

## WHS To Host High Country Football Clinic

Written by Mike Kelly  
Friday, 30 March 2012 19:21

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The Watauga High football team will host the 6th Annual High Country Football Clinic April 13-14. The cost of the clinic is \$60 at the door (the staff rate of four coaches or more is 40 per coach), \$50 if you pre-register,

and \$30 for Friday or Saturday only. The Clinic will feature 18 speakers on Friday and nine more Saturday. The registration fee includes dinner and social on Friday evening with vendor and wives, and breakfast on Saturday.

But unlike past years when the dinner/social was held at the Broyhill Inn and Conference Center on the campus of Appalachian State University, this year's gathering will take place at the WHS cafeteria.

"And we have the space to do it," said WHS coach Tim Pruitt, now in his fifth year with the Pioneers. "And this is a beneficial clinic. I'm glad we have the chance to do this again. We have some key note speakers attending the clinic again this year. It should be a lot of fun. For what you pay, we offer a lot. Not many clinics provide you with two meals and all the speakers that we're blessed to have. For the amount of what you get, it's a good deal."

Some of those speakers include ASU coach Jerry Moore, Wofford College coach Mike Ayers and Fred Goldsmith, who coached at Duke and most recently Lenoir-Rhyne University before he retired last summer. Other noted speakers will be Scott Johnson of Starmount High, Ray Rhodes of Mount Tabor, and Hal Capps of Mooresville. And the clinic is free to anybody coaching in Watauga County.

"Our attendance has been very good in past years, and I'm very confident, we will have a great turnout this year," Pruitt said. "Coaching clinics are great learning tools for all coaches. It doesn't matter if you've been coaching for a lot of years, if you're just starting out, or if you're a youth coach. You always pick something up new at these clinics that can help you."

And for Pruitt, coaching has become a passion. He began his coaching career as a student teacher in 1991 at Starmount High. He worked under the legendary B.W. Holt for ten years as an assistant coach before he landed his first head-coaching job at Cherryville in 2003. He went to West Wilkes the following year, where he was named the Carolina Panthers Coach of the Year after he led the Blackhawks to a 9-3 record in 2007. He was 23-13 in last three seasons with the Blackhawks and led them to three straight state playoff appearances.

Now, Pruitt finds himself moving into his fifth year as the head man of the Pioneers. And Pruitt and his players turned in a magical season last fall. The Pioneers, who only won three games in 2010, went 7-6 last year and made it to the second-round of the state playoffs. The Pioneers also produced their first winning season and their first post-season win in three seasons (2007). "It was a great year for our kids and our program," Pruitt said. "But every year is different. But I love coaching because I really love helping kids. That's why I got involved in coaching to begin with. When you're coaching, you're doing it to make kids better. And the things about life and kids, you make mistakes along the way. There are going to be things you wish you can take back, or do again. But it's a way of reaching out, of helping kids, and not just kids in your program.

"I've been blessed with some great assistant coaches around me. I'm excited about the clinic coming up, the upcoming season and football in Watauga County as a whole."

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The first session begins at 12 noon Friday and 9 a.m. Saturday. There will be three speakers at each session. A van will also be available for the annual wives trip to the Mast General Store in Valle Crucis Friday afternoon beginning at 3 p.m. at no charge. There will be a Coaches Outreach Devotional Friday morning at 9 a.m.; dinner begins at 6:15 p.m. Friday night; a speaker will be available for all those attending dinner in the Auditorium; and a coaches round table will follow. There will be a Friday night social in the LaQuinta conference room; breakfast will be served in the conference room at the LaQuina Inn Saturday morning.

For more information, please call coach Pruitt at (336) 262-4708, or Stephen Poulos (828) 719-8245.