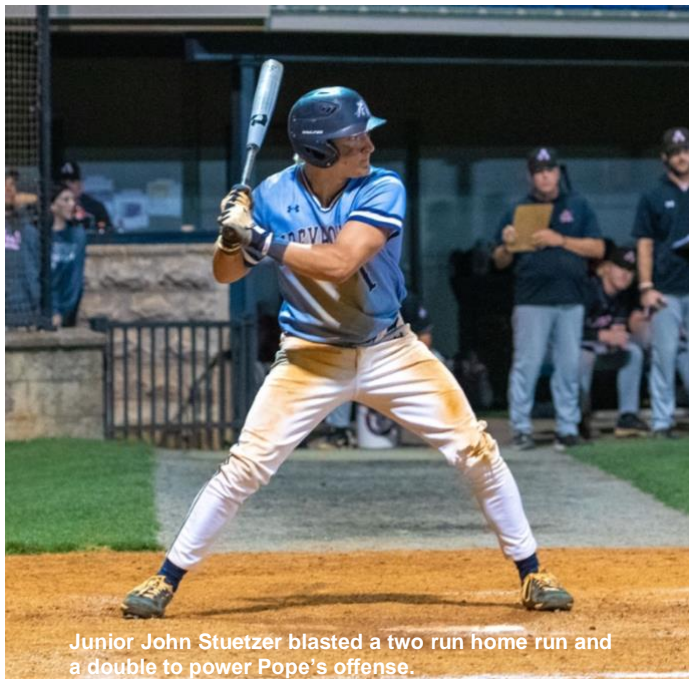




Game 32, April 25, 2024  
Pope Greyhounds 6, Allatoona Buccaneers 1  
Weather: 72 degrees, 4 mph winds  
Played at Jeff Rowland Field at Pope High School  
Overall Record 20-12  
GHSA Playoffs Round One, Game Two, Best 2-of-3 Series



## POPE BEAT ALLATOONA TO EVEN SERIES GARRETT HURLS HOUNDS TO VICTORY; STUETZER SHINES WITH HIS BAT



Junior John Stuetzer blasted a two run home run and a double to power Pope's offense.



Junior Ethan Garrett threw six innings to earn the win. He allowed only three hits and one earned run.

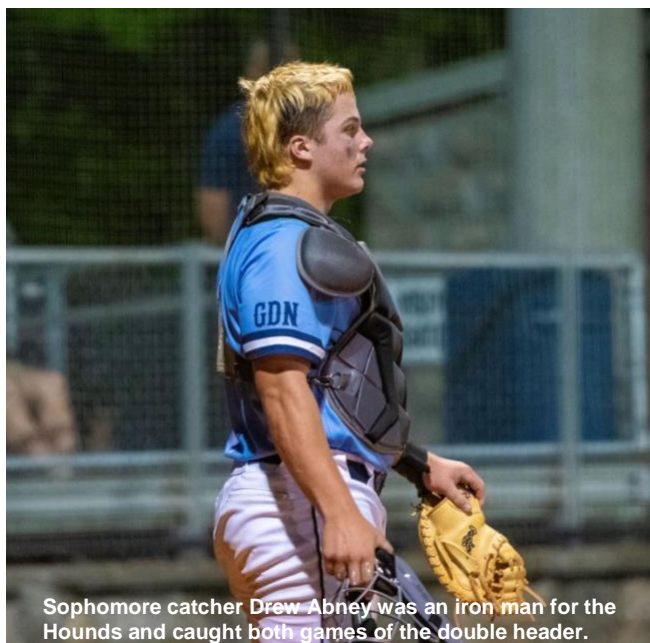


Pope staved off elimination and rode the right arm of junior pitcher **Ethan Garrett** to beat Allatoona, 6-2, in game two of the best 2-of-3 series in the first round of the GHSA State Playoffs on Thursday night at Jeff Rowland Field. The win completed a 5½ hour doubleheader, evened the series at one game each, and set up a decisive game three on Friday night at Pope. The Hounds were the two seed out of region seven and the Buccaneers were the three seed out of region six. Pope's overall record is 20-12 and Allatoona is 21-11.

The game two matchup featured a pitching duel between two D1 college commits. Garrett committed to Georgia Southern and the Allatoona left hander to Georgia Tech. Both pitchers were impressive. Early in the game the two pitchers combined to strike out seven straight batters. All totaled there were 17 strikes outs between the two teams with Garrett punching out seven batters.

