

Pioneers Edge Cougars In Overtime

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 12 January 2013 13:01

Apparantly, the third time was the charm. Just ask head coach Rob Sanders and the Watauga High boys basketball team. The Pioneers (7-4 overall; 1-1 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference), who were victimized twice in overtime this season (a loss

at home last Friday night against Hickory and a loss at Wilkes Central on Tuesday to start this six-game road trip), finally picked up their first extra-session win of the year as they outlasted Alexander Central 50-42 in a NW3A/4A Conference game Friday night at Cougars Gymnasium in Taylorsville, N.C.

It was WHS' third overtime game in its last four outings. It was also WHS' first win in Taylorsville since the 2009-10 season. Senior DeWayne Mackey backboned the Pioneers as he poured in a game-high 20 points, including 11 in the OT period. Mackey hit back-to-back three pointers to start the extra session, snapping a 37-37 tie, and the Cougars (7-9; 0-4) never recovered.

"Our defense did a good job keeping us in the game," said Alexander Central coach Ed Wills.

"But we struggled all night on offense. We missed a lot of free throws, and we let some good opportunities slip away. And those two threes put us in a hole. We never recovered."

The cougars got within one at 43-42 with 1:56 to play on a bucket by Matt Quigley, but the Pioneers pulled away as they made 7-10 free throws down the stretch. But both teams struggled at the foul line. The Pioneers were 9-18 for the game; the Cougars were 10-25.

"Neither team shot free throws that well tonight," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "But we finally got them to fall in overtime. But that's just the make up of this team. That's what I love about this team. There's no quit in them. And I really believe, even though we lost to Hickory, we can play with anybody in this conference."

Mackey and Ben Margolis paced WHS as those two combined for 30 points in the second half. Margolis finished with ten points.

"I'm, not going to lie to you, I really thought those shots DeWayne took to start the overtime period weren't going in," Sanders said. "I was upset with the shot selection. I really thought those shots were short when they left his hands, but I was wrong. And those shots really gave us the lift we needed. DeWayne and Ben really stepped up big for us."

"We finally put it all together in the overtime period," Margolis said. "DeWayne really stepped up big hitting those shots. Coach really believes in us. He's been telling us all year that we can play with anybody in our league. We just have to come out and do it."

WHS trailed early 13-5, but came charging back to take a 17-15 halftime lead on a pair of threes by Eli Gales. The Pioneers eventually built their biggest advantage at eight points in the third quarter. But the offense went dormant in the fourth quarter.

The Pioneers only scored five points in the final stanza. Margolis gave the Pioneers a 37-31 lead with 3:25 to play, but WHS never scored again in regulation time. The Cougars closed things out with a six-point run that forced overtime.

But Mackey took over in the overtime period.

"We needed someone to step up tonight, and DeWayne did it tonight," Sanders said. "He was feeling it. And when you've got a guy out there with the hot hand, you want that guy on the floor to hit those shots for you."

Mackey also finished with six rebounds and three assists; Margolis had three assists; Cameron

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Baker, who had a season-low two points, pulled down five rebounds.

"Cameron came up with some big rebounds, especially in overtime," Margolis said. "We finally put it together. Third overtime game in the last four games. It feels good to get the win."

Quigley led the Cougars with 16 points, seven rebounds and six blocked shots. Luke Bean, who sent the game to OT with a free throw, finished with 11 points.

"We didn't shoot the ball real well all night," Sanders said. "The pace was completely in Alexander's favor, that's why we picked up the pace in the second half. These last three road games are probably the toughest places to play. But we've been prepared with games against Hickory, Wilkes Central and Ashe County. And we told our guys before the overtime period that we were due. We had to find a way to get it done and we did."

The Pioneers travel to South Caldwell Tuesday night. Coverage begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

WATAUGA 50, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 42

SCORE BY PERIODS 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 1OT TOTAL

WATAUGA 5 12 15 5 13 - 50

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 10 5 9 13 5 - 42

WHS: HARRILL 2, STURGILL 2, GAILES 6, AUGUSTINE 2, MARGOLIS 10 (3 ASSISTS), BAKER 2 (5 REBOUNDS), HOWSER 3, MACKEY 20 (6 REBOUNDS, 3 ASSISTS), LAMBERT 2 (2 STEALS). FG: 7, 3FG: 9, FT: 9-18.

THREE-POINTERS: MACKEY 4, GAILES 2, MARGOLIS 2, HOWSER.

