

WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

FSU to name coach today

■ Red Springs' Patterson-Heath expected to be introduced at 5:30.

By **Sammy Batten**
Staff writer

Eva Patterson-Heath, who has compiled more than 500 career victories in 24 seasons as head girls' basketball coach at Red Springs High School, is expected to make the jump to the college level today.



Patterson-Heath

Fayetteville State University has called a 5:30 p.m. press conference at Capel Arena to announce a replacement for Eric Tucker, who retired in April after 17 seasons on the job and 299 career wins.

Multiple sources close to the situation confirmed to The Observer that Patterson-Heath was offered a three-year contract last Friday. But the contract was subject to the approval of the FSU Board of Trustees.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees has been called for noon today, according to school officials. It is expected Patterson-Heath's contract will be approved during that meeting.

Patterson-Heath could not be reached for comment Tuesday. But the other two finalists interviewed for the positions — Tucker's FSU assistant Mike Rich and E.E. Smith High coach Dee Hardy — said they had not been contacted by any university officials to inform them of a choice.

Patterson-Heath is a Red Springs graduate and former N.C. A&T player. She has taken the Red Devils to two state championship game appearances and won more than 80 percent of her games since becoming head coach in 1985. Red Springs was runner-up in the 2-A title game in 1999 and in the 1-A finals in 2003.

Staff writer Sammy Batten can be reached at battens@fayobserver.com or 486-3534.



Very, very average

MID-SEASON REPORT: The Atlanta Braves hit the season's halfway point earlier this week with a record slightly below .500



THE GOOD

■ **JAIR JURJENS AND JAVIER VAZQUEZ:** Although both have records below .500 (Jurjens 6-7 and Vazquez, above, 5-7) both starters have been good, suffering from poor run support. Jurjens' ERA is 2.91 and Vazquez's 3.05. Normally that would be enough to garner some All-Star consideration. Rookie Tommy Hanson is also doing good things in Atlanta. He's 4-0 with a 2.25 ERA in six starts.

■ **BRIAN McCANN:** The catcher earned a spot on the National League All-Star team after a solid first half effort in which he hit .303 with eight home runs and a .383 on base percentage.

■ **RAFAEL SORIANO AND MIKE GONZALEZ:** It hasn't been closer by committee but closer by manager Bobby Cox's gut this year. Gonzalez, with a 3.20 ERA, leads the team in saves with nine. But Soriano, with eight saves, has a better ERA at 1.63.



THE AVERAGE

■ **CHIPPER JONES:** Braves fans have come to expect superior numbers from Jones, above. This year he has slipped a bit, batting just .292 with nine home runs. Still serviceable, but far from an All-Star.

■ **DEREK LOWE:** Atlanta signed the veteran pitcher to be its ace. But while he leads the team with seven wins, he has been far from dominant with a 4.56 ERA in 106 innings pitched.

■ **TEAM HITTING:** Some Braves fans might be surprised to hear that the team's batting average of .261 is actually sixth best in the National League. But they rank in the bottom third of the league in other categories, including home runs (12th with 66), RBI (11th with 331) and runs scored (11th with 346).



THE BAD

■ **KELLY JOHNSON:** While they never expected him to turn into a Hall of Famer, the Braves have come to expect solid numbers from the second baseman, above. Last year he hit .287, and in 2008 he batted .276. This year he fell off the map, hitting just .214 with a .286 on base percentage.

■ **JEFF FRANCOEUR:** Once Atlanta's golden boy, the outfielder was benched earlier this week. Hitless in his last 11 at bats, Francoeur, (main photo), is hitting just .214 (37-for-173) with two homers and 15 RBI since May 10. He's tied for the fourth worst on-base percentage among the National League starters (.280).

■ **TEAM SPEED:** The Braves' total of 29 stolen bases is second worst in the National League, only better than Milwaukee's 26. Of those 29, Nate McLouth, who the team acquired in a trade with Pittsburgh, has 10. No other player has more than five.

FAYETTEVILLE SWAMPDOGS

Schmidt hopes to be a starter

■ Lefty counting on summer growth to help him land a spot in his college rotation.

By **Andrew Johnson**
Staff writer

Tom Schmidt loves being on the mound.

At 6-foot-6, 215 pounds, Schmidt is an intimidating

force. He enjoys peering down on batters before, he hopes, striking them out.

"I like it because you're the one that controls the ball," he said. "People have to react to you. You're the one that dictates the action on the field."

Schmidt has always had confidence in his ability. Even after a wood-carving accident in high school left

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Photo courtesy of Lance King

SwampDogs pitcher Tom Schmidt hopes his time on the hill this summer will help him earn a spot in his college team's rotation next year.

Johns leads Tobs past Dogs, 7-5

Andrew Johnson
Staff writer

Considering the way Wilson's Matt Johns hit the ball Tuesday night at J.P. Riddle Stadium, Fayetteville was pretty much doomed from the beginning.

Johns wreaked havoc in the swamp, going 4-for-4 with a single, three doubles and three RBIs in the Tobs' 7-5 victory over the SwampDogs (2-4 second half, 18-14 overall)

NEXT HOME GAME

- **Who:** Fayetteville vs. Florence
- **When:** Thursday, 7:05 p.m.
- **Where:** J.P. Riddle Stadium
- **Tickets:** \$4-7

in front of 1,936 fans.

Neither starter Will Simpson, nor the SwampDogs bullpen had an answer for the sophomore from Central

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