

Pioneers Title Hopes Fall Short

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The Watauga High men's soccer team closed out the regular season with a disappointing 2-1 loss on the road in Hickory against St Stephens in double-overtime. That loss, coupled with Hickory's 1-

0 double-overtime win at Fred T. Foard, gives the Red Tornadoes (22-1; 11-1 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) the NW3A/4A Conference championship.

Brian Greer put the Pioneers (15-3-3; 8-2-2), who are ranked 15th in the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association Class 4A Poll, on top with as he scored at the 25-minute mark of the first half. He trapped the ball in front of the goal and slammed the ball into the back of the net. The Pioneers, who led 1-0 at the intermission, lost Cam Linville, who went down with a hamstring injury in the first half.

St Stephens, which was celebrating Senior Day, stepped up its attack in the second half. That pressure eventually paid off as * scored on a breakaway at the 65-minute mark of the second half to tie the game and send it to overtime.

The Indians finally jumped on top when Tommy Vo scored for the Indians at the 87-minute mark of the first overtime period. Luke Bruce had the assist on that tally. The Pioneers were also denied twice in the extra session. Canyon Mueller had a goal disallowed on an off-sides call, and Jake Chasteen blasted a shot that hit the side of the net. The Indians, who were red carded in the overtime period played the extra session with only ten players.

Watauga closes out the regular season in second place in league play, but as the No.1 seed among the Class 4A schools in the conference. The state playoff pairings will be announced Monday, October 29; first-round games must be completed by next Wednesday, October 31. WHS won the JV match, 2-1. Chase Palm scored twice for WHS. The JV team finished the year with a 14-3-4 record while outscoring their opponents 41-10, including nine shutouts.