

UPDATED: Pioneers Host Cougars Friday

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 29 October 2011 16:09

The Watauga High football team, making its fifth appearance in the state playoffs in the last six years, will open post-season play at home Friday night. The Pioneers (6-5) will host Alexander Central at Jack Groce Stadium. The Pioneers are seeded seventh in the West and third in the Western pod; Alexander Central is sixth in the Western pod and 13th in the West Regional.

It will be the second meeting between the schools. The Pioneers, who closed out the regular season with a 25-22 loss at St. Stephens Friday night, defeated Alexander Central 28-10 on Homecoming on October 7. The win snapped a two-game losing streak against the Cougars. The Pioneers blitzed Alexander Central with a 21-point explosion in the first quarter.

The Cougars (5-6), defeated Hibriten 48-19 in their regular-season finale Friday night, are coming off their first losing season since 2008. And the Pioneers are hosting their first state playoff game since 2007. Ironically, the Pioneers defeated Alexander Central 42-14 in their playoff opener at the old Jack Groce Stadium that same year.

Our coverage of that game begins at 6:30 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

In all, the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference had six teams make the state playoffs. The only team that failed to make the cut was Fred T. Foard. The Tigers, led by Watauga County native Jason Phelps, finished with only two wins, one in league play (2-8 overall; 1-5 NW3A/4A). South Caldwell (10-1), which won the NW3A/4A title (its first conference championship since 1994 and only the second title in school history), open the state playoffs in the Class 4AA division against Lake Norman. The Spartans are seeded fourth in the West and second in the Western pod.

In Class 3A, Hickory, the No.1 seed among the 3A schools in the NW3A/4A, will entertain Hibriten Friday night. The Panthers (4-7), who fell on hard times this season, are a 13 seed overall in the West, and

a six seed in the Western pod; the Red Tornadoes (7-3-1) are a four seed in the West, and a three seed in the Western pod. It's their second meeting this season. The Red Tornadoes defeated Hibriten 34-28 in Lenoir on October 14.

And St. Stephens (4-7), making its first state playoffs appearance since 2008, will open post-season play in the Class 3AA playoffs at Crest. The Chargers, which finished in second place in the Big South

Conference, is the No.6 seed in the West; the No.2 seed in the Western pod. The Indians are seeded 15th overall; seventh in the Western pod.

In Class 1AA, Avery (6-5), which made it to the Western Semifinals last fall, will play at Swain County in the first round Friday night. The Vikings are the No.11 seed in the West, and they're seeded seventh

in the Western pod; Swain is the No.2 seed overall and the No.2 seed in the Western pod.

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And in Class 2AA, Ashe County, which closed out the season winning four of its last five games, travels to Bandys Friday night. The Huskies (6-5), who produced their first winning record since 2008, are making their eighth consecutive playoff appearance.

FRIDAY'S FIRST-ROUND GAMES

CLASS 4A: ALEXANDER CENTRAL @ WATAUGA

CLASS 4AA: LAKE NORMAN @ SOUTH CALDWELL

CLASS 3A: HIBRITEN @ HICKORY

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CLASS 3AA: ST. STEPHENS @ CREST

CLASS 2AA: ASHE COUNTY @ BANDYS

CLASS 1AA: AVERY @ SWAIN COUNTY

ALL THESE GAMES KICK-OFF AT 7:30 P.M.

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