

## UPDATED: Tigers Hang On To Beat WHS

Written by Mike Kelly

Thursday, 31 January 2013 08:44

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The Watauga High boys basketball team came up short Wednesday night at Fred T. Foard. The Pioneers, who trailed 46-38 with 3:44 left to play, made a valiant comeback only to fall short at the end. Trailing 50-49, Jay Harrill's three-point shot

wouldn't fall with seven seconds left and the Tigers hung on to beat the Pioneers 53-49 at Jerry Copas Gymnasium in Newton, N.C.

"We had a chance to pull it out," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "And we got the ball to the right guy. Jay was hot tonight, and Eli (Gailes) did a good job working the clock and finding Jay for that final shot. It was there, but it just wouldn't fall."

"I thought it was going in," Harrill said. "It went halfway in and popped back out. I thought we had it."

Harrill came off the bench and finished with a game high 17 points. Tyler Sturgill had nine points and four rebounds. Gailes finished with five assists. The WHS bench produced 38 points. That effort more than made up for Ben Howser, who was saddled with foul trouble all night and finished with three points. Howser was averaging 21 points a game in his last three outings.

"Our bench has been solid all season," Sanders said. "That's the type of players we have. If someone is having an off night, we've had someone else step up. Tonight, Jay and Tyler really stepped up for us. And Eli is making the proper adjustments to be a successful point guard at this level. He's going more off his instincts, and tonight he did a good job finding the open man." A three-point play by Cameron Baker and a three ball by Harrill ignited WHS' comeback attempt, making it 48-46 with 2:10 left to play; a free throw by Sturgill with 1:43 left made it 48-47. But Jordan Turner hit a floater in the lane giving the Tigers a three-point advantage; a bucket by Harrill with 53 seconds left got the Pioneers within one at 50-49. But the Tigers, following Harrill's miss, iced the game away at the foul line.

"I don't like losing, but I was very pleased with our effort tonight," Sanders said. "We played much better, we had good intensity on defense, and we showed a lot of patience on offense. Unfortunately, we didn't get the win."

The win moves Fred T. Foard (16-3 overall; 6-1 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) into a first-place tie with Hickory in the NW3A/4A Conference standings. The loss drops WHS (9-7; 3-4) into fifth place, one half game behind South Caldwell for the No.4 seed and home court advantage in the opening round of the conference tournament.

And the Pioneers have a huge week coming up. The Pioneers take on Fred T. Foard in a rematch next Monday night at home before they play Alexander Central (next Tuesday) and South Caldwell (next Friday) in a pair of key Class 4A games in the conference.

"They're all must wins from this point on," Sanders said. "And we have two big (Class) 4A games coming up on the schedule. Those games will determine our seeding in the state playoffs. We lost tonight, but we can't dwell on it. We have to move on. We've got the weekend to prepare for a big week coming up."

Turner paced the Tigers with 11 points; Brice Falgout and Joe Isenhour had eight points apiece. Coverage of Monday's game with Fred T. Foard begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

**NOTES:** The Tigers picked up their first win against the Pioneers in eight tries....Fred T. Foard coach Rob Bliss also snapped a three-game losing streak against WHS coach Rob

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Sanders.....The WHS JV boys lost to the Tigers, 50-36. Utah Jones led the way with 12 points and six steals; Aaron Dobbins had eight points and six rebounds; T.J. Poulos finished with six points and seven assists; Michael Ebaugh had six points and four rebounds....WHS coach Rob Sanders has also announced that the West Caldwell game postponed on December 20 will not be rescheduled.

### FRED T. FOARD 53, WATAUGA 49

#### Score By Periods 1st 2nd 3rd 4th Total

watauga 10 8 14 17 - 49

Fred T. Foard 9 9 20 15 - 53

**WHS:** HARRILL 17, STURGILL 9 (4 REBOUNDS), AUGUSTINE 2, MARGOLIS 6 (4 STEALS), KOPPENHAVER 4 (4 REBOUNDS), BAKER 7 (6 REBOUNDS, 4 STEALS), HOWSER 3, MACKEY 1 (5 REBOUNDS). FG: 13, 3FG: 5, FT: 8-13.  
THREE-POINTERS: HARRILL 3, MARGOLIS 2.

**FTF:** BLISS 3, MATTHEWS 5, CAMERON 5, SIMS 5, TEAGUE 2, TURNER 11, FALGOUT 8, TOMBERLIN 1, ISENHOUR 8, KIRK 5. FG: 16, 3FG: 5, FT: 6-12.  
THREE-POINTERS: BLISS, MATTHEWS, CAMERON, FALGOUT, SIMS.

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### **NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE**

#### **WEDNESDAY'S GAMES**

##### **GIRLS:**

**FRED T. FOARD 46, WATAUGA 42**

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 51, ST. STEPHENS 39

##### **BOYS:**

**FRED T. FOARD 53, WATAUGA 49**

ST. STEPHENS 67, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 58

#### **FRIDAY'S GAMES**

SOUTH CALDWELL @ FRED T. FOARD

ALEXANDER CENTRAL @ HICKORY

ST. STEPHENS @ HIBRITEN

**WATAUGA - BYE**

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### GIRLS STANDINGS

HICKORY 6-1; 17-1  
FRED T. FOARD 6-1; 13-6  
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 6-2; 17-3  
HIBRITEN 3-4; 7-11  
SOUTH CALDWELL 3-4; 6-10  
**WATAUGA** 2-5; 7-10  
ST. STEPHENS 0-8; 3-16

### BOYS STANDINGS

HICKORY 6-1; 15-3  
FRED T. FOARD 6-1; 16-3  
ST. STEPHENS 6-2; 15-5  
SOUTH CALDWELL 4-4; 6-10  
**WATAUGA** 3-4; 9-7  
HIBRITEN 1-6; 8-10  
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 0-8; 7-13

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