

Close, but no cigar. That best described the Watauga High men's soccer team and its last two outings against No.6 Hickory (in Class 3A) and No.9 West Forsyth (in Class 4A). The Pioneers, who lost to Hickory on a controversial goal on September 14, dropped a 2-0 decision at West Forsyth in a non-conference match Monday night.

But despite the loss, head coach Woody McKay remains optimistic.

"I think we'll do better in the state playoffs this year," he said. "We had a good effort against two very good teams. We just couldn't buy a goal. But our defense has been superb. I like what I've seen so far from our players. They've really worked hard to put themselves in this position."

The Pioneers (8-3) return home (where they haven't given up a goal all season) to play Alexander Central Wednesday night. The JV team lost 2-1. Raul Fornani scored the only WHS goal.