

Morganton Slams Watauga, 16-4

Written by Mike Kelly
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The Morganton All-Stars remembered all too well what happened the last time they played Watauga National.

The Watauga 11-12-year-olds rallied to beat Morganton 9-8 with a two-run rally at Catawba Meadows last Tuesday night. The loss dropped Morganton into the losers bracket of the District 7 tournament; the win moved Watauga National into the district championship game. But Morganton turned the tables on Watauga Monday night as they belted the Nationals 16-4 in the District 7 semifinals at Optimist Park in Boone. The teams will play a rematch in a winner-take-all scenario Tuesday night at 5 pm at Catawba Meadows. Ironically, Watauga National did not throw its best pitchers in Monday's match up, and Morganton responded by jumping out to an early 8-0 lead by the third inning. Morganton put it away in the sixth. Leading 10-3, Chase Crump smacked a grand slam to highlight the frame. But it didn't stop there as Morganton hit three consecutive home runs in the frame. Joey Watson homered, Graham Gilliam, Case Taylor and Austin Sauls each drove in a run for Watauga National. The Nationals smothered Morganton's high powered offense last Tuesday. Morganton had scored 43 runs in its first two tournament games, but Taylor came on in relief last Tuesday night and threw three strong innings allowing Watauga National to rally. Morganton has been explosive in the District 7 tournament, scoring 79 runs in five games (15.8 runs-per-game). The winner Tuesday night advances to the state tournament in Forest City, NC this weekend. Morganton went to the Little League World Series in South Williamsport, Pa., in 2004.