

Jones Named Player Of Year

Written by Mike Kelly
Tuesday, 28 May 2013 08:47

Well, Watauga High senior Ryder Jones lived up to the pre-season hype by being named the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference Player of the Year on Monday by the conference coaches. Jones,

who ignited a season-high ten-game winning streak (WHS' longest winning streak since the 2000 season) and nearly led the Pioneers to the state playoffs, finished his prep career with a .461 batting average. He led the Pioneers in hits, doubles, home runs and runs-batted-in. Jones, who split time between the mound and shortstop this season, belted out 35 hits with nine doubles, he tied the school record with 11 home runs (set by Jonathan Greene in 2004), and he set a new school record with 43 RBI (breaking the old mark of 35 set by Greene in 2004). Jones also tied a school record with two grand slams in the same season (the last one to do it was Josh Robert, who hit at North Davidson, and one against St. Stephens at Pioneer Field on Senior Night in 2011). Jones also led the team with 21 walks and he was intentionally walked a school-record eight times.

Pitching wise, Jones made 12 appearances on the mound. He was 4-3 with a 1.23 earned-run-average. Jones gave up seven earned runs in 40.1 innings pitched with 63 strikeouts and 22 walks allowed.

Jones is also the second WHS to player to earn Player of the Year honors in the last two years. Matt Proffitt, who just completed his freshman year at (Division II) Brevard College, shared Player of Year honors last season with Davis Harvey of Hickory and Garrison Franklin of South Caldwell.

Jones signed his National Letter of Intent with Stanford University of the Pacific 12 Conference last fall, but he could be selected in the Major League Baseball Amateur Draft June 6. Jones, who is listed as a third baseman/pitcher, is currently ranked 197th on Baseball America's Top 500 Prospects List. He played shortstop for the Pioneers this season. Right handed pitcher Hunter Harvey of Bandy's High is ranked 33rd on that list.

Joining Jones on the All-Northwestern 3A/4A Conference team are fellow seniors Tyler Jones (who was honorable mention last year), Tyler Sturgill and Mason Illich.

Tyler Jones, a three-year varsity starter, batted .337 with 30 hits, five doubles, two home runs and 17 RBI. He also led the team with 34 runs scored, and he was hit by a pitch a team-leading seven times.

Sturgill batted .308 and was second on the team with five home runs and 23 RBI. Illich was second on the team with a .359 batting average. He had 28 hits, including five doubles and a triple, He drove in 19 runs and he scored 20 runs.

Jesse Illich was named honorable mention. Jesse Illich was third on the team with a .355 batting average with a home run and 13 RBI. He was tied for second on the team with Hunter Isaacs with six doubles, and he was third on the team with ten walks.

Brandon Lail of Alexander Central was named the Pitcher of the Year; Jerry Whitman of the Cougars was named the Coach of the Year. The Cougars, who won the regular-season championship, led the way with seven players on the all-NW3A/4A team; South Caldwell, which won the conference tournament, had six players selected. The Pioneers had four.

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ALL-NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE TEAM

WATAUGA

RYDER JONES
TYLER JONES
MASON ILLICH
TYLER STURGILL

SOUTH CALDWELL

ETHAN JAMES
AUSTIN MILLER
NICK HORNING
PHILLIP PAGE
TAYLOR PURUS
GAGE PARHAM

ALEXANDER CENTRAL

JOSH McLAIN
TREVOR COOK
TAD RATLIFF
BRANDON LAIL
LUKE WATTS
JORDAN BARNES
ETHAN DEAL

HICKORY

DAVIS HANVEY
TYLER PAIT
ZACH JARRETT

FRED T. FOARD

TYLER DICKENS
MATT WARD

HIBRITEN

JOHN CURTIS
A.J. WATSON

ST. STEPHENS

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**KONNER KLINGENBERG
KYRAWN WHITFIELD**

**PLAYER OF THE YEAR
RYDER JONES, WATUAGA**

**PITCHER OF THE YEAR
BRANDON LAIL**

**COACH OF THE YEAR
JERRY WHITMAN**

Photo Courtesy: Ryder Jones, PHOTO SUBMITTED