

Smith To Sign National Letter With ASU

Written by Mike Kelly
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Watauga High senior Mike Smith will be signing their National Letters of Intent in the next week, or so, with Appalachian State University. Smith, who plays No.1 singles and No.1 doubles for the Pioneers in men's tennis,

will continue his playing career with a Mountaineers' program that is enjoying a stellar season under head coach Bob Lake.

"I've got the letter at home, so I just have to sign on the dotted line, and I'm headed to ASU," he said.

And Smith will be going in with some high accolades. The senior is currently undefeated in singles play with an impressive 14-0 record.

"I've been fortunate," Smith said. "Playing for coach (Scott) Taylor has been great the last four years. He's made it a lot of fun. We just love him. And getting the chance to play in college is great. It's something I've wanted to do since I started playing tennis. And going to a good program like ASU makes it real special."

Smith began playing tennis when he was two-years-old, but he didn't start taking the game seriously until he was eight.

"I use to play baseball and other sports, but I've decided to concentrate all my efforts on tennis," he said. "It's just my sport. I enjoy it, and really look forward to tennis season every year. Plus, my dad is a tennis pro at Beech Mountain (for 24 years), and he put a racket my hand when I was two. But I started playing tournaments when I was eight-or nine-years-old, I got some decent rankings, and I was hooked. I just started working hard at it."

His father, Tim, who is the Director of Tennis at Beech Mountain Club, played No.1 singles at ASU his senior year.

"With my dad going to ASU, it really made my decision quite easy," Smith said. "And ASU is having a great year, and knowing my dad played No.1 singles for them, really drew me there. I like their coach, and I like their program. It's a good fit for me."

Smith is a four-year varsity player, and a two-time state qualifier. WHS senior Ethan Greene of the baseball team will sign his national letter with Pfeiffer College Monday; Pfeiffer is a Division II school and a member of Conference Carolinas. Senior Andrew Vandenberg of the WHS track and cross country teams will sign his national letter with Milligan College, an NAIA school in Johnson City, TN, and a member of the Appalachian Athletic Conference, either next Wednesday or Thursday, according to WHS coach Randy McDonough.