Watauga High girls basketball coach Klay Anderson could probably write a novel on heartbreaking finishes.

The Pioneers, who lost an overtime game to T.C. Roberson ten days ago, coughed up another lead down the stretch Friday night against Avery at Lentz-Eggers Gym.

The end result, the Vikings, who blew a 14-point second quarter lead, came charging back to beat WHS, 60-54. It was the first time in three years that the Vikings (5-1), riding a five-game winning streak, have swept the Pioneers (1-6) in a season series. And it was gut wrenching to say the least.

“We just didn’t finish at the end,” said WHS coach Klay Anderson. “We had our chances to finish them out, but give them credit. They kept their poise and came back. Avery has a good team. But I feel the same way about our team, despite tonight’s loss.”

WHS owned a 52-48 lead with 3:34 left in the game, but the Vikings, thanks to senior Hayley Pyatte and junior Katelyn Eudy came charging back to tie the game at 54 with less than 90 seconds to go in regulation time. Sara Wiseman hit the game-tying free throws. Eudy and Pyatte each finished with 13 points, but they combined for 14 of their points in the second half.

“Those girls really stepped it up for their team,” Anderson said. “They never panicked. They kept the game within reach, and they hit some big shots down the stretch.”

Trailing 58-54 with 23 seconds left, the Pioneers burned a time out and set up a play for Nicole Tesh, who backboned WHS with a season-high 20 points. But she only had four points in the second half. The feed from Christina Rees was on the money down low, but Tesh missed the layup and Eudy scooped up the loose ball and was fouled. She proceeded to hit both free

throws and that put the game out of reach.

“The play was there, but the ball got deflected and it messed up the play,” Anderson said. “Then we lost sight of the ball. We couldn’t find it, and they picked it up. It’s a tough loss, but I am proud of my girls, and I still have a lot of confidence in them.”

Mariah Corbin finished with 11 points for WHS. The Vikings had four players in double figures. Lauren Avery led the way with 14 points. Wiseman, who was in foul trouble in the first half, finished with 11 points, nine in the second half.

WHS boys 90, Avery 65

The Watauga High boys basketball team just keeps rolling along. And there wasn’t a letdown against Avery Friday night at Lentz-Eggers Gym following last Tuesday night’s emotional win at West Caldwell.

The Pioneers (5-2), who have won three in a row, shook off a stubborn Avery (1-5) team in the second quarter, built a 16-point lead, and went on to beat the Vikings 90-65. The Pioneers, who scored a season-high in points and led by as many as 28 points, utilized their speed to break the game open late in the second quarter. Leading 30-24, the Pioneers turned up the pressure, and outscored Avery 14-6 down the stretch.

“I wasn’t worried about a letdown,” said WHS coach Rob Sanders. “This is a rivalry game, and it’s easy to get up for these guys. Everyone of our players got pumped up to guard (Dustin) Clarke tonight.

“He’s a great players, and our guys take a lot of pride in shutting him down. But we just stepped up our perimeter defense, and disrupted their flow.”

Clarke, who was hit with a technical foul with five seconds left, finished with 13 points. And the Vikings, who buried seven threes against WHS last Friday at the Octagon, only had four on Friday.

And making matters worse for Avery, the Pioneers got a solid effort from their bench. The Pioneers got 40 points from their reserves. Caleb Courtney, who scored a career-high 16 points against the Vikings last season, led the way with 13 points. Luke Hall was stellar as well. He finished with ten.

“Caleb finally relaxed and played his game,” Sanders said. “When Will (Koppenhaver) got into early foul trouble, Caleb came in and filled the void. He was just thinking too much out there in the first few games. I asked him after he came out the first time, ‘isn’t it nice to just play relaxed.’

“Luke was solid as well. He showed off his athletic ability in practice this week, and I knew he was ready.”

Damian Edwards paced five players in double-figures with 19 points. Josh Coffey had ten; Brandon Calhoun came off the bench and poured in 11. Jake Pifer, making his first varsity start, finished with nine, with seven of those coming in the second half.

Kody Hughes and Clarke led Avery with 13 each. Dylan Eppley, who transferred from WHS to Avery, finished with 11 points off the bench.

WHS travels to Ashe County Tuesday night. Our coverage begins at 6:05 pm on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: The WHS jayvee girls survived a scare Friday. They beat Avery 39-37 improving their record to 9-0. Brooke Rhoades and Gab Wilson each scored ten points. The WHS jayvee boys won their game 45-41 against Avery. They improved to 3-6. Matt Proffitt had 14 points; Kyle Chambers had nine.