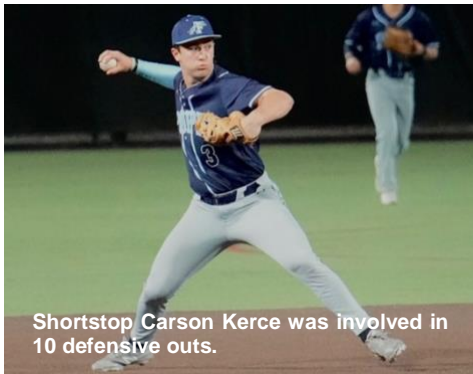




POPE DROPS CLOSE ONE

Pope's defense and pitching kept the Hounds close, but the offense was unable to get untracked, and Pope fell just short to Lassiter, 2-1, in a well-played game by both teams on Tuesday night at Lassiter High School. This was game one of the three-game region series between the two teams. Pope's overall record is now 6-2 and region record is 0-1.

Both teams had six hits and combined for seven defensible double plays, with Pope turning four. Both pitching staffs struck out three batters and both teams were retired in order 4-of-7 innings. Pope had no errors and Lassiter had one. Lassiter scored two runs in the fourth inning and Pope scored one run in the sixth.



Shortstop Carson Kerce was involved in 10 defensive outs.

The Hounds defense stood out early and often. Combined with junior lefthanded starting pitcher **Dawson Jones**, Pope retired the Trojans in order the first three innings. In the bottom of the first inning, Pope turned a 4-6-3 double play (**Cooper Orr** to **Carson Kerce** to **Kent Schmidt**) for the first two outs of the game. Jones struck out the next batter to end the inning.

In the bottom of the second, after a flyout to **John Stuetzer** in centerfield, the Hounds turned another 4-6-3 double play (Orr to Kerce to Schmidt) to end the inning. In the bottom of the third, Jones, Orr and Kerce both made individual defensive plays for the first two outs, and Jones struck out the next batter to retire the ninth consecutive Lassiter batter.



Second baseman Cooper Orr was involved in six defensive outs.

Stuetzer led Pope's offense with two singles. Schmidt slugged a double. **Jack Myers** had a single and scored Pope's only run. **Tanner Morneau** and **Jesse Walter** both had singles. Kerce and **Logan Rapp** both walked one time.

Junior righthander **Andrew Nelms** pitched well in 2.1 innings of relief. In the bottom of the fourth, Nelms inherited a bases loaded jam with two outs and the Hounds trailing 2-0. The two outs were from Pope's third double play of the game when second baseman Orr snagged a line drive up the middle for one out and touched second base for the second out to double up the runner.

After throwing a first-pitch strike, Nelms coaxed the Trojans' batter into a soft ground ball back to him on the mound and he threw to Schmidt at first base for the out to end the inning. In the final two innings, Nelms retired 6-of-7 hitters, allowed no runs, one hit, threw 67% strikes (16-24), and benefited from the Hounds final 4-6-3 double play of the game (Orr to Kerce to Schmidt) in the sixth inning.

In the top of the sixth, Pope sent six batters to the plate and scored one run on two hits. With one out, Myers hit a first-pitch ground ball up the middle to the shortstop and beat the throw to first base for an infield hit. Stuetzer followed with a first-pitch bunt single down the third base line that did not even draw a throw. Myers and Stuetzer advanced to second and third on a wild pitch. Kerce walked to load the bases with one out. Schmidt hit a full count line drive deep to right field that was caught. Myers was able to score on the play from third, after a Lassiter throwing error.

Pope and Lassiter play game two in the region series Wednesday night at 5:00 at Pope High School's Jeff Rowland Field.