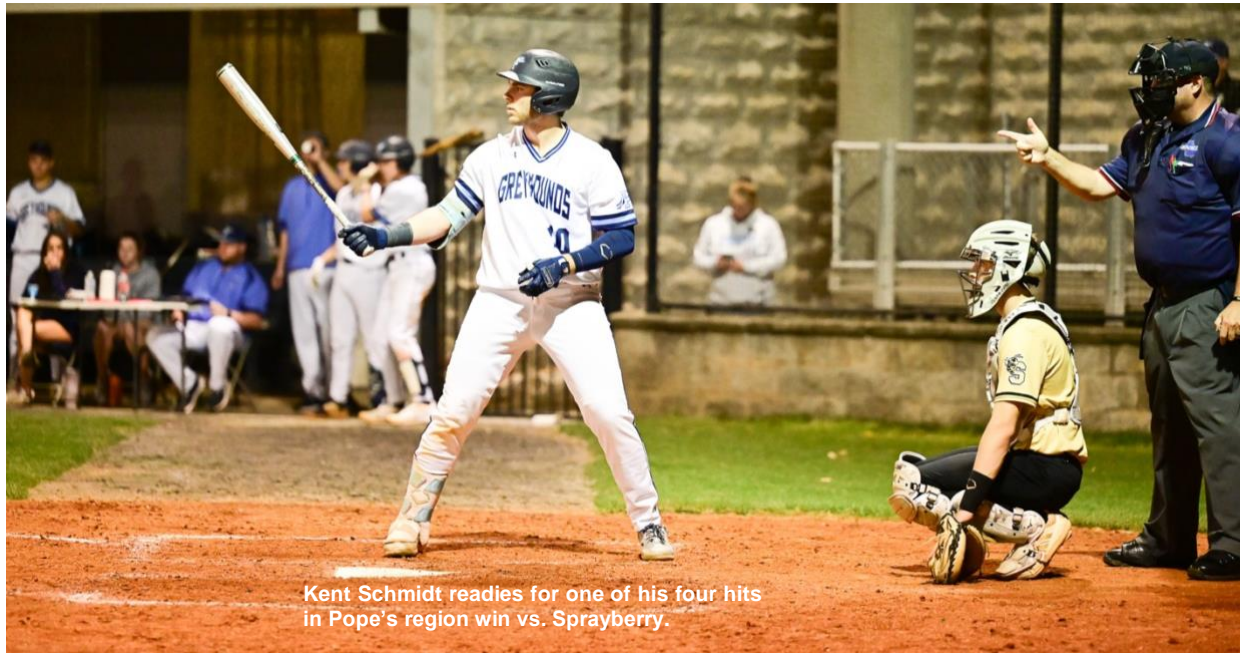




HOUNDS PULL AWAY FROM YELLOW JACKETS SCHMIDT POWERS POPE WITH FOUR HITS



After tweaking his hamstring on Saturday afternoon, Pope senior **Kent Schmidt** was a game-time decision as to whether or not he would play three days later on Tuesday night vs. Sprayberry. It was ultimately decided Schmidt would only hit as the designated hitter and was slotted in his usual clean up position in the batting order. Schmidt showed no ill effects from his hamstring and went 4-for-4 at the plate to lead the **Hounds past the Yellow Jackets, 9-3**, at Jeff Rowland Field. This was game one of the three-game region series between the two teams. Pope's overall record is now 8-3 and region record is 2-2.

Pope's offense exploded for 16 hits, including six Hounds that had a multi-hit game. Pope scored in 5-of-6 innings and every batter reached base. Schmidt led all hitters with three singles, a double, two RBI, and scored two runs. **Carson Kerce** had two hits, including a triple, two RBI, and scored one run. **Jack Myers** had two hits, one RBI, walked one time, and scored one run. **Cooper Orr** had two hits, including a double and one RBI. **Jesse Walter** had two hits and one RBI. **Tanner Morneau** collected two hits. **Brady Otero** started his first varsity game at first base and had one hit and one RBI. **Jake Gastley** had one hit and scored one run. **Eli Overstreet** had an RBI sacrifice fly, scored one run, and stole one base. **John Stuetzer** stole one base. **Logan Castro** and **Logan Rapp** both scored one run.

