

Margolis Leads Pioneers To Victory

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 09 February 2013 13:30

Hannah Margolis put on a clinic Friday night as the Watauga High girls basketball team knocked off South Caldwell 43-30 in a Northwestern 3A/4A Conference game at Lentz-Eggers Gym. The win snapped a season-high five-game losing streak

and moves WHS (8-12 overall; 3-7 NW3A/4A Conference) into sole possession of fifth place. And with Hickory blasting Hibriten 83-39 Friday night, the Pioneers find themselves just one game behind Hibriten (4-6 in conference play) for fourth place and home-court advantage in the opening round of the conference tournament, which begins February 18. The Panthers come to Boone Tuesday night.

"We're right in the position I want us to be in," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "We want that number four seed. That means a home game in the opening round of the conference tournament, and it would be a huge reward for our players, especially our seniors."

The Pioneers also swept the season series from South Caldwell. It's the first time the Pioneers have done that since the teams became conference members in 2001-02. And the Spartans (6-13; 3-8), who have lost eight of their last nine games, also lost their first game in Boone since the 2004-05 season.

WHS broke the game open, thanks to a six-point run just before halftime. Trailing 14-9, Margolis, who scored a game-high 18 points, scored six consecutive points to close out the first half, handing WHS a 15-14 lead. From there, WHS just took over.

"To me, that six point run just before halftime was the medicine we needed," Anderson said.

"We stepped it up defensively the last three or four minutes of the second quarter. We had some decent looks in the first half, but our shots wouldn't fall. But Hannah stepped up and carried us. She doesn't talk a lot. She doesn't want to talk a lot, but she's our leader and the rest of the girls know that. She was all over the floor, especially in the first half. She was around the ball all the time making things happen."

The Pioneers outscored the Spartans 16-5 in the third quarter, and 25-8 over a 16-minute stretch. The Pioneers led 31-19 after three, and they led by as many as 16 points in the final stanza.

Clare Harris finished with ten points, including a pair of threes; Ryan Loflin came off the bench and poured in five points. Caleigh Raby led the Spartans with 12 points. Seven of those came in the first quarter.

"We showed a lot of guts, a lot of pride, a lot of character after halftime," Anderson said. "We have talked all season about finding a way to win, finding a way to score, finding a way to be successful. And we were a little passive on defense in the first half. They were more aggressive. I challenged our girls at halftime, and we came out in the third quarter, and I thought we played with a lot of intensity. The most intensity I've seen us play with all year."

With the score tied at 15 early in the third quarter, the Pioneers methodically pulled away. A conventional three-point play by Margolis gave WHS a seven point lead at 22-15; Harris capped off a 13-4 run with a three ball that gave the Pioneers a nine point advantage. The Spartans never recovered.

"The play that sticks out in my mind came in the third quarter, when Hannah defended the

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passing lane, made the steal and scored a transition basket," Anderson said. "She was going to go up with the right hand on that layup attempt, but (Raby) was hanging all over her. She makes the layup and the free throw for the three-point play. That play showed right there, that we were going to be tough to beat. What a big win for us, and what a way for us to hit our stride in our final Friday night home game of the year."

WHS will play its final home game of the regular season Tuesday night against Hibriten. It will also be Senior Night, and Pack The Pantry Night. Coverage begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: South Caldwell defeated the WHS JV girls, 35-32...Tasha Wilson, who suffered a lower leg injury at Avery on December 7, returned on Friday night. She finally got in the game late in the fourth quarter and scored a field goal on a foul-line jumper....Haleigh Wallace has left the team for personal reasons.

WATAUGA 43, SOUTH CALDWELL 30

Score By Period 1st 2nd 3rd 4th Total

South Caldwell 11 3 5 11 - 30

Watauga 6 9 16 13 - 43

SCHS: GOSNELL 2, RABY 12, POTTER 6, WOOD 6, EVERHART 2, FREIL 2. FG: 9, 3FG: 2, FT: 6-10.

THREE-POINTERS: RABY 2.

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WHS: WOOD 4, MARGOLIS 18, HARRIS 10, McNEILL 2, WILSON 2, LOFLIN 5, WELSH 2.
FG: 12, 3FG: 4, FT: 7-10.
THREE-POINTERS: HARRIS 2, WOOD, MARGOLIS.

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

FRIDAY'S GAMES

GIRLS:

WATAUGA 43, SOUTH CALDWELL 30

HICKORY 83, HIBRITEN 39

FRED T. FOARD 74, ST. STEPHENS 61

ALEXANDER CENTRAL - BYE

BOYS:

WATAUGA 70, SOUTH CALDWELL 66 (OT)

HICKORY 78, HIBRITEN 47

ST. STEPHENS 67, FRED T. FOARD 47

ALEXANDER CENTRAL - BYE

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NW3A/4A STANDINGS

GIRLS:

FRED T. FOARD 10-1; 17-6

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 8-2; 19-3

HICKORY 8-2; 20-2

HIBRITEN 4-6; 8-13

WATAUGA 3-7; 8-12

SOUTH CALDWELL 3-8; 6-13

ST. STEPHENS 0-10; 3-18

BOYS:

FRED T. FOARD 9-2; 19-4

HICKORY 8-2; 18-4

ST. STEPHENS 8-2; 17-5

WATAUGA 5-5; 11-8

SOUTH CALDWELL 5-6; 7-12

HIBRITEN 1-9; 8-13

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 0-10; 7-15

Photo Courtesy: Hannah Margolis, WHS Athletics

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