Written by Mike Kelly
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The Watauga High men's and women's basketball teams split their games on Friday night at Baldwin Gymnasium in Asheville.

In game one, the WHS women (1-2) suffered their second consecutive loss as they were bested by T.C. Roberson 65-30. The Rams (6-0) broke the game open by outscoring WHS 38-13 in the second and third quarters combined. Cierra McKendrick did most of the damage as she poured in a game-high 18 points. Taylor Feimster chipped in with 12, and the Pioneers committed 35 turnovers.

The Pioneers, depsite a sluggish start by both teams, owned a 13-11 lead at the first-quarter break. But the Rams outscored WHS 18-9 in the second quarter, taking a 29-22 lead at the intermission. And the Rams smothered WHS in the second half, holding WHS to just eight points in the entire second half.

That effort gave TCR an insurmountable 49-26 advantage heading into the final stanza. The WHS women have now scored all of 24 in the second half of their last two games (which includes 16 points in the second half against Avery on December 3). Brooke Rhodes led the Pioneers with 14 points.

In game two, the WHS men (3-0), off to their best start since the 1997-98 season, clobbered T.C. Roberson 73-45. The Pioneers opened up an early five point lead, but the Rams (2-4) came charging back to tie the game. Damian Edwards nailed a three that gave WHS an 8-5 lead and the Pioneers proceeded to pull away from there.

Edwards had a monster game with 19 points and five threes, one shy of his career high of six set last season against TCR at the old Lentz-Eggers Gym.

"What can I say," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "I'm very pleased with the way we're playing right now. But as a coach, you can always find a flaw or two to work on. But for the most part, I am very impressed with the focus and determination of this team."

The Pioneers broke the game open with a 24-point blitz in the second period and opened up a commanding 44-21 lead at the halftime break. And ironically, they did it without Jake Pifer scoring a single point.

As a matter of fact, Pifer, who has backboned WHS offensively in the first two games of the year with 45 points, only had two points for the game on a pair of free throws in the fourth quarter.

"This team is so unselfish," Sanders said. "Jake saw that other people were stepping up , so he made sure they got the ball in a position to score. That's what makes this team so special. They work very well together."

WHS led by as many as 33 points as they Pioneers defeated T.C. Roberson for the second year in a row. The Rams have lost four in a row. Will Koppenhaver was the only other player in double figures for WHS with 11 points. Caleb Watson and Casey Quinn each had eight points a piece. Kyle Chambers had nine points off the bench. The Pioneers made nine three pointers.

"I've never been on a team that's this deternmined to win," Watson said. "No matter what the situation is, we believe in each other"

WHS travels to Mountain Heritage Saturday night for a make-up game. Our coverage begins at 4:30 pm on Oldies 100.7 FM.

WOMEN:

	1	2	3	4	T
WHS	13	9	4	4	- 30
TCR	11	18	20	16	- 65

WHS: RHODES 14, WILSON 4, HARRELSON 3, ALFORD 2, GILLIAM 2, SHIPP 2, CHURCH 1, MARGOLIS 2.

TCR: C. McKENDRICK 18, FEIMSTER 12, McCURRY 1, LOVE 6, B. McKENDRICK 4, BURGESS 7, LOGAN 8, TERRY 9.

MEN:

	1	2	3	4	T
WHS	20	24	14	15	- 73
TCR	13	8	9	12	- 45

WHS: EDWARDS 19, KOPPENHAVER 11, PIFER 2, HODGES 3, GREER 2, QUINN 3,

WATSON 8, POULOS 1, CHAMBERS 9, HALL 5, POGOLOFF 5.