Sprayberry's offense was averaging 10 runs per game in the previous 10 games they played. Three Pope pitchers combined to hold the Yellow Jackets to just two runs on three hits with 11 strike outs and two walks. After Sprayberry scored two runs in the first inning, the Hounds shut them out the next six innings and allowed just one infield single. Pope pitchers retired the side

in order in four of those six innings and struck out the last five batters they faced. Pope defense made one error and Sprayberry made three.



Dawson Jones earned the win and retired the final 12-of-13 batters he faced.

Senior lefthander **Dawson Jones** (2-2) started for the Hounds and pitched five innings to earn the win. Jones dominated the final four innings and retired 12-of-13 batters that he faced. All totaled, Jones struck out six batters, allowed just three hits, walked two, and gave up two runs. Jones also picked off a base runner from first base on a 1-3-6 putout (Jones to Otero to Kerce). Andrew Nelms pitched one inning, faced three batters, and struck out two. Bryce Chapin pitched the final inning and struck out the first three batters he faced. The first batter reached base when the ball got away on strike three. Chapin was eyeing a four strike out inning before freshman catcher **Drew Abney** threw out a baserunner trying to steal second base and ended the game.

In the top of the first inning, Pope trailed 2-0. With two outs and Sprayberry runners on first base and second base, catcher Walter blocked a pitch in the dirt. The runner from second ran to third. Walter scurried to the ball and threw a strike to Myers at third, who applied the tag to record the out and end the inning.

In the bottom of the first inning, Pope scored one run on one hit to cut the Yellow Jackets lead to 2-1. Overstreet led off and reached base by an error by the third baseman. Stuetzer reached base by an error by the first baseman. Overstreet ran to third on the play. Stuetzer stole second base. With one out, Schmidt hit a line drive single to right field to score Overstreet. Myers walked to load the bases, but the Hounds could not plate any additional runs.

In the bottom of the third inning, Pope scored one run on two hits to tie the score, 2-2. With one out, Schmidt pulled a 335-foot line drive double to the bottom of the right field fence that bounced off the 2017 Pope Baseball State Championship banner. Castro pinch ran for Schmidt. Myers followed with a first-pitch single to center field that scored Castro from second and tied the score.

In the bottom of the fourth inning, Walter led off with a single to center field. With one out, Otero hit a one-strike looping single to right center. Morneau followed and hit an opposite field two-strike single down the right field line that moved Otero to third base. Morneau took second base on the throw. Overstreet hit a first-pitch sacrifice fly to center field that scored Otero standing up with what proved to be the game-winning run.

In the bottom of the fifth inning, Pope scored three runs on five straight hits to take a more comfortable lead, 6-2. Kerce led off with deep fly ball to right field that spun around the right fielder and fell for a triple. Schmidt pulled a ground ball single past a diving first baseman into right field and scored Kerce from second base. Schmidt advanced to second base on a wild pitch. Myers hit a single past the first baseman down the right field line and moved Schmidt to third. Orr hit a line drive single past the shortstop in the hole to score Schmidt and advance Myers to second. Walter hit a line drive to center field that scored Myers.

In the bottom of the sixth inning, Pope scored three final runs to take a 9-3 lead. Overstreet led off and reached base by a throwing error by the third baseman. Overstreet stole second base on the next pitch. Pinch hitter Gastley sliced a single to right field and advanced Overstreet to third. Gastley took second base on the throw. Kerce singled past third base into left field and scored Overstreet and Gastley. With one out, Schmidt hit a line drive single to center field for his fourth hit of the game. Rapp pinch ran for Schmidt. With two outs, Orr slugged a 330-foot double to left field that two-bounced the fence and scored Rapp all the way from first base.

Pope and Sprayberry play game two in the region series Wednesday night at 6:00 at Sprayberry High School.



Bryce Chapin struck out three batters in one inning and almost struck out four.