

## Pioneers Hand Out Team Awards

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Tuesday, 06 December 2011 10:01

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The Watauga High football team had its end-of-the-year banquet Sunday night. And the Pioneers, who were 7-6 this season under fourth-year coach Tim Pruitt, handed out their yearly

team awards.

Offensive lineman Adam Uschelbec received the Most Improved Offensive Player of the Year Award. Defensive back Nick Williams received the Most Improved Defensive Player of Year Award. Williams made 86 tackles, six tackles-for-loss, had two interceptions, broke up two passes, recovered a fumble, forced two fumbles and blocked one kick.

Linebacker Cody McKinney received the Heart Award. The senior was fourth on the team with 96 tackles this season, despite missing two games with an arm injury. He had 5.5 TFL, and a quarterback sack.

Running back Kyle Chambers was named the Most Valuable Player on Offense. The senior gave WHS its most legitimate running threat since Eric Breitenstein (who is currently a red-shirt junior at Wofford College, was named the Southern Conference Offensive Player of the Year, and is Walter Payton Award candidate). Chambers ran for 1,402 yards and scored 17 touchdowns. He also caught a touchdown pass and led the Pioneers in scoring with 108 points. Kicker Alex Parsons was a distant second in team scoring with 35 points; quarterback Ethan Greene was third with 30 points.

Taylor Shuford was named the Most Valuable Player on Defense. The junior was second on the team in tackles with 110 stops. He had 19.5 TFL, six quarterback sacks, he had two quarterback hurries, he forced one fumble and recovered a team-high four fumbles.

And senior linebacker Alex Fox won the Golden Helmet Award. Fox, a four-year varsity starter, who had his junior year cut short by a knee injury, led the Pioneers in tackles with 112, and in solo stops with 37. He had ten TFL; 2.5 quarterback sacks, three interceptions (he returned one that set up the game-winning touchdown against Alexander Central in the opening-round of the state playoffs), three passes defended, a quarterback hurry and a forced fumble.

The Pioneers posted their first winning season, and won their first playoff game since 2007 this past fall. WHS was eliminated by Mooresville in the second-round of the state playoffs.