

Pioneers Keep Title Hopes Alive

Written by Mike Kelly

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The Watuaga High men's soccer team kept pace with Hickory for the regular-season championship in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference Monday night with a come-from-behind 3-2 win against

Hibriten on Senior Night at Jack Groce Stadium. The Pioneers (15-2-3 overall; 8-1-2 NW3A/4A), who are ranked 15th in the state in the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association Class 4A Poll this week, spotted Hibriten a 2-0 lead six minutes into the game, but came roaring back with three unanswered goals to win the match.

"I guess it was Senior Night jitters," said WHS coach Woody McKay. "But we finally woke up and dominated the match. We attacked, and we created some great scoring chances."

Tucker Chasteen converted one of those scoring chances into a goal at the 34-minute mark of the first half. Cam Linnville picked up the assist on the play. And Jake Chasteen tied things up with a goal of his own six minutes later on an assist from Trey Ollis.

Justin Hall scored the game winner at the 72-minute mark of the second half on a feed from Hunter Martin. Despite the win, Hickory won its match by blanking St. Stephens, 2-0. Frankie Wyatt and Carlos Sevilla scored for the Red Tornadoes.

Hickory (21-1; 10-1), ranked No.2 in the NCSCA Class 3A Poll, wraps up the regular season at Fred T. Foard Wednesday night. The Pioneers will close out the season at St. Stephens. The state playoff pairings will be released next Monday, October 29.

WHS won the JV match, 3-0. Jakie Irwins scored twice for WHS; Adam Hendrix has the other WHS goal.