

Sports round-up for Friday, April 24th, 2009

Written by Mike Kelly
Friday, 24 April 2009 04:53

The Watauga High baseball team will aim its sights on its first Northwestern 4A Conference championship since 2001 (actually, the Pioneers shared it with McDowell that year;

they haven't won it outright since 2000) as they take on East Burke tonight down in Icard.

It will be a battle of right-handers as WHS (14-5 overall; 9-1 NW4A) will send junior Cal Hardee (3-1) on the mound, and the Cavaliers (9-7; 3-6 NW4A and in sixth place) will counter with Corey Rhoney.

Rhoney is arguably the best pitcher in the conference. And he has owned WHS in his career. In four appearances, Rhoney is 1-0 with two saves and he has a 0.50 earned-run-average against the Pioneers. In his last outing against WHS, he scattered three hits, walked two men and struck out ten. And in his last appearance against Freedom in the finals of the Freedom Easter Tournament,

Rhoney gave up one hit and struck out 11.

And the Pioneers have had their problems in Icard. They haven't won down there since 2004. Our coverage begins at 5:55 pm tonight on 100.7, MAC-FM, and junior Emily Bushman of the WHS women's lacrosse team will be our guest on the Dug-Out Show.

The Appalachian State baseball team will begin a three-game weekend series against Wofford College tonight at Smith Stadium/Beaver Field. The Mountaineers (23-17 overall; 10-12 in the Southern Conference) begin the night in sixth place, 1 ½ games behind College of Charleston for the No.5 seed. The Apps have won 12 of 13, they've won eight of their last 11 games in league play, and they haven't lost a conference series since late March (the 20th-22nd vs. Georgia Southern). Our coverage begins at 6:40 pm Friday night on WATA. Saturday's air-time begins at 4:10 pm; Sunday's air-time begins at noon.

In the NW4A last night, Enka defeated A.C. Reynolds, 9-2. The Rockets have lost two in a row. The Alexander Central-T.C. Roberson game scheduled last night was postponed, and it will be played next Wednesday, April 29th. Alexander Central travels to Providence to play a make-up game on Saturday.

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The WHS-T.C. Roberson game that was rained out April 4th will not be rescheduled; the Pioneers are hoping to make up the West Forsyth game that was postponed on April 11th.

And a correction concerning the state playoffs. The state baseball playoffs begin on Friday, May 15th. If the Pioneers win the NW4A title, they would play the No.5 seed from the Southwestern 4A Conference (right now it looks like Butler or Weddington) in the opening round at home. And remember, unless the Pioneers completely collapse in their next two games, they own the tie breaker against South Caldwell and McDowell for the regular-season championship. The NW4A Tournament will be played at Deal Stadium in Granite Falls May 7th-9th.

In track, WHS competed in a five-team meet in West Jefferson with Ashe County, Starmount, Wilkes Central, and Surry Central. The WHS men finished second with 99 points, ten points behind Starmount. WHS won five events: Ian Boyd won the pole vault and the 110 hurdles; Jordan Pineda won the shot put and the discus; Thomas McDonough won the 800. The WHS women won 11 events and bested the field with 161 points. Ashe County was a distant second with 76. Kasey Jones won the 100 hurdles; Taylor Cook won the pole vault and the triple jump; Ryann Jones won the 200; Tara Trivette won the high jump; Hannah Barbour won the 1600 and the 800; Kayla Schneider won the 400; Ingrid Forsyth won the 3200; and WHS also won the 4x100 and 4x400 relays.

In tennis, the ASU men beat the Citadel 4-0 in the opening round of the Southern Conference Tournament at Elon University. They will play the No.2 seed and the host school, Elon, in the quarterfinals on Friday. The Apps are 15-9. And former Pioneer Bobby Lake, now a senior at ASU, was named first team all-Southern Conference. Lake, who is 13-10; 5-5 in SoCon play at No.1 singles, is the first App player to be named first-team since Pedro Lopes in 1997. Chattanooga eliminated the ASU women 4-2 in the opening round of the SoCon Tournament.

The WHS men's tennis team, which won the NW4A title on Wednesday night with a win at A.C. Reynolds, will wrap up the regular season at home tonight against McDowell. The Pioneers (16-2; 11-0) will play in the NW4A Qualifier on Monday at the Granite Falls Recreation Department. South Caldwell will host the event. WHS will open the state playoffs at home against the No.5 seed from the Southwestern 4A Conference on Tuesday, May 5th.

And the WHS women's soccer team had its match with McDowell postponed last night. It's been rescheduled for Wednesday, May 6th in Boone. It will be a varsity-only match beginning at 6 pm. The Pioneers (3-8-3; 3-3-1 NW4A) take on East Burke on Friday night at 5 pm. It's varsity only. East Burke has dropped its junior varsity program.

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