Garrett (6-2) pitched six innings to earn his sixth win of the season. He threw 99 pitches, scattered three hits, allowed just one earned run, picked off a runner at first base, and worked around six walks. **Matt Levinson** pitched the final inning and earned his first hold of the season. Levinson retired the side in order and was aided by a game ending 4-6-3 double play (Joachim to Stuetzer to Nelms). Pope's defense made no errors, turned two double plays, and threw out runners at third base and home plate.

Pope's offense had six hits, five stolen bases, took advantage of an Allatoona throwing error that allowed two runs to score, and worked through 10 strike outs to grind out the win. **John Stuetzer** had a big night and led the Hounds with two hits, including a two-run home run, a double, one stolen base, and two runs scored. It was Stuetzer's fourth home run of the season. **Tanner Morneau** had two singles, scored one run, and stole one base. **Andrew Nelms** had a double, a walk, scored two runs, and had a sacrifice fly that scored one run. **Bryce Chapin** had a sacrifice bunt that scored a run. **Ben Hill** hit a two strike bad hop single off the third baseman's face and stole one base. **Luke Winbush** walked one time, scored one run, and had a sacrifice bunt to advance a runner. **Drew Abney** was hit by a pitch in the shoulder. **Matt Strydom** and **Regan Cochran** both stole one base.



Sophomore catcher Drew Abney was an iron man for the Hounds and caught both games of the double header.

Abney caught both games of the doubleheader and was an iron man behind the plate for the Hounds. He endured a collision at home plate and was battered and bruised with foul balls that hit off his face mask, stomach, thigh, knee, foot, and groin area. Abney did not flinch and finished both games - with one more to go on Friday.

In the top of the first inning, Pope scored one run on two hits to take a much needed 1-0 lead and move forward from the game one loss. Stuetzer led off with a first pitch line drive double past the left fielder that looked like the ball was lost in the lights. Stuetzer stole second base. Nelms hit a full count fly ball to right field that scored a headfirst sliding Stuetzer from third. Morneau singled, but was not able to advance.

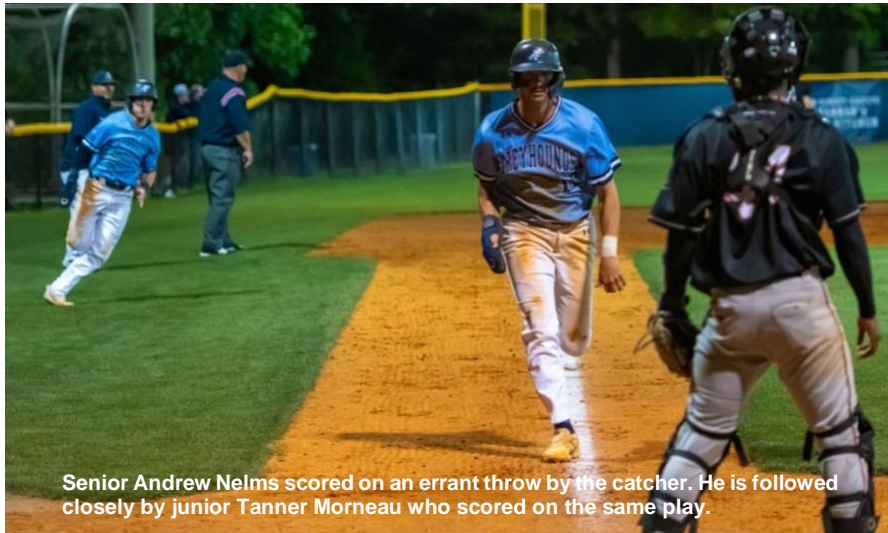
In the bottom of the first inning, after the Allatoona lead batter led off with a full count walk, the second batter grounded into a 1-6-3 double play (Garrett to Stuetzer to Nelms). The third batter walked, moved to second base on a balk, but was picked off at second base by Garrett, who threw to Stuetzer covering the base, and ended the inning with no runs allowed.

In the bottom of the second inning, Garrett put on a pitching clinic in his three up and three down inning. He struck out the first batter looking with curve balls, struck out the second batter swinging with fast balls, and struck out the third batter looking with curve balls.

