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House of Representatives

TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF THE WHITLEY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. HAROLD ROGERS
OF KENTUCKY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 29, 2023

Mr. ROGERS. Mister Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Whitley County High School Colonel Baseball Team and Coach Jeremy Shope for winning the 2023 Kentucky High School Athletic Association State Championship at the Kentucky Proud Park.

The Colonels brought home the 13th Region's first-ever state baseball title, returning top honors to the mountains for the first time since 2001. Rising from defeat after a district championship loss, Whitley County closed out the season with an impressive 39-4 record, defeating LaRue County, South Warren, Henderson County, and finally beating the Shelby County Rockets 2-1 to earn the state tournament crown. Our mountain student athletes have a long-held legacy of competing with tremendous grit, talent, and pride, and I am personally proud of their determination and tenacity to show the entire state what our students are capable of achieving.

When Coach Shope took over the helm of the baseball program in 2018, the Colonels had not made a tournament appearance since 2005. The team has since improved by leaps and bounds, steam rolling past their opponents, winning the regional title in 2021 and 2023, and sweeping the state tournament this year with skillful plays that they have tirelessly trained for.

The Colonels were visibly determined to bring the state title back to the mountains. Grant Zehr, a senior pitcher, dominated the baseball mound with 96 pitches in the final game, earning the MVP award for the tournament. Bryce Anderson scored the first run thanks to an RBI ground out by Sam Harp, who scored again in the sixth inning by courageously stealing home plate, a rare feat at any level of competition. The team's stellar defense then held the Rockets to one run, securing the highly coveted banner for Whitley County High School.

It is with great enthusiasm that I join the people of southern and eastern Kentucky in celebration of the Whitley County High School Baseball Team and the coaching staff for winning the state championship. Their achievement will undoubtedly encourage our young mountain student athletes to dream bigger, knowing the state title is always within reach with sheer perseverance, excellent coaching, and hard work.

HAROLD ROGERS
Member of Congress