The Watauga High women's basketball team completed the three-game sweep of its season-opening homestand by knocking off Ashe County 47-33 Friday night at Lentz-Eggers Gym. The last time WHS (3-

0) opened the season with three consecutive wins was in 1998-99 (the Pioneers began the season with a 6-0 record that year). And the Pioneers also snapped a 15 game losing streak against the Huskies. It's the first time WHS has beaten Ashe County (0-3) since the 2004-05 season.

"It's been real sweet the last two weeks," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "We're just enjoying the moment right now."

But Anderson, who picked up his first win against the Huskies (he's 1-10 in his career), had his anxious moments. The Pioneers blew a seven-point, second quarter lead, and they led 26-23 late in the third quarter before Hannah Margolis and Claire Harris ignited an 11-2 run that finally put the game out of reach.

Margolis, who scored seven of her game-high 15 points in the second quarter, hit a layup with 4:25 left to play in game that gave WHS a commanding 37-25 lead. The Huskies never got any closer than eight points the rest of the way.

"We had two small spurts during the course of the game and that was based on our defense," Anderson said. "Then Hannah and Claire took over. Claire knocked down a couple of threes and Hannah does what she does best, and that's get to the rim. We really needed those girls to step things up tonight."

The Pioneers had three players in double figures. Harris, who buried a pair of threes, finished with 12 points, and Savanna Wood, who made five of six free throws down the stretch, finished with ten points. Wood also had seven assists and four steals; Margolis had seven assists and three blocked shots.

"We went through some rough times two years ago," Anderson said. "but there was never a doubt in my mind that the coaching staff and I were doing the right things. We're seeing the fruits of that right now. A young team last year that only won seven games has turned itself into a pretty good basketball team. And we're really looking forward to our first road trip next Tuesday night at McDowell."

The Pioneers haven't beaten McDowell (1-1) since the 1996-97 season (and the only time they've beaten the Titans in school history). East Burke defeated McDowell 52-51 Friday night.

Kaelin McNeill had four points and a team-high 11 rebounds for the Pioneers. The Huskies, who trailed 23-21 at halftime, only made four field goals in the second half. Ashton Lee led the Huskies with eight points. Abby Lopp and Paige Spell had six points apiece.

WHS 47, ASHE COUNTY 33

SCORE BY PERIODS	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**TOTAL**
ASHE COUNTY	8	13	4	8	- 33
WATAUGA	9	14	9	15	- 47

ASHE COUNTY: REED 2, HUDLER 3, LEE 8, SPELL 6, REAVIS 4, LOPP 6, FLANNIGAN 2, BROWN 2.

WHS: WOOD 10 (7 ASSISTS, 4 STEALS), DERRICK 4, MARGOLIS 15 (7 ASSISTS, 3 BLOCKED SHOTS), HARRIS 12, McNEILL 4 (11 REBOUNDS), WILSON 2.

THREE POINTERS:
WHS - HARRIS 2, WOOD.
ASHE COUNTY - LEE 2, REAVIS, HUDLER.

PIONEERS WIN THIRD STRAIGHT

The Watauga High men's basketball team crushed Ashe County 55-40 Friday night in a non-conference game at Lentz-Eggers Gym. And the game wasn't as close as the final score. WHS was dominant from the start. The Pioneers (3-0) opened up a commanding 13-0 lead in the opening stanza and never looked back.

The Huskies didn't score until Zach Lawrence nailed a free throw with 1:55 left in the first quarter. WHS led 15-3 after one.

"We knew Watauga was going to come out and they hit us with their pressure," said Ashe County coach Scott Grubb, who took over when legendary coach Marc Payne retired in late October. "We just never found our offense, and we started to press a little bit and threw the ball all over the place. But give Watauga credit. They are so athletic. They're speed, they're long, they're quick, they gave us fits all night."

The Pioneers, who led 29-9 at the break, built a 28-point lead (their biggest of the game) in the third quarter. The Huskies, who rallied late to make it respectable, never got any closer than 15 points the rest of the way.

"We came out and did exactly what we wanted to do," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "When you've got a team that's struggling offensively like Ashe County, you want them playing from behind right away. We came out with our trapping defense and it created a lot of transition baskets. We ran the floor well, and controlled the tempo from the outset."

Tyler Strugill and DeWayne Mackey paced the Pioneers with 13 points apiece. Mackey also had four assists. Allen Koppenhaver had ten points; Ben Howser had seven points and six rebounds. Matt Lambert had four points, six boards and three blocked shots.

"I was proud the way we came out and took control in the third quarter," Sanders said. "We didn't want to put it in cruise control. We wanted to maintain our 20-point lead that we built at halftime. And we also wanted to work on some things to make us a better team."

The Huskies, who lost 95% of their offense to graduation, were averaging 34 points-a-game through their first two games of the season. And the Huskies continued to struggle Friday night. They only made three field goals in the first half, and 14 for the game.

Devan Sheets, who came off the bench, led the Huskies (1-2) with 12 points. Sam Bowers had eight points.

"It's back to the drawing board," Grubb said. "We're looking for someone to step up offensively. We just don't have a go-to guy right now."

On the other hand, the Pioneers haven't been bashful about scoring points. And thanks to Mackey at point guard, and a solid effort by Strugill, who turned in his best game of the season Friday night, the Pioneers are riding a three-game winning streak.

"I really felt DeWayne and Tyler played very well tonight," Sanders said. "We've been wanting DeWayne to create for us, to draw the defense to him. We know he can score, but tonight, he did a good job finding the open man. And Tyler has so much potential, but he's got to bring it out of himself. He was a little somber off the bench to start the game, and I got on him a little bit.

But he handled it and turned up his aggression on the floor."
The Pioneers travel to McDowell Tuesday night. It's the first meeting between the schools since the 2008-09 season. The schools were scheduled to play each other last year, but the game was snowed out.
"And we have to shore up some things, especially on the board," Sanders said. "You can't give a team like McDowell, which is athletic with size, too many shots inside. But it's a good measuring stick for us. (McDowell) a quality opponent, and a great first test on the road."
The Titans (3-0) defeated East Burke 71-63 Friday night. Coverage begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: The WHS JV girls snapped a two-game losing streak by knocking off Ashe County 32-20 Friday night. Brooklin Carroll led the Pioneers (3-2) with ten points; Mary Seramer had seven.....The WHS JV boys (5-0) won their 30th consecutive game by knocking off Ashe County, 53-42. Aaron Dobbins had ten points, five rebounds and four steals; Caleb Bryson had nine points, four assists and three steals; Michael Ebaugh had eight points.

WHS 55, ASHE COUNTY 40

SCORE BY PERIODS	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**TOTAL**
ASHE COUNTY	3	6	16	15	40
WATAUGA	15	14	20	15	55

ASHE COUNTY: LAWS 5, D. SHEETS 12, BOWERS 8, SPELL 5, ASHLEY 3, GAMBILL 4, LEE 2, LAWRENCE 1.

WHS: STURGILL 13, MARGOLIS 3, KOPPENHAVER 10, BAKER 5 (6 REBOUNDS), HOWSER 7 (6 REBOUNDS), MACKEY 13 (4 ASSISTS), LAMBERT 4 (6 REBOUNDS, 3 BLOCKED SHOTS).

THREE-POINTERS:
WHS - BAKER, MACKEY
ASHE COUNTY - D. SHEETS 2, LAWS, SPELL