

Spartans Aiming Sights On Sectional Crown

Written by Mike Kelly
Friday, 18 May 2012 08:15

The South Caldwell High baseball team finds itself in a familiar position. The Spartans (24-2), the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference regular-season and tournament champions, take on Cornelius-Hough in the Class 4A sectional

finals tonight in Sawmills, N.C. Cornelius Hough (19-10) is the No.2 seed from the I-Meck Conference. The winner of this game will play either Mallard Creek (18-8 and the No.1 seed from the I-Meck Conference) or T.C. Roberson (26-2 and the No.1 seed from the Mountain Athletic 3A/4A Conference).

The Rams, who defeated Watauga 3-2 in nine innings in a second-round state playoff game Wednesday night, is ranked No.1 in the state in Class 4A by Impactbaseball.com. The Rams are also ranked nationally by MaxPreps.com (45th) and ESPN (44th). TCR, riding a 16-game winning streak, hasn't lost a home game since 2010.

In softball, Alexander Central entertains Cornelius-Hough in a Class 4A sectional title game in Taylorsville tonight. Chelsea Wilkinson, who has not signed a National Letter of Intent to play in college next season, blanked McDowell 6-0 Wednesday night. She struck out 16 batters in that game. Wilkinson made a verbal commitment to attend the University of South Carolina her freshman year, but she changed her mind and verbally committed to North Carolina State as a junior last year. Wilkinson, who didn't pitch in the first six games of the year, hasn't lost a game this season. She's 22-0 with 19 shutouts this season. Wilkinson has 83 shutouts, nearly 1,400 strikeouts and a state-best 111 wins in her career. Team wise, the Cougars (27-1 and the No.1 seed from the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) are ranked third this week in the Powerade FAB/ESPN Top 50 Poll.

If the Cougars beat Hough (19-4 and the No.2 seed from the I-Meck) tonight, they will play either T.C. Roberson (16-6 and the No.1 seed from the MAC 3A/4A) or Porter Ridge (27-0 and the No.1 seed from the Southern Carolina Conference) in the Class 4A Western Regional semifinals next Tuesday, May 22.

In Class 3A, Fred T. Foard (21-4 and the No.2 seed from the NW3A/4A), which handed Alexander Central its only loss of the year (a 9-1 setback on March 9, just two days after the Cougars were ranked No.1 nationally by MaxPreps.com), take on Asheville-Erwin (17-6 and the No.2 seed from the MAC 3A/4A) at home tonight in a sectional title game; St. Stephens (20-7), the No.3 seed in the NW3A/4A and a NW3A/4A Tournament finalist, travels to Franklin (20-3 and the No.1 seed from the Western North Carolina Conference). If the Tigers and the Indians advance, they will face each other next Tuesday, May 22 in a Class 3A Western Regional semifinal game.

In soccer, Hickory, led by former Watauga High assistant coach Brian Jillings, travels to St. Stephens in a Class 3A Western Regional semifinal game Saturday night. The Red Tornadoes (20-4-1), the No.2 seed from the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference, advanced by knocking off Asheville 3-0 in the sectional finals Wednesday night; St. Stephens (21-1-2), the regular-season champions in the NW3A/4A, advanced by knocking off Tuscola 3-2 Wednesday night in the sectional finals.

The winner on Saturday takes on Marvin Ridge (17-3-2 and the No.1 seed from the SCC) or Charlotte Catholic (23-1-1 and the No.1 seed from the MEGA 7 Conference).

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NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE SCHEDULE/SCOREBOARD

WEDNESDAY NIGHT'S GAMES

BASEBALL

CLASS 4A
T.C. ROBERSON 3, WATAUGA 2 (9 INNINGS)

SOFTBALL

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CLASS 4A

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 6, McDOWELL 0

WOMEN'S SOCCER

CLASS 3A

HICKORY 3, ASHEVILLE 0
ST. STEPHENS 3, TUSCOLA 2

FRIDAY NIGHT'S GAMES

BASEBALL

CLASS 4A

CORNELIUS-HOUGH @ SOUTH CALDWELL

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SOFTBALL

CLASS 4A

CORNELIUS-HOUGH @ ALEXANDER CENTRAL

CLASS 3A

ASHEVILLE-ERWIN @ FRED T. FOARD
ST. STEPHENS @ FRANKLIN

SATURDAY NIGHT'S GAMES

WOMEN'S SOCCER

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CLASS 3A
HICKORY @ ST. STEPHENS