

WHS boys beat Avery; WHS girls lose

Written by Mike Kelly

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The Watauga High boys basketball team staved off a determined Avery Vikings team Friday night in Newland.

It took a yeoman effort by Damian Edwards and Brandon Calhoun as the Pioneers (3-2 overall) beat Avery 81-70 at the Octagon. Edwards, who had a monster week with a career-best 37 points against T.C. Roberson Tuesday night, finished with 28 points Friday night. He was also 17-19 at the free throw line. Calhoun backed up that effort with 20 points and eight rebounds of his own.

“There’s always someone different stepping up every night,” said WHS coach Rob Sanders. “That’s what I love about this team, and it makes us hard to defend.” But the Vikings (1-4), gave WHS fits throughout the night. The Vikings built their biggest lead at 34-26 just before halftime before the Pioneers came charging back with a 9-0 run to take a one-point lead at the break, 35-34.

And the Vikings went up 52-51 early in the fourth quarter before the Pioneers put together a 12-3 run and built a 63-54 advantage with just under four minutes to play. The Vikings closed the gap and got within 70-64 on a three-pointer by Mark Polsgrove. But a three-point play by Calhoun with a defender on his back put Avery out of its misery

“That was the play that won it for us,” Sanders said. “I told them during the time out that Avery is an excellent three-point shooting team, and that our lead wasn’t safe, But we found the open man in that spot.”

Isaac Hodges came on at point guard when Casey Quinn picked up his fourth foul early in the third quarter. Hodges finished with five points and four assists. “I am very proud of Isaac,” Sanders said. “Casey has been driving us all year, but tonight it was Isaac’s turn to step up and he got the job done.”

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Dustin Clark led four Avery players in double figures with 21 points. The Pioneers have beaten Avery 11 consecutive times since Sanders took over at Watauga in 2005-06.

Avery girls beat WHS, 61 -53

The Avery High girls broke a four-game losing streak against the Pioneers Friday night. The Vikings (4-1), riding a four-game winning streak, broke the game open in the third quarter when they built a 20-point lead.

But WHS (0-5) made it interesting thanks to senior Christina Rees, who sparked a 14-2 run with ten points, including a pair of threes. She finished with a game-high 18 points. But the Pioneers never got any closer than eight points. "As bad as we played, to be within eight points shows me the character of this team," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "We got lazy on defense in the third quarter and they started pulling away. That is unacceptable.

"That's why I didn't substitute from the midway point of the third quarter into the final period. I had the group I wanted out there. They were playing defense, they were stopping Avery, and we started scoring at the other end."

Sara Wiseman and Elyse Perry led Avery with 13 points each. Watauga travels to West Caldwell Tuesday night. Our coverage begins at 6:05 pm on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES; The WHS jayvee girls are 7-0. They beat Avery 48-35. Anna Church had 15 points; Brooke Rhoades had 14. Avery beat the WHS jayvee boys, 32-27. The jayvee boys are 2-5.