

Pioneers Travel To Indian Trail

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 27 October 2012 16:48

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association has released its state playoff pairings. And as the late Jackie Gleason use to say, "A little traveling music, please." And the Pioneer, a No.14 seed in the west, have a haul. WHS (5-6),

which defeated St. Stephens 43-21 Friday night on Senior Night at Jack Groce Stadium, will make a three-hour trip to Indian Trail, N.C., located in Union County, to play Porter Ridge (9-1), the No.1 seed from the Southern Carolina 3A/4A Conference, and the No.3 seed in the west. The Pirates defeated Sun Valley 16-0 Friday night to nail down the No.1 seed among the Class 4A schools in the SCC (ironically, Porter Ridge and Sun Valley are the only Class 4A schools in the conference). Weddington, which lost to Sun Valley (49-42 on October 19), but defeated Porter Ridge (7-0 on October 12), is the No.1 seed among the Class 3A schools. Weddington, Porter Ridge and Sun Valley finished in a three-way tie for first place in the overall standings. Weddington nailed down the top seed among the 3A schools with a 17-9 win against Marvin Ridge Friday night. The Pirates outscored their opponents 350-68 with three shutouts. And the Pirates posted lopsided victories against Piedmont (58-7 on August 24), Forest Hills (38-6 on August 31), Kannapolis-Brown (41-14 on September 14), Parkwood (69-0 on October 5), and Anson County (55-0 on October 19).

Porter Ridge officially opened its doors in the fall of 2005. The Pirates have only been playing football for eight years. And after they posted seven wins in their first four years of existence, which included an 0-11 season in 2005, the Pirates have gone, 13-2, 14-1 and 9-1 with three consecutive SCC titles the last three years. The Pirates have also made it to the Class 4A Western Finals the last two years. The winner of WHS-Porter Ridge will play Alexander Central or A.C. Reynolds in a second-round game Friday, November 9. This is the first meeting between the Pioneers and the Pirates on the grid-iron, but the schools met in the Class 4A sectional finals in baseball in 2011. The Pirates bested WHS 1-0 in that game. Jake Watts, a rising sophomore at Milligan College (an NAIA school in Johnson City, TN.) suffered the loss in his final game as a Pioneer.

The Pioneers snapped a three-game losing streak in the state playoffs last fall by knocking off Alexander Central in the first round at home.

Alexander Central (5-6), the No. 10 seed in the west, has lost three in row. The Cougars suffered a 58-51 shootout loss against Hibriten Friday night. South Caldwell (11-0), which has played in the Class 4AA division the last two years, drops down to Class 4A this season. The Spartans, who captured the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference championship for the second year in a row (the first time they've won back-to-back conference titles in school history), will play Hopewell (4-6) at home Friday night. The winner plays T.C. Roberson or Sun Valley in the second round.

In Class 3A, Hibriten (7-4) travels to Hickory (7-4) Friday night. It's a rematch of NW3A/4A teams. The Red Tornadoes defeated Hibriten 21-13 on October 12 to nail down the No.1 seed among the class 3A schools in the NW3A/4A. The Red Tornadoes, led by first-year coach Tom Harper, closed out the regular season with a three-game winning streak. Hickory blasted Fred T. Foard 63-0 in Friday night's season finale. The Panthers have won two in a row. The winner will play either Forestview or Lawndale-Burns in the second round.

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In Class 2AA, Ashe County (4-7), which finished the season with a disappointing loss at East Wilkes, travels to Newton-Conover (9-2) Friday night. The winner will play Bandys or East Burke in the second round; the Huskies haven't won a playoff game since 2007. And in Class 1AA, Avery (3-8), which broke its eight-game losing streak Friday night with a 13-6 win against Mitchell, travels to Lake Norman Charter (9-1). The Vikings lost in the first round of the state playoffs last year.

Photo Courtesy: Cameron Baker, Rob Moore