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RANDLEMAN - There are some incredible achievements in high school athletics with many of those being accomplished by Randolph County teams and student-athletes.



*Randleman head coach Jake Smith.
Photo by PJ Ward-Brown
Photography.*

One of the most impressive team records in all of sports is the run the Randleman High School baseball team has been on since 2011. Since that season, according to MaxPreps, the Tigers have advanced to at least the fourth round of the NCHSAA State Tournament. That's at least three playoff wins each year with appearances in the state championship series in 2011, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2021 and 2022.

While that streak began with coach Van Hurley and was continued for one season with Sean Barker, current head coach Jake Smith has extended that impressive run to 13 seasons heading into this year. And the way the Tigers have looked so far in the 2024 campaign, they are certainly primed to extend that most improbable streak another season.

The Tigers finished this past week with three more wins to run their record to 15-2, including a perfect 10-0 record in

Piedmont Athletic Conference play, where the Tigers are 103-8 under Smith during his tenure. An 8-2 win over Providence Grove Friday night clinched at least a share of the PAC title, the 14th straight season the Tigers have claimed a regular-season conference championship.

"I credit the kids," said Smith, who is an unbelievable 238-49 in his 11th season as head coach. "They work hard day in and day out. They love to play for Randleman. They love the support they get from this community and it's always a great atmosphere, a great environment."

Does the impressive streak put any pressure on Smith as he begins every new season?



*Braxton Walker. Photo by PJ Ward-Brown
Photography.*

"You would think so toward me, but no," he said. "Our pressure comes in practice. I try to make practice as difficult as possible."

The formula is working again. With a group of hard-working individuals, incredible pitching and rock-solid defense, the Tigers have only dropped non league games to Northwest Guilford (7-5) and West Davidson (4-2).



Jake Riddle. Photo by PJ Ward-Brown Photography.

"In the off season, we knew what we had," Smith said. "Our main thing was going to be pitching. High school baseball is throwing strikes and playing clean defense. They have had success doing that."

The pitching starts with Seth Way. The senior has been dominant this year and he leads a group including Jake Riddle, John Kirkpatrick and Braxton Walker. Way hurled a complete-game win over Providence Grove on Monday, winning 1-0 with 13 strikeouts.

"It starts with Seth," Smith said. "He does a lot of things. We have had really good starting pitching and Seth has been dominant."

With the other hurlers stepping up, it doesn't take a lot of offense for the Tigers to be successful game in and game out, but the offense hasn't been a problem as the Tigers are averaging nearly eight runs per game. Way, Riddle, Tate Andrews, Kirkpatrick, Walker, Caden Lasley and Peyton Patterson, among others, have led the charge.

"I never had questions about the offense, just if we were going to be consistent offensively," Smith said. "I felt really good about our pitching. I felt we had a great chance to win."

Just like every other year.