

## Panthers open playoff series tonight

Written by Don Wallace  
Friday, 09 May 2014 10:54

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**BIRTHRIGHT** — The long wait is over and tonight North Hopkins will return to the baseball diamond in a meaningful game.

The Panthers won district and earned a first round bye into the area round of the Class 1A playoffs.

The district champion North Hopkins team will play a best-of-three game series starting today. Game 1 is set at Harleton, 6 p.m. today. Game 2 will be played at noon Saturday at North Hopkins. Game 3, if needed, will follow at the North Hopkins field Saturday.

North Hopkins has been in warm-up games trying to stay sharp after posting a 14-0 mark in district play.

The Panthers are 15-6 overall.

Harleton is 20-4 overall, they went 12-2 in district play.

Many of the North Hopkins losses were non-district battles against playoff caliber teams. They fell to Celeste and Dallas Covenant.

The Wildcats are fresh from a bi-district playoff sweep over Cayuga. Harleton easily took the series by scores of 9-0 and 23-0 to advance.

During the year, the team, did have one common opponent — powerhouse Price Carlisle.

Harleton lost to the Indians 6-3 and 6-2. North Hopkins saw Carlisle in a warm-up game, falling by a 10-0 score.

The Panthers and Wildcats both feature high scoring teams.

Harleton has scored over 10 runs in 11 wins this year. North Hopkins won several games, including the majority of district outing by the 10-run rule.

According to statistics on the Max Preps website - North Hopkins is averaging 11.2 runs per game, Harleton puts up an average of 10.3 runs a contest.

North Hopkins is paced by seniors Kevin Meza, Jessie Williams, Silas Whaley, Blake Adams, Rheston Sills and Alan Morehead.