

Storm Softball Finishes Fourth

Written by Staff Reports
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Ball games of any kind can be won in different ways.

This is what the Watauga Storm 14U travel softball team learned this past weekend. Competing in the Top Gun Summer State Championship, held in Concord, the Storm placed 4th in their division, finishing the tournament with a 4-3 record.

The Storm opened the tournament with a convincing 9-1 win over the Lady Heart Breakers of Hickory. Watauga banged out a total of 14 hits. The Storm was paced by the bottom of the lineup (Katie Rumburg , Rachel Hawkins, Rachel Cox, Amie Sigmann), all going 2-2 in the game. Pitcher Megan Jackson got the win and recorded 9 strikeouts while facing 16 batters. As easy as this may have seemed, the other games became more challenging as the tournament progressed. The Storm was bested by the Catawba Titans (7-2), the Athlete's Choice (4-0), and were ousted from the tournament by The Stingrays of Charlotte (7-1).

"We're still a "work in progress"...learning more about ourselves each tournament," said Watauga coach Jay Jackson. "We're very proud of our accomplishments to this point. We've played four tournaments, placing or winning in three of them. That's a great accomplishment. "However, this tournament was a great experience for us. There were 42 teams in our age division and we had to play for placement into a bracket. It was important to not only win but to score as much as we could. This was a challenge. We did not hit as well as we would have liked, but we learned how you could win games with both stellar defense and timely hits."

Describing two key wins, Jackson went on to describe a 3-1 win over the QC Spirit (Charlotte). "This game was hard fought as no runs were scored until the sixth inning. The Spirit scored their only run on a fielder's choice. We tied the score on Kristen Gill's single that scored Katie. With both Kristen and Hope LaPointe on base, and with two outs, Megan Jackson, with a count of three balls and two strikes, delivered a walk-off, two run double that bounced just short of the 200 ft. fence. This was a tough game to lose but someone was going to. We learned that you can truly go down to the last pitch and still have hopes of winning."

For the tournament, the Storm was led at the plate by Rachel Hawkins (8 for 16) and Jackson (9 for 18); each having a .500 average. Along with these two, Sigmann, LaPointe, Cox, and Makayla Pennington contributed with averages above .300.

In the field, outstanding play was exhibited by shortstop/3rd baseman Sloan Elliott, catcher Katie Rumburg, and shortstop Sierra LaPlante. On the mound, Jackson was credited with three wins and Pennington, one.

**NOTES: TEAM PHOTO - Left of large ball (front): Makenzie Wallace, Rachel Hawkins, (middle): Sloan Elliott, Kristen Gill, Rachel Cox, (back) Coach Jay Jackson
Center of ball: Amie Sigmann**

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Right of ball (front): Coach Richard Butler, (center) Katie Rumburg, Sierra LaPlante, Makayla Pennington, (back) Hope LaPointe, Megan Jackson, Coach Mike Steele