

## Pioneers fall in Western Semi-Finals

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 30 October 2010 14:15

---

The Watauga High volleyball team saw its dream season come to an end on Saturday afternoon.

The Pioneers (26-4), who set a single-season school record for victories with 26, lost to Lake Norman three games to one at Lentz-Eggers Gym in the Class 4A Western Semi-Finals.

Lake Norman (29-2), the No.1 seed from the I-Meck Conference, defeated WHS 25-12, 26-24, 14-25, 25-21. Lake Norman advances to the Western Finals and will play either Providence or Mount Tabor on Tuesday night. The winner advances to the state finals in Raleigh next Saturday.

"Lake Norman played a great match," said WHS coach Kris Hagaman. "We lost two close sets in the match, and it hurt us."

Bailey Hagaman, who suffered a deep cut on her hand following Thursday night's sectional finals win against Hough, led the Pioneers with a marvelous effort. The senior, who will most likely be the player of the year in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference, had 44 assists, 11 digs, three kills and four aces in the loss. Hagaman also came within one ace of tying the single-season school record, ironically held by Hagaman and Maddie Bakken (who is currently a freshman at Division II Mars Hill College) with 107.

"The injury didn't bother Bailey," coach Hagaman said. "She turned in her usual solid effort. I thought we did a good job, but Lake Norman was a little better today. It's tough way to finish our season."

It was Watauga's deepest penetration in the state playoffs since 2000, when the Pioneers made it to the Western Finals, but lost to West Charlotte. Colby Combs led WHS with 15 kills and three blocks; Hannah Stewart had 13 kills and five digs. Channing Hagaman and Anna Church each had eight kills, Church also had 17 digs.

"Our front line has been solid all season," Hagaman said. "This is a special group. They work well together, because they know each other. Playing together for a long time has really allowed this team to gell."

Brooke Rhoades had seven kills and eight blocks; Skylar Hicks had 24 digs. And the future looks very bright for the Pioneers, despite Saturday's disappointing loss. WHS only loses two seniors to graduation---Bailey Hagaman and Caroline Yates.

"We return a lot of experience next season," Hagaman said. "Yes, we will miss our seniors, especially Bailey. But I'm very confident in the girls we have coming back."

The loss also snapped Watauga's nine-game winning streak. Prior to Saturday's setback, the Pioneers last loss came against Chapel Hill in a five-set match on October 2 in a tri-match at Lentz-Eggers Gym.