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ACHS: BEAN 11, GANT 2, SMITH 8 (4 STEALS), QUIGLEY 16 (7 REBOUNDS, 6 BLOCKED SHOTS), WATTS 3, WALL 2. FG: 13, 3FG: 2, FT: 10-25.
THREE-POINTERS: BEAN, WATTS.

COUGARS UPEND PIONEERS

Give the Watuaga High girls basketball team an "A" for effort. The Pioneers (5-7 overall; 0-2 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference), gave Alexander Central all it could handle Friday night. But in the end, the Cougars (14-2; 3-1) prevailed, 56-39. But the final score was quite misleading. The Pioneers rallied back from an early 7-2 deficit and forged a 14-14 first-quarter tie; and the Pioneers got within 40-33 early in the fourth quarter after trailing by 11 after three. But the Cougars eventually pulled away.

"This game was lost, with our inability to finish in close," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "We missed so many close in shots. Late in the second quarter, in the last three or four minutes, we had several chances in close and we didn't finish."

The Cougars went on an eight-point run and led 48-33 with 4:26 left in the game. WHS got within 48-37, but a three ball by Sara Kate Ferguson with 2:08 to play put the game out of reach.

"In the fourth quarter, we had a shot at 40-33 to get within four or five points," Anderson said. "But we missed several opportunities late from in close and you can't do that, especially against a team as gifted as Alexander Central. They did a great job tonight. They earned the win. But I'm proud of the effort, the purpose, and the intensity we had on the floor tonight."

Savanna Wood led all scorers with a game-high 22 points; Hannah Margolis had seven points, ten rebounds, three assists and three steals.

"Savanna is playing great," Anderson said. "I can remember saying that the first five points in the second half against Avery (back on December 7) may have been the biggest points of the season. And ever since then, she's been real consistent with double digit scoring. When she does that, and with the pieces we have around her, we play that much better."

The Cougars featured a balanced attack with three players in double figures. They were led by Madi Suddreth with 17 points. Kelsie Rhyne and Marie Ritchie each had ten points apiece. The Cougars, who snapped an eight-game losing streak against WHS last season, have beaten the Pioneers three consecutive times. And the Cougars, who went 15 years without a winning season, are 35-10 dating back to last year.

"We needed a couple of their shots to miss down the stretch, and we needed some of our shots from in close to go in," Anderson said. "We had great looks, we had some defensive steals, but

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we just couldn't hit the big shot in that fourth quarter. It's a tough loss, but I thought it was a great basketball game."

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NOTES: Alexander Central defeated the WHS JV girls, 30-20. Brooklin Carroll led WHS (6-6; 0-2) with nine points; Mary Seramur had six.....The WHS JV boys (10-2; 2-0) won 47-35. T.J. Poulos led the Pioneers with 14 points, four steals and five assists. Aaron Dobbins and Utah Jones had nine points apiece; Dobbins had ten rebounds.

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 56, WATAUGA 39

SCORE BY PERIODS 1st 2nd 3rd 4th TOTAL

WATAUGA 14 8 7 10 - 39

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 14 17 9 16 - 56

WHS: WOOD 22, DERRICK 2, MARGOLIS 7 (10 REBOUNDS, 3 ASSISTS, 3 STEALS), McNEILL (6 REBOUNDS), WELSH 2, HARRIS 2. FG: 13, 3FG: 3, FT: 4-5.

THREE-POINTERS: WOOD 3.

ACHS: RHYNE 10, WIKE 3, SETZER 9, RITCHIE 10 (5 ASSISTS), SHARPE 3 (5 REBOUNDS), ALLEN 1, SUDDRETH 17 (5 REBOUNDS, 3 ASSISTS). FG: 13, 3FG: 6, FT: 12-20.

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THREE-POINTERS: SETZER 3, RHYNE, WIKE, FERGUSON.

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

FRIDAY NIGHT'S GAMES

GIRLS:

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 56, WATAUGA 39

FRED T. FOARD 64, HIBRITEN 54

HICKORY 61, SOUTH CALDWELL 29

ST. STEPHENS - BYE

BOYS:

WATAUGA 50, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 42 (OT)

FRED T. FOARD 82, HIBRITEN 76

HICKORY 76, SOUTH CALDWELL 58

ST. STEPHENS - BYE

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FRED T. FOARD 3-0; 13-2

ST. STEPHENS 2-1; 11-4

SOUTH CALDWELL 2-2; 4-8

WATAUGA 1-1; **7-4**

HIBRITEN 0-3; 7-7

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 0-4; 7-9