Written by Mike Kelly
Saturday, 05 June 2010 22:22

Ben Wellborn has earned a coach's greatest reward.

The Watauga native, who played for and was an assistant coach with the Pioneers, led West Wilkes to a state championship on Saturday night at Five County Stadium in Zebulon, NC.
Jacob Shepard drove in the game-winning run with an walk-off single in the ninth inning that scored Logan Hallock with the winning run as the Blackhawks (23-12) defeated Dixon 7-6 in game three to win the Class 1A state championship. It's the first team title of any kind for the Blackhawks, members of the Mountain Valley 1A/2A Conference.
Scott Gambill, who had a three-run triple in game two that highlighted a huge comeback for the Blackhawks, was named the series Most Valuable Player. He was 3-9 with four RBI and he also walked four times.
"Anyone who saw this game knows what our season was like," Wellborn said. "We've been up, we've been down. But our kids kept battling no matter what. They were determined all season, and winning the state championship is a great reward for all their hard work."
The Blackhawks built an early 6-1 lead, but Dixon (25-7) came battling back to tie up the game. Rodman Young had a two-run single in a four-run sixth inning that tied the game at 6-6.
The Blackhawks had a chance to win it in the seventh, but Rookie Davis, who no-hit the Blackhawks Friday night wriggled out of a bases-loaded jam.
The win capped off a huge day for the Blackhawks, who outscored Dixon 14-10 in game two to tie the series at one apiece. West Wilkes rallied from a 5-0, first-inning deficit to win that game.
"I believed in this group all season," Wellborn said. "Our hitting wasn't there early on, but our pitching and defense was strong. Once our hitting came around, we became a pretty solid all-around team."
This was West Wilkes second trip to the state finals. They lost in a three-game series to Greene Central in 1987.