

## JUNIOR DIXIE BOYS WORLD SERIES

# Hope Mills rebounds in a big way

■ After dropping its first game, The All-Star team routs Tennessee 19-2 in an elimination game.

By **Ricky Adams**  
Special to The Observer

**ENTERPRISE, Ala.** — The Hope Mills All-Stars rebounded from Saturday's heart-wrenching 8-7 loss to Virginia in a big way Sunday; Hope Mills advanced to the third round of the

Junior Dixie Boys World Series with a 19-2 thrashing of Tennessee in an elimination game.

As was the case Saturday, Sunday's games were delayed by weather; Hope Mills and the other five teams in the losers'

bracket saw their games delayed by at least two-and-a-half hours.

Hope Mills began play at approximately 7:50 p.m. and after scoring early and often were done by 9:45 in the five-inning, mercy-rule game.

Hope Mills scored 10 runs in the first inning, five in the third, three in the fourth and one in the fifth and final stanza.

"This feels a whole lot better than last night," Hope Mills manager Jason Deal said through a smile noticeably absent some 20 hours earlier when the Virginia game finally ended after midnight. "We hit the ball exceptionally well tonight."

Hope Mills' entire lineup contributed to the victory. Each player recorded a hit, led

by Russell Anderson and Troy Cain, who each batted 3-for-4.

But Hope Mills didn't rely entirely on its hitters.

"We got great pitching," Deal said.

Clay Ewing, the starting pitcher, struck out eight consecutive Tennesseans at one stretch. Austin Deal pitched in relief and added two strikeouts

See **HOPE MILLS**, Page 5C



### ON THE WEB

■ Follow the Hope Mills All-Stars in the World Series at **910rec.com**

## MOTOR SPORTS

# Pocono race pushed back

■ Thanks to steady rain, the Pennsylvania 500 will be held today at 12:15.

By **Dan Gelston**  
The Associated Press

**LONG POND, Pa.** — Jimmie Johnson's White House visit will have to wait. So will the start of the Sprint Cup race at Pocono Raceway.

Steady rain postponed Sunday's race and it has been rescheduled for 12:15 p.m. today.

Heavy rain hit the track Sunday morning. It let up about an hour before the scheduled 2 p.m. start and the sky brightened for driver introductions. The rain returned about 3:30 p.m. and soaked the surface again. There was light rain the rest of the afternoon, forcing the postponement.

There was also some concern about "weepers" — water that seeps up through the track following heavy precipitation on the triangle track. Pocono does not have lights and faced a time crunch to start the race.

"It's just kind of rough to endure it when you're here waiting for it to either rain more or rain less," Bobby Labonte said.

Johnson, the three-time defending Cup champion, was among a group of NASCAR drivers to be honored at the White House by President Barack Obama today. Johnson's No. 48 Chevrolet was going to be parked at the White House.

NASCAR spokesman Kerry Tharp said the date of a future visit was being discussed with White House officials.

Rain also washed out qualifying on Friday, which automatically gave the pole to points leader Tony Stewart. Stewart lost his pole position and will start from the

See **POCONO**, Page 6C

## PANTHERS

# STEPPING UP

Steve Smith has turned 30 and is eager to put his hot-headed past behind him and become a veteran leader for the Panthers



By **Mike Cranston**  
The Associated Press

**SPARTANBURG, S.C.** — Steve Smith loaded up the car early Sunday morning and the ugly memories returned.

Throughout his 90-minute drive to training camp, Smith replayed the scene a year ago when he broke Carolina teammate Ken Lucas' nose with a sucker punch, an incident that produced a two-game suspension and another dent to the star receiver's reputation.

On the same day Julius Peppers ended his offseason of discontent by showing up to camp and then avoiding reporters, Smith had plenty to say.

He got out of his car in front of the Wofford College dormitory, plunked down a mini refrigerator on the sidewalk and tackled the issue that has sometimes overshadowed his four Pro Bowl selections: his temper.

"Everybody in this circle, football players and football fans, kind of know what happened last year. I'm just dealing with that," Smith said. "I'm just kind of kicking myself coming down here."

Then Smith acknowledged turning 30 in May was significant. Already holder of several team career records, he knows he's closer to the end than the beginning. He feels he must fill a larger role on a team that went 12-4 last season before a shock-

ed season.

"It's always been something I've been able to do ever since I was a little kid," Kole said. "You know I've played a lot of different positions and it's kind of fun because it keeps you on your toes."

And the work that Kole has put in practice has certainly paid off for the SwampDogs. In 35 games, he is batting

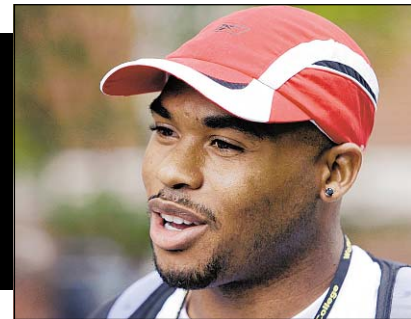
See **KOLE**, Page 5C

Steve Smith said Sunday that he has to 'become a better leader and a more responsible leader.'

See **SMITH**, Page 5C

### LOOKING BACK AT LAST SEASON

- Smith led the Panthers with 78 receptions for 1,421 yards and 6 TDs.
- He was third in the NFL in receiving yards despite missing first two games.
- He was selected for his fourth Pro Bowl and had eight 100-yard games.
- He set a Panthers team record with an average of 18.2 yards per catch.



Smith talks to reporters Sunday after arriving at training camp.

AP photo



Photo courtesy of Lance King/Lance Images

Matt Kole pitches during the SwampDogs' win Saturday.

## SWAMPDOGS

# Kole does it all for the Dogs — literally

■ The junior has suited up as a pitcher, DH, left fielder and first baseman this season.

By **Andrew Johnson**  
Staff writer

When Matt Kole arrives at the ballpark for each game, he expects the unexpected.

His teammates pretty much know

what position they will be playing day in and day out, but Kole simply doesn't.

That's because there are numerous options the Fayetteville SwampDogs have every game in using Kole's services. Whether it's starting on the mound, in the lineup as a designated hitter, left fielder, or first baseman, Kole is always ready to play.

And he doesn't find the unknown to be frustrating. Instead, he gets a kick out of consistently playing in a differ-

ent spot.

"It's always been something I've been able to do ever since I was a little kid," Kole said. "You know I've played a lot of different positions and it's kind of fun because it keeps you on your toes."

And the work that Kole has put in practice has certainly paid off for the SwampDogs. In 35 games, he is batting

See **KOLE**, Page 5C