The Watauga High boys basketball team suffered its second overtime loss in as many games Tuesday night. The Pioneers, who rallied from a 20-point deficit,

lost to Wilkes Central 75-65 in overtime in a non-conference game at The Nest in Moravian Falls. It's WHS' (5-4) fifth loss in that building in the last six years.

"We talked about it before the game," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "Every time we play in this building, we seem to go through a bad stretch. It just seems like we can't do anything right, and Wilkes Central can't do anything wrong. And that happened in the second quarter tonight."

Ben Howser and Cameron Baker did all the scoring for WHS in the first half as the Eagles (8-4) built a 15-point halftime lead. They stretched their lead to 20 points at 44-24 early in the third quarter before the Pioneers finally came to life.

Led by Baker and Jay Harrill, who came off the bench and poured in 12 points, the Pioneers went on a 27-8 run and cut the lead down to one at 52-51. Harrill applied the exclamation point as he buried a three ball at the horn.

"I know Jay hasn't played a lot of minutes lately, but he's such a tremendous shooter," Sanders said. "He's iights out in practice. Jay showed a lot of poise out there and hit some big shots for us. When they went into that zone, we needed another shooter, and Jay got hot."

Harrill contined his torrid pace as his bucket early in the fourth quarter gave WHS a 57-55 lead. The Pioneers eventually stretched their advantage to five points at 60-55 with 4:09 left. But they couldn't put the Eagles away. Wilkes Central scored seven consecitove points to go up by two. Will Cornette, who led all scorers with 27 points, scored five points in the run. Tyler Sturgill forced overtime as he hit a layup with 32 seconds left.

But the Pioneers sputtered in the overtime period, and were outscored by the Eagles, 13-3. Howser scored WHS' only bucket and the Eagles made nine consecutive free throws to put the contest away. Wllkes Central was 22-28 from the charity stripe on the night.

"We played terribly to start the game, especially in the second quarter," Sanders said. "We showed a lot of poise to come back and force overtime, but we let another one slip away. But we have to be ready to play four solid quarters of basketball and beyond, if necessary, to win these types of games. Our (Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) is going to be tight. And a lot of games are going to be hard fought and go down to the wire. You can't take possessions off, or a quarters off, and expect to win those games."

Baker led the Pioneers with 18 points; Howser, who carried WHS with 14 first-half points, finished with 16. Michael Howell came off the bench and poured in 14 points for the Eagles; Austin Staley had 11 points.

WILKES CENTRAL 75, WHS 65 (OT)

SCORE BY PERIOD	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**1OT**	**TOTAL**
WATAUGA	13	9	29	11	3 -	65
WILKES CENTRAL	18	19	15	10	13 -	75

WHS: HARRILL 12, STURGILL 8 (5 REBOUNS), GAILES (6 ASSISTS), MARGOLIS (3 ASSISTS), KOPPENHAVER 1 (3 ASSISTS), BAKER 18 (5 STEALS), HOWSER 16 (5 REBOUNDS), LAMBERT 2. FG: 21, 3FG: 5, FT: 8-15.
THREE-POINTERS: HARRILL 2, MACKEY 2, BAKER.

WCHS: CORPENING 2, OSBORNE 6, CORNETTE 27, SHOEMAKER 5, BAILEY 2, WILLIAMS 2, STALEY 11, HOWELL 14, STINSON 6. FG: 19, 3FG: 5, FT: 22-28.
THREE-POINTERS: CORNETTE 4, STALEY.

EAGLES DOWN PIONEERS, 52-45

For two-and-a-half quarters Tuesday night, it looked like the Watuaga High girls basketball team was going to win its first game in Moravian Falls in three years. They owned a nine-point lead with 3:29 to play in the third quarter, thanks to junior Savanna Wood, who scored nine of her team-high 25 points in the stanza.

But it just wasn't meant to be. The Pioneers (4-6) came unraveled down the stretch and dropped a 52-45 decision at the Nest in Moravian Falls in a non-conference game. The Eagles (9-4) outscored WHS 28-12 down the stretch; Martha Mastin, who did not play against the Pioneers in their initial meeting back on November 27 (a 47-22 WHS win), led the comeback as she scored 22 of her team-high 25 points in the second half.

"We can't have a disappearing act during portions of the game," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "And that's what we're doing right now. We're disappearing. We've got to be better, and it starts with me, down to our coaches, our seniors, our captains, and the rest of our team."

Wood was WHS' only player in double figures. Hannah Margolis, who fouled out with 14 seconds left, finished with seven points. Kaelin McNeill had eight points. Laken Blackburn had nine points; Caitlyn Kilby finished with eight points for the Eagles, who avoided being swept by the Pioneers for the first time in three years (2009-10).

"We had the lead and let this one get away," Anderson said. "We just fell apart in the final two minutes of this game. And that's inexcusable this late in the season. It's a matter of heart and wanting it more. Wilkes Central just outplayed us and they deserved to win."

The Pioneers fell behind 43-41, but a baseline jumper by Margolis tied the game with 2:02 to play. Caitlyn Kilby buried a three from the far corner that snapped the tie and gave the Wilkes Central a 46-43 lead. Mastin and the Eagles took over from there. The Eagles outscored WHS 20-10 in the fourth quarter.

WHS continues its six-game road trip tonight in West Jefferson against Ashe County. Coverage begins at 6 p.m. on AM 1450, WATA.

NOTES: Collin Augustine returned for the WHS boys Tuesday night. He had been hampered by a foot injury. He played briefly and did not score.....The WHS JV girls (5-5) won their game by knocking off Wilkes Central, 45-34. Sydney Farthing led the way with 12 points. Mary Seramur had nine points; Rachel Foutz had eight points....The WHS JV boys defeated Wilkes Central, 54-42. T.J. Poulos led the Pioneers (8-2) with 15 points and six assists; Aaron Dobbins had nine points and seven rebounds; Utah Jones had nine points.

WILKES CENTRAL 52, WHS 45

SCORE BY PERIOD	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**TOTAL**
WATAUGA	10	11	14	10	45
WILKES CENTRAL	8	10	14	20	52

WHS: WOOD 25, MARGOLIS 7, HARRIS 3, McNEILL 8, LOFLIN 2. FG: 11, 3FG: 4, FT: 11-16.
THREE-POINTERS: WOOD 4.

WCHS: BLAIR 3, T. MASTIN 2, GRAHAM 2, WILLIAMS 2, M. MASTIN 25, BLACKBURN 9, KILBY 8, COWLES 1. FG: 14, 3FG: 2, FT: 18-26.
THREE-POINTERS: BLAIR, KILBY.

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

TUESDAY'S GAMES

GIRLS:

WILKES CENTRAL 52, WATAUGA 45
FRED T. FOARD 32, SOUTH CALDWELL 28
HIBRITEN 67, ST. STEPHENS 49
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 62, HICKORY 52

BOYS:
WILKES CENTRAL 75, WATAUGA 65 (OT)
FRED T. FOARD 56, SOUTH CALDWELL 50
HICKORY 73, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 46

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

WATAUGA @ ASHE COUNTY
ST. STEPHENS @ STATESVILLE