

Lady Braves Head to Region Playoffs

By Tyler Spradlin
Sports Editor

The Heard County High School softball team has been lighting up region opponents during the 2009 season. Shutouts and double digit wins have been the norm for much of the regular season region schedule. That all changed on October 1, when the Lady Braves (12-10, 6-1) suffered their lone region loss to rival Pike County. The loss dropped Heard County into second place in the region standings heading into the region playoffs that begin on October 10.

During the game against Pike County, the evenly matched rivals proved why they were the elite in the region. The hard fought battle ended as the Lady Pirates came out victorious 3-1. The Lady Pirates' pitcher, Ally Smith, was dominant with thirteen strikeouts and had a no hitter going until senior Blake Alford broke it up in the fifth

inning with a one out triple. Another disappointing aspect of the loss was that senior Kristin Smith was hit by a pitch that broke her hand. Although she played the rest of the game, Smith will be out for the rest of the Lady Braves' season.

On September 8, the Lady Braves faced the Spencer Greenwave. The final score was 15-0 due to the mercy rule, as Heard County continued to dominate region opponents. Two days later, the girls traveled to Crawford County to compete against the Lady Eagles. This victory put Heard County 3-0 in region play. The final score was 6-1. It was a dramatic victory led by another clutch hit to start a rally by Alford.

On September 12, the Lady Braves traveled to Columbus to have a rematch

versus non-region foe Pacelli, who had previously defeated the Lady Braves 6-2 in the Jordan Invitational at the start of the season. The Heard County bats were hot in the first inning, putting



seven runs on the board. Three batters were also hit by a pitch in this inning, twice walking in a batter. Great at-bats came from senior Paige Summerlin, with an inside the park homerun; junior Hunter

Sims, with an inside the park homerun off of a bunt; and Alford with a three run triple. The Lady Vikings were defeated by the Braves 12-0. As of September 12, six of the nine starters were batting over .300 (team average was .361). Also, of the thirteen varsity players, ten had an on base percentage

of over .415 (team average was .458), and sophomore pitcher Alicia Carroll's ERA was 1.40, allowing an average of only .86 base runners to get on per game.

On September 17, the Lamar County Lady Trojans traveled to Heard County for a region matchup. Winning 15-0, the Lady Braves moved to 4-0 in region 5-AA. This became the third region game where the Braves run ruled their opponent by outscoring them by over fifteen runs by the third inning. On September 29, the Lady Braves set out to play the Lady Cavaliers. The Braves came out victorious 17-0 due to the mercy rule once again. Every Lady Brave seemed to be in full tilt as they rolled over their region rival.

The Lady Braves are set to play in the region 5-AA tournament this upcoming weekend as the number two seed in the tournament. The Lady Braves have already qualified to take part in the softball state playoffs.

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