

## Pioneers Look To Halt Losing Streak

Written by Mike Kelly

Thursday, 11 October 2012 15:59

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The Watauga High football team hopes to turn its fortunes around Friday night. The Pioneers (4-4 overall; 1-2 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) are mired in a three-game losing streak, and they're also battling the injury bug. And

if things weren't bad enough, the Pioneers take on South Caldwell, the best team in the NW3A/4A Conference, Friday night at Jack Groce Stadium.

The Spartans (8-0; 4-0) won their first conference title in 18 years last fall, and they haven't missed a beat this season. The Spartans begin the night in a first-place tie with Alexander Central (the Spartans play the Cougars next Friday night at home), and they're looking to win back-to-back titles for the first time in school history. The Spartans boast a stingy defense that's only given up 71 points this season (the Spartans led the state with seven shutouts last season), and they coughed up 59 of those points in a pair of victories against Hibriten (36-29 on September 14) and Hickory (41-30 last week). They've also posted five shutouts this season. And they've done it with four returning starters.

"Our goal is be consistent every year," said South Caldwell coach Butch Carter. "Our kids have bought into our system. Our goal isn't to be cocky. We want to be confident."

Offensively, the Spartans are led by junior running back Zac Pollard, who has 1,911 rushing yards this season. Pollard, who ran for more than 1,386 yards and 18 touchdowns last season. And he wasn't South Caldwell's primary guy last season. Devin Potter, who ran for 1,600 yards and led the NW3A/4A Conference in rushing, was the main man last season. But Pollard hasn't missed a beat.

"He's a talented running back, and he runs hard," said WHS coach Tom Wright. "And they've got a very good offensive line in front of him. That's makes for a tough combination. It's going to be a real challenge stopping that Friday night."

Pollard ran for a season-high 352 yards and scored five TD against Hickory last Friday night. He also had scoring runs of 50-and 64-yards. Now, this will be the 36th meeting between the Pioneers and the Spartans. South Caldwell leads the all-time series with 20 win and 15 losses. And the Spartans have won two in a row in the series, which includes a 20-0 win in Sawmills last fall.

But the Spartans have had their problems winning in Boone. They're 3-4 against WHS on the road dating back to 1998. And the Spartans haven't won in Boone since 2008, when they blanked WHS 13-0 in a steady down pour at the old Jack Groce Stadium. The Pioneers beat South Caldwell 20-15 in Boone in 2009.

"We can't worry about that," Carter said. "Watauga is a good football team, and they play especially tough at home. We just have to play our game, give it our best shot, and hope that it's good enough."

Injury-wise, Tripp Taylor is out with a broken jaw he suffered in the third quarter of last week's game at Alexander Central. Jay Harrill will make his second varsity start at quarterback. Collin Augustine, who suffered a broken collarbone against Avery on August 31, is a game-time decision; wide receiver Cameron Baker, who missed the last two games with a thumb injury, will play; Kenan Fox, who re-aggravated an ankle injury last Friday night against the Cougars, is questionable.

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Coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

### NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

SOUTH CALDWELL 4-0; 8-0

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 4-0; 5-3

HIBRITEN 2-1; 5-3

HICKORY 1-2; 4-4

**WATAUGA** 1-2; 4-4

ST. STEPHENS 0-3; 1-7

FRED T. FOARD 0-4; 2-6

### FRIDAY NIGHT'S GAMES

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**SOUTH CALDWELL @ WATAUGA**

HIBRITEN @ HICKORY

ST. STEPHENS @ FRED T. FOARD

STATESVILLE @ ALEXANDER CENTRAL

**Photo Courtesy: Zac Pollard, PHOTO SUBMITTED**