

## Pioneers Power Past McDowell

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The Watuaga High women's soccer team didn't waste any time putting McDowell out of its misery Wednesday night in the opening round of the Class 4A state playoffs at Jack Groce Stadium. The Pioneers (12-6-1), thanks to Kendyl Baird, who had two goals and two assists, knocked off McDowell, 4-1. It was a far cry from their first meeting on May 3. The Pioneers

had to rally with two late goals in the final 15 minutes of the game to beat the Titans, 2-1. "We just played great tonight," said WHS coach Brittany Bolick. "I'm so pumped. We really played well and won our first-round game. Now we play A.C. Reynolds at home Friday night." The Rockets (17-4-3), who belted West Mecklenburg 8-0 in their playoff opener Tuesday night, are the No. 1 seed from the Mountain Athletic 3A/4A Conference. The Rockets beat WHS 4-0 in their first meeting (on March 7) this season in Boone. Shenny Lenhart had three of those goals. On Wednesday, the Pioneers took an early 1-0 lead on a goal by Ivy Wilcox in the 14th minute of the game. Baird picked up an assist on that goal. McDowell (8-10) tied it up with seven minutes left in the first half. But a pair of goals by Baird---one two minutes into the second half on a penalty kick, and the other at the 60 minute mark assisted by Molly Wells---gave WHS a 3-1 lead and pretty much put the game away. Skylar Hicks scored WHS' final goal on an assist by Baird to close out the scoring.

The Pioneers take on ACR Friday night at home beginning at 6 p.m.