

Tigers Eliminate Pioneers in NW3A/4A Semis

Written by Mike Kelly

Wednesday, 20 February 2013 09:27

It just wasn't meant to be. Any hopes the Watauga High boys basketball team had about winning the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference Tournament came to a crashing halt Tuesday night. Fred T. Foard (21-4), the No.1 seed, disposed of WHS

61-43 in the semifinal round at Craft Gymnasium in Hickory, N.C. The win vaults Fred T. Foard into Friday night's championship game. The Tigers will play Hickory in the finals at 8 p.m. The Red Tornadoes (21-5) advanced by knocking off St. Stephens 74-53 in Tuesday's second semifinal game.

The Tigers put WHS (13-10) out of its misery with a 9-2 run early in the third quarter. That onslaught turned a 35-29 lead into a 44-31 cushion with 3:48 left in the period. And the Pioneers, who have dropped three straight to the Tigers, were sent reeling. They never got any closer than ten points the rest of the way.

"Fred T. Foard is well balanced," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "Unlike a team like St. Stephens, which has two or three guys that can hurt you offensively, Foard has five guys that can do that. You can't key on just one player or players. They have a lot of guys that can score." Spencer Matthews did most the damage as he led three players in double figures with 16 points. Jordan Turner, who burned WHS with the three ball in their last meeting (a 69-41 loss at Lentz-Eggers Gym on February 5), poured in 11 points, including three trifectas; Joe Isenhour had ten points. Cameron Baker paced WHS with 13 points.

The Pioneers actually led early 4-0 on a pair of buckets to start the game by DeWayne Mackey and Ben Howser. But the Tigers regrouped and scored ten consecutive points, most of those on uncontested put-backs and took the lead for good. And the Pioneers, who have been known for their offensive lapses this season, went through another dry spell for most the second quarter. The Pioneers scored all of three points in the first six minutes of the second quarter.

And while the Pioneers sat dormant, the Tigers methodically pulled away and built a commanding 26-11 lead with 2:01 left in the first half. But, thanks to Mackey and Collin Augustine, who turned in another stellar effort off the bench, they ignited a nine-point run to close out the first half that narrowed the gap to six points at the break.

But any hopes of a second-half rally were squelched by that 9-2 run early in the third quarter. The Tigers eventually built their biggest lead of the game at 59-37 with 1:45 left to play. Mackey, who fouled out with 1:45 left in the game, finished with seven points; Augustine, who fouled out with 3:53 to go, finished with eight points.

The WHS boys will now wait-and-see who they will play in the opening round of the state playoffs next Monday night, February 25. WHS, the No.1 seed among the Class 4A schools in the NW3A/4A Conference, will host that first-round game at Lentz-Eggers Gym. The WHS girls (11-12), riding a season-best, four-game winning streak, will play Hickory, the No.1 seed in the NW3A/4A Conference Tournament, today at 6:30 p.m. Coverage begins at 6:10 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

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FRED T. FOARD 61, WATAUGA 43

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

Watauga 8 12 9 14 - 43

Fred T. Foard 14 12 13 22 - 61

WHS: HARRILL 3, STURGILL 3, AUGUSTINE 8, MARGOLIS 4, BAKER 13, HOWSER 2, MACKEY 7, LAMBERT 3. FG: 11, 3FG: 3, FT: 12-16.
THREE-POINTERS: MARGOLIS, BAKER, LAMBERT.

FTF: MATTHEWS 16, CAMERON 4, TURNER 11, FALGOUT 5, WIGINGTON 2, TOMBERLIN 4, ISENHOUR 10, KIRK 6, SIMS 3. FG: 19, 3FG: 3, FT: 14-20.
THREE-POINTERS: TURNER 3.

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT

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TUESDAY'S GAMES BOY'S SEMIFINALS

FRED T. FOARD 61, WATAUGA 43
HICKORY 74, ST. STEPHENS 53

FRIDAY'S CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
HICKORY v. FRED T. FOARD, 8 P.M.

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES GIRL'S SEMIFINALS

WATAUGA v. HICKORY, 6:30 P.M.
FRED T. FOARD v. ALEXANDER CENTRAL, 8 P.M.

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FRIDAY'S CHAMPIONSHIP GAME, 6:30 P.M.

MONDAY'S GAMES

GIRLS

WATAUGA 56, HIBRITEN 50

FRED T. FOARD 54, ST. STEPHENS 34

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 76, SOUTH CALDWELL 47

BOYS

WATAUGA 67, SOUTH CALDWELL 56

HICKORY 59, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 46

ST. STEPHENS 77, HIBRITEN 57