee has announced that the PIoneers will play Alexander Central at Smith Stadium/Beaver Field on the campus of Appalachian State University Monday night.

The Pioneers (17-7), riding a six-game winning streak, will have the right-hander Ethan Greene on the mound. Greene defeated Alexander Central in the semifinal round of the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference tournament on May 6. Greene, who came on in relief for starting pitcher Tyler Jones, went seven innings, gave up no runs, scattrered four hits, walked one and struck out six. Now, this is the fourth between the schools this season, and their first meeting ever in the state playoffs.

The Pioneers have also won six of their last seven games against the Cougars (14-11). But Alexander Central snapped a five-game slide against WHS, winning a 13-10 slug-fest on April 15 at Pioneer Field. Taylor Pennell hit for the cycle in that game. And catcher Lukas LaSalle, who will attend ASU this fall to play baseball for the Mountaineers, is hitting a lofty .706 against the Pioneers in his career.

The Cougars advanced to second-round play by beating Lake Norman 7-2 , the No.1 seed from the I-Meck Conference, in the opening round of the state playoffs last Thursday. The Pioneers advanced by beating Olympic 11-1 in five innings.

Our coverage begins tonight at 5:30 pm on Oldies 100.7 FM. The winner of this game will play either Porter Ridge or East Gaston in the Western Quarterfinals Thursday or Friday night. If the Pioneers win and Porter Ridge advances, WHS will play on the road. But if WHS wins and East Gaston advances, the Pioneers will host that quarterfinal game.