

## Pope Qualifies for 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive State Tournament

For the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, Pope Fastpitch has qualified for the GHSA state tournament keeping alive one of the longest playoff streaks in Cobb County. The Hounds captured the 4<sup>th</sup> seed from Region 5-AAAAAA to earn the team a spot in the playoffs and chance to defend their 2014 AAAAAA State Championship.

Although the Hounds successfully qualified for the playoffs, securing the 2015 bid was anything but easy. The trip to state came down to an elimination game against a strong Etowah team that previously defeated the hounds 9-1 in their only meeting of the 2015 season.

After falling behind 1-0 in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup>, Leah Higginbotham erupted for a 2 run homerun to take the lead 2-1. Some Hounds miscues surrendered the lead in the 2<sup>nd</sup> as the Greyhounds fell behind 3-2. In the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Hounds would manage to load the bases with no outs and some timely hitting and an Etowah miscue plated 2 runs to give the Hounds the 4-3 lead. The Hounds added an



insurance run in the 4<sup>th</sup> and took a 5-3 lead into the 6<sup>th</sup> inning. 4 outs away from a state playoff berth, the Etowah bats rumbled to life as they were able to erase their 2 run deficit by hitting a single, triple and single consecutively to tie the game. In the 6<sup>th</sup>, the Hounds answered right back by with Monkiewicz walking, stealing 2<sup>nd</sup>, Crabtree bunting Monk over to 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Hannah Rogers coming up with the big go ahead RBI on a long sacrifice fly. In the top of the 7<sup>th</sup>, the leadoff batter reached on a 2 base error and was advanced to 3<sup>rd</sup> on a passed ball on the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch to the 2<sup>nd</sup> batter of the inning. A ground ball out produced a tie game and the Hounds would enter the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> tied 6-6. Williamson led off with a single and then exited the game for pinch runner Jodie Smith. Lea McFadden smoked the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch of her Ab to LF. The LF ran passed the hard ground ball hit by McFadden and Smith was able to score the winning run all the way from 1<sup>st</sup> base.

The resiliency shown by the Hounds was a fitting way qualify for the playoffs as it is symbolic of the way the entire season for the Greyhounds progressed. The Greyhounds showed tremendous perseverance in the 2015 campaign which in many was the tale of 2 seasons for the Hounds.

In August, the team posted a 6-7 record being outscored by their opponents 65 to 54 but in September, the team showed vast improvement, posting an 8-5 record and outscoring opponents 64 to 33.

The resilient Hounds improved everyday as the defending state champions were plugging multiple holes left behind by graduation. Through daily practice and game reps, our new team was able to jell together and peak at just the right time to propel the Greyhounds to the state playoffs once again.

### **Current playoff streak:**

2010 – 4<sup>th</sup> seed region 5-AAAA; 1<sup>st</sup> round of the playoffs  
2011 – 2<sup>nd</sup> seed region 5-AAAA; 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the playoffs  
2012 – region champion 7-AAAAA; STATE RUNNER UP  
2013 – 3<sup>rd</sup> seed region 7-AAAAA; 4<sup>th</sup> place in State  
2014 – 2<sup>nd</sup> seed region 5-AAAAAA; STATE CHAMPION  
2015 – 4<sup>th</sup> seed region 5-AAAAAA; TBD.....

The Greyhound's road to state:

# 2015 5AAAAAA REGION TOURNAMENT

