

UPDATED: State Playoff Pairings Finally Released

Written by Mike Kelly
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The North Carolina High School Athletic Association has announced the state playoff pairings for baseball and softball. As expected, the Watauga High baseball team (15-8) will be traveling to East Gaston (13-9) for a first-round game in

Class 4A at 7 p.m.. But the bracket has been switched around concerning the WHS softball team. Originally, the NCHSAA had the WHS softball team (9-11) taking on East Gaston (14-4) at home on Friday night. But upon further review, the WHS softball team will now travel to Mount Holly on Friday night for a 6 p.m. game.

The winner between WHS and East Gaston in baseball will play either T.C. Roberson or Hopewell on the road in the second round; the winner between WHS and East Gaston in softball will play either Mooresville or TCR in a second-round game on the road. Those second-round games will be played on May 15.

The WHS baseball and softball teams are both No.2 seeds among the Class 4A schools in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference. East Gaston is the No.2 seed among the Class 4A schools in both softball and baseball in the MEGA 7 Conference.

In the other first-round match-ups concerning the NW3A/4A Conference, in Class 4A in softball, Alexander Central (24-1), the regular-season and tournament champion, will host conference foe South Caldwell (11-11), a wildcard team, in the opening round; in Class 3A, Hibriten (9-15), the No.3 seed among the Class 3A schools in the NW3A/4A Conference, travels to Freedom (12-9); Fred T. Foard (19-4), the No.1 seed among the 3A schools and the No.2 seed overall, entertains Tuscola (4-19); and St. Stephens (18-7), the No.2 seed among the Class 3A schools and the No.3 seed overall in the NW3A/4A, entertains South Point (18-4). The Indians knocked off Fred T. Foard in the NW3A/4A Conference semifinals, but lost to Alexander Central in the finals.

In baseball, South Caldwell (23-2), which won both the regular-season and tournament championships in the NW3A/4A Conference, takes on McDowell (14-10), a wildcard team, at home in the opening round of the state playoffs Friday night in Sawmills. In Class 3A, Hickory (18-7), the No.1 seed among the Class 3A schools in the NW3A/4A and a finalist in the conference tournament, entertains East Henderson (15-8) in a first-round game; St. Stephens (11-11), the No.2 seed among the Class 3A schools, entertains Shelby-Crest (15-6); and Hibriten (8-13), the No.3 seed among the 3A's, travels to Patton (15-9) for a first-round game. Our coverage of WHS baseball Friday night begins at 6:30 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.