

Pioneers Changing Venues

Written by Mike Kelly

Thursday, 01 December 2011 14:53

Watauga High men's basketball coach Rob Sanders has announced that the Pioneers, both the men and women, will travel for the Christmas holidays this season. Originally, the Pioneers were going to host the annual Pioneers Holiday Classic December 28-29 at Lentz-Eggers Gym. But those plans were squashed when West Caldwell pulled out of the tournament last week, leaving the WHS men and women, and North Cross High of Roanoke Va., as the only teams remaining in the field.

"It's just been one of those years finding teams for our tournament," Sanders said. "We just couldn't fill out the brackets. Fortunately, we have a chance to get some games in during the holidays."

And those games will be played Tuesday, December 27 and Wednesday, December 28 at the Alleghany Christmas Tournament hosted by Alleghany High School in Sparta, NC. The WHS women will play West Stokes in a first-round game on Tuesday afternoon at 4 p.m.; the men will play Starmount that day at 5:30 p.m. WHS wraps up the tournament with both the men and women playing South Stokes on Wednesday, December 28. The women play at 7 p.m.; the men play at 8:30 p.m.

"They asked us to play in this tournament about three-four weeks ago," Sanders said. "When West (Caldwell) backed out, I thought to myself, 'now what?' So I took a chance and called Alleghany back.

"Kent (Phillips, the men's coach at Alleghany) said he still had a spot open for both the men and women, and gladly invited us to come."

The Alleghany tournament will feature an eight-team field for the men and women. And it will be round-robin tournament that guarantees every team two games. Alleghany, WHS, Patrick County (Va.), West Stokes, South Stokes, Elkin, Galax (Va.), and North Surry round out the women's field. WHS, Alleghany, Patrick County (Va.), South Stokes, Galax (Va.), Elkin, North Surry, and Starmount will make up the men's field.

The WHS men and women travel to Newland Friday night for their annual battle with Avery. Our coverage comes your way at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.