

WHS vs. South Caldwell

Written by Mike Kelly
Friday, 03 April 2009 03:32

What: A battle for first-place in the Northwestern 4A Conference

Who: The Pioneers (8-3 overall; 5-1 NW4A) and the Spartans (8-1; 5-1)

Where: Sawmills, NC

When: Tonight with the air-time set for 6:05 pm on 100.7, MAC-FM

And it doesn't get any better than this. Two traditionally strong baseball programs square off against each other tonight in a battle for first place in the Northwestern 4A Conference.

The Pioneers, South Caldwell and McDowell begin the night in a three-way tie for first place with identical 5-1 records. And the Pioneers will have their ace, Jon Sharpe, on the mound. Sharpe, who is 3-1 with a 2.93 earned-run-average, is 1-0 in two appearances lifetime against the Spartans.

Sharpe saved the day on Monday night as he came on in relief and nailed down a win against Alexander Central. The right-hander went 4 1/3 innings, gave up an unearned run on seven hits with five strikeouts and a walk. On the year, Sharpe has 40 strikeouts in 28-plus innings of work.

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And during his varsity career, Sharpe is 10-2 with a pair of saves. Tonight he will go up against a South Caldwell team he defeated back on March 10th at WHS-High Field.

In what many considered to be a close-to-the-vest type of game, it turned into a battle for survival. The teams combined for 18 runs, 19 walks and nine errors as the Pioneers prevailed 12-6, and broke a four-game losing streak at home against the Spartans.

Since then, however, the Spartans have been on a roll. They've won six in a row, and they've been very impressive in their last two outings against A.C. Reynolds and Alexander Central.

Cody Poarch, who finally gave up a run against the Rockets when Phillip Treadway led off the game with his first home-run of the year, scattered three hits and struck out six. The Spartans exploded for five runs in the top of the seventh to pull it out.

Zack Greer and David Evans have been the big hitters for the Spartans during his run. Greer went 4-4 with a run-batted-in against Alexander Central. His two-run double ignited the five-run explosion against the Rockets. Evans had a three-run homer against the Rockets.

Cody Penny, who will attend the University of North Carolina next fall, has won his last two starts and his numbers are impressive, five runs allowed with 22 strike outs in 14 innings of work.

Keep in mind, the Pioneers haven't swept a season-series against the Spartans since 2004. Injury-wise, third baseman Trey Lowder will not play tonight. He's on the shelf with a pulled muscle in his neck, and tendonitis in his wrist. Jake Wallace, coming off his best offensive performance of the year (two hits and four RBI against Mount Tabor on Tuesday night) will get the starting nod at third.

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