

Panthers Finally Beat WHS

Written by Mike Kelly

Thursday, 24 January 2013 08:35

As the old saying goes, "What goes around, comes around." And the Watauga High girls basketball team found that out first hand Wednesday night. The Pioneers (7-8 overall; 2-3 Northwestern 3A/4A

Conference), who won their first game at South Caldwell in 16 years on January 15, had the rug pulled out from under them against Hibriten.

The Panthers (6-11; 2-4) snapped a three-game slide by beating WHS 41-39 in a NW3A/4A Conference game in Lenior, N.C. It was Hibriten's first win against the Pioneers since the 1997-98 season. Keisha Corpening applied the crushing blow as she hit the game winning shot on baseline drive with 6.2 seconds left.

Savanna Wood's layup attempt with time running out came up short at the other end. Hannah Margolis grabbed the rebound, but Elexia Logan knocked the ball out of her hands as time expired.

The loss also leaves WHS with a half-game lead on Hibriten and South Caldwell for fourth place and home court advantage in the opening-round of the NW3A/4A Conference tournament, which begins February 18.

"(Corpening) is the best player in the conference," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "She can score the basketball from anywhere on the floor. You take any girl in this league, take the best player on the best team, and they wouldn't have the success she's had with this team. She is skilled in all areas."

Corpening finished with a game-high 21 points. And she showed off her talents in the first half as she carried her team by scoring 13 points, wiping out a five-point deficit, and forging a 19-19 halftime tie. And the Panthers, feeding off that momentum, eventually pulled away and built a nine-point lead in the third quarter. The Pioneers, who struggled from the field to start the second half, only scored five points in the period.

"This is a trap game," Anderson said. "Hibriten has a little bit more this year than just Keisha Corpening. They're a scary opponent. Even though they're not winning a lot, they believe in what they're doing. That belief will eventually translate into wins."

But the Pioneers, who trailed 30-21, finally rediscovered their scoring touch and starting chipping away. A three-pointer by Clare Harris, who had four trifectas on the night, buried a three that capped off a 12-1 run that gave WHS a 32-31 lead.

But the Panthers methodically pulled way again with an eight-point run of their own and led 39-32. The Pioneers came charging back and eventually tied the game with 32 seconds left on a three-ball by Harris.

Unfortunately, that also set the stage for Corpening's game-winning heroics. Wood and Harris paced WHS with 12 points apiece; Kaelin McNeill had six points and eight rebounds; Ryan Loflin had seven boards, and Danielle Welsh pulled down a team-high ten rebounds.

Ally Soldati had 11 points for the Panthers. WHS returns home to play Fred T. Foard, weather permitting, Friday night. Coverage begins, if they play, at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

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NOTES: The WHS JV girls defeated Hibriten, 35-20. Brooklin Carroll led WHS with ten points, Sydney Farthing had seven points; Rachel Foutz had six points.

HIBRITEN 41, WATAUGA 39

Score By Periods 1st 2nd 3rd 4th TOTAL

WATAUGA 12 7 5 15 - 39

HIBRITEN 7 12 11 11 - 41

WHS: WOOD 12 (3 ASSISTS), MARGOLIS 5, HARRIS 12, McNEILL 6 (8 REBOUNDS), LOFLIN 2 (7 REBOUNDS), WELSH 2 (10 REBOUNDS). FG: 5, 3FG: 8, FT: 5-13.
THREE-POINTERS: HARRIS 4, WOOD 3, MARGOLIS.

HIBRITEN: LOGAN 2, SOLDATI 11, CORPENING 21, B. MORTON 3, C. MORTON 4. FG: 14, 3FG: 0, FT: 13-19.

THREE-POINTERS: NONE.

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NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

GIRLS:

HIBRITEN 41, WATAUGA 39

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 62, SOUTH CALDWELL 45

BOYS:

WATAUGA 59, HIBRITEN 35

SOUTH CALDWELL 68, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 65 (2OT)