

Sharpe, Church, Wallace heading to WCC

Written by Mike Kelly
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Three former Watauga High baseball players will continue their playing careers this fall. Jon Sharpe, Adam Church and Jake Wallace, who propelled the Pioneers to the final regular-season championship in the old Northwestern 4A Conference in 2009, are teaming up once again. This time, they'll be playing for former WHS assistant coach Andy Fox at nearby Wilkes Community College.

Sharpe, who was an All-NW4A selection his senior year, is transferring in from Spartanburg Methodist College in Spartanburg, SC. Sharpe was 7-3 with a 2.77 earned-run-average during his senior year. He also had 81 strikeouts in 65 2/3 innings of work. Church, the NW4A Conference Player of the Year his senior year, transfers in from East Tennessee State University. He batted .473 with seven home runs and a .811 slugging percentage in his final season with the Pioneers; Jake Wallace, who attended Emory & Henry College (a Division III school in Emory, Va.) to play football, batted .267 his senior year at WHS with a home run, four doubles and ten runs-batted-in.

"These guys are big additions to our program, said Fox, now in his second year at WCC. "They will certainly help us. Adam and John should step right in, but I think it might take Jake a little while before he shakes off the rust. That's why we play a 20-game schedule in the fall. It gives the new guys, especially like Jake who took time off to play football, to re-adjust himself." Church signed his National Letter of Intent in May. Sharpe and Wallace are guaranteed walk-ons.

"I'm 100% sure that Adam and Jake will join us," Fox said. "I would say John is at least 99.9% sure. He has told me that he wants to be here, and that he wants to play."

Sharpe is currently playing with the Caldwell County Post 29 American Legion team in Lenior, NC. Former Pioneers Trey Louder and Cal Hardee (who will attend Appalachian State University to play baseball this fall) are also playing for Post 29.

WCC is a Division II school in Region 10 of the National Junior College Athletic Association. The Cougars were 30-27 last season, and they made it to the third round of the Region 10 tournament.

"We play in a good conference," Fox said. "And we have a competitive program. We play a 20-game schedule in the fall, and a 56-game schedule in the spring. And we've brought in a good recruiting class. I really like what we have right now."

The Cougars also had a player selected in the Major League Amateur Baseball Draft in early June. Pitcher Ethan Icard, who played at East Burke High School, was chosen by the Chicago White Sox in the 13th round.

"And they really liked him," Fox said. "Look, we may be a small school, but our guys have big hearts. They love the game, and we've been blessed with some good players. This is a baseball-rich area.

"Adding Church, Sharpe and Wallace is a great example of what I'm talking about. They're talented players that will only make our program that much stronger. Jake, once he settles in, and Adam give us a strong bat in the lineup. And John can be stellar on the mound."