In the bottom of the third inning, Allatoona had runners on first and second base with no outs. With an expected bunt, Pope ran a defensive wheel play. The runner at second base tried to steal third. Stuetzer beat the runner from shortstop to third base. Abney made a nice throw from his catcher's position to Stuetzer, who tagged the runner for the first out of the inning. Garrett struck out the next batter swinging for the second out. The next batter lined out to Stuetzer at shortstop for the third out and Allatoona was again kept off the scoreboard.

In the top of the fourth inning, Pope scored one run on no hits to take a 2-0 lead. Nelms led off with a four pitch walk. He advanced to second base on a wild pitch. Morneau grounded out 6-3, but advanced Nelms to third base. With one out, Chapin placed a sacrifice bunt to the right side of the pitcher's mound. The pitcher fielded the ball and threw home, but Nelms beat the throw and was safe with the Hounds second run. Chapin was safe at first on the play.

In the bottom of the fifth inning, with the bases loaded and two outs, the Allatoona batter singled up the middle to score a runner from third base. The runner at second base tried to score as well. Morneau scooped up the ball in center field and threw a line drive in the air to Abney at catcher. Abney caught the ball, absorbed the impact from the runner, and held on for the third out to end the inning.

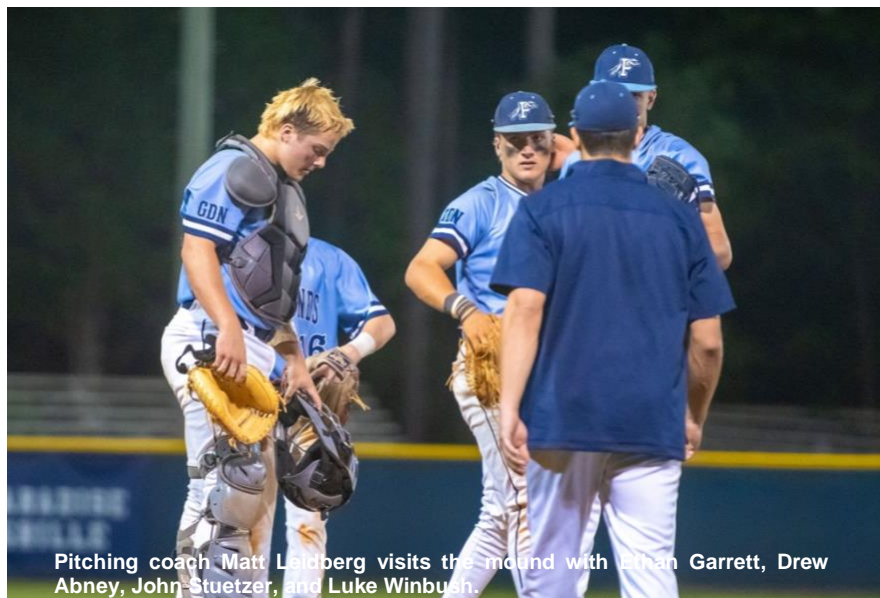


Senior Andrew Nelms scored on an errant throw by the catcher. He is followed closely by junior Tanner Morneau who scored on the same play.

In the top of the sixth inning, Pope scored two runs on two hits to take a 4-1 lead. Nelms led off with an 0-2 line drive bad hop double past the third baseman into left field. Morneau hit a sacrifice bunt to the right side of the pitcher and moved Nelms to third base. Nobody was covering first base on the play and Morneau was safe with an infield single. Morneau stole second base. With one out, Abney squared to bunt. The

pitch was up and Abney did not swing. The Allatoona catcher tried to pick off Nelms at third base. His throw sailed over the third baseman's head and into left field. Nelms scored on the play. The left fielder slipped and the ball got past him. Morneau raced home and scored from second base on the play.

In the top of the seventh inning, Pope scored two runs on one large hit to put an exclamation point on the game and take a 6-2 lead. With one out, Winbush walked on a 3-1 count. With two outs, Stuetzer walked to the plate for his final at bat of the game. On a 1-0 pitch, after waiting patiently on the pitch to (finally) be thrown, Stuetzer was fed a fast ball and crushed it 365-foot over the left center field fence for a no doubt home run. Stuetzer displayed a nice bat flip and was greeted at home plate by his teammates with an energetic jump celebration. Winbush also scored on the blast.



Pitching coach Matt Leisberg visits the mound with Ethan Garrett, Drew Abney, John Stuetzer, and Luke Winbush.