

## Sanders Earns 100th Career Win

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 10 December 2011 01:45

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Watauga High men's basketball coach Rob Sanders reached a milestone in his coaching career Friday night. Sanders, now in his eighth year with the Pioneers, was rewarded with his 100th career win (his record is 100-84) as the Pioneers (3-1) staved off a stubborn Avery team 57-48 at Lentz-Eggers Gym in front of a packed house. He was rewarded by his players as they presented him with an autographed ball after the game.

"It's nice and it's special," Sanders said. "But I thank all the players that have played for me over the years. They're the ones that made it possible. I know I yell a lot, and I'm pretty tough on them at times, but I love them all. Every player that's ever played for me is special."

Jake Pifer, who led the Pioneers with a game-high 22 points, presented Sanders with the game ball. He was WHS's only player in double figures for the second game in a row. Sanders also kept his record perfect against the Vikings (1-2). He's beaten them 16 consecutive times since taking over at WHS in 2004-05.

But the Pioneers gave Sanders some anxious moment on his special night. WHS which built an 11-point lead in the first half and led by ten at halftime, hit a snag offensively in the third quarter. Just like they did in Tuesday night's loss at West Caldwell, the Pioneers couldn't buy a basket. The end result, the Vikings came charging back to take a 36-35 lead on a fastbreak bucket by Timmy Stewart with 3:44 left in the period. A follow by Matt Proffitt on WHS's next possession allowed the Pioneers to regain the lead at 37-36. And following a pair of ties, Jesse Chasteen put the Pioneers on top to stay at 42-40 as he hit a layup at the horn off a great feed by Proffitt. Despite those heroics, the Pioneers were outscored 15-7 in the quarter.

"We got some good looks, but our shots just wouldn't fall," Sanders said. "But give Avery a lot of credit. They're scrappy and their guys wouldn't back down. They never allowed us to pull away." Making matters worse, senior Kyle Chambers rolled his ankle in the third quarter and left the game. But he managed to come back and he played in the fourth quarter. And the Pioneers also put the contest out of reach.

Leading 46-42 a three ball by Pifer gave WHS a seven-point advantage. The Vikings never got any closer than five the rest of the way.

"It's a good win, and now we have to get ourselves ready for (the Northwestern 3A/4A) conference (opener) next week," Sanders said. "And (Fred T.) Foard won't be a pushover. Rob Bliss (the Tigers new head coach) is a heck of a coach. And he doesn't care about their past history of losing games. He's more concerned about his history, and that's building a successful program. They'll be ready for us, we have to make sure we ready for them.

"But like I told our guys after the game, they showed a lot of fight tonight. We didn't give up like we did the other night at West Caldwell. We really earned this win. It's a good stepping stone going into conference next week."

Sturgill and DeWayne Mackey both finished with six points. Ethan Poulos, Ben Margolis and Chasteen all finished with five points apiece. Hunter Shields and Stewart paced the Vikings with 13 points each. Alex Villanueva, who really struggled from the get-go, finished with ten.

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### WHS 57, AVERY 48

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
AVERY	13	12	15	8	- 48
WATAUGA	16	19	7	15	- 57

**AVERY:** GREENE 1, VILLANUEVA 10, LYONS 3, PITTMAN 4, SHEILDS 13, STEWART 13, WOTELL 4.

**WHS:** PIFER 22, POULOS 5, PROFFITT 4, MARGOLIS 5, CHASTEEN 5, STURGILL 6, MACKEY 6, CHAMBERS 4.

### VIKINGS UPEND WHS WOMEN

The Avery Vikings continued their mastery against the Watauga High women's basketball team Friday night.

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The Vikings (3-2), despite a woeful shooting night by both teams, defeated the Pioneers 48-42 at Lentz-Eggers Gym. The Vikings, riding a three-game winning streak, have now beaten the Pioneers four consecutive times and six times in their last seven meetings.

Both teams really struggled with their shooting touch early on. The Pioneers (1-3) were 1-17 from the floor in the first quarter; the Vikings weren't much better, making one field goal in 11 attempts.

"Neither one of us really shot the ball well," said WHS women's coach Klay Anderson. "That just really sums it up. It's a gaudy statistic, but in reverse. That's how bad it was. We both shot the ball poorly. We just couldn't make any outside shots tonight. When you hit your outside shots, it opens up the inside game and the driving lanes. Unfortunately, we couldn't do that tonight."

But the Vikings finally found their rhythm in the closing minutes of the second quarter. Trailing 21-18, The Vikings went on an 8-0 run and built a five point lead at the intermission. A three-pointer by Monica Estep gave the Vikings their five-point cushion.

Avery carried that momentum into the third quarter and stretched the lead to ten points. And the Vikings also did it without their best player, Megan Tennant, who was on the bench, nursing a shoulder injury She sat out the entire second half.

But Lauren Burleson picked up the slack. The sophomore errupted for eight points in the second half and finished with 13 point to pace the Vikings.

"Arguably, she's the best player on the floor on either team tonight," Anderson said. "She has a lot of tools to work with. She has size, she can handle the ball, she can rebound, she can shoot from the perimeter. She did a good job every time we seemed to get close. She made a basket, got a rebound, or drew a foul."

But the Pioneers made a last-gasp effort to win the game in the fourth quarter. Trailing 43-35 with just inside three minutes left to play, the Pioneers, who held the Vikings without a field goal in the final period, put together a 7-2 run and got within three with 44 seconds remaining. But they ran out of time.

"We made a great run," Anderson said. "It shows the great character of this team, and our players. But we made our push too late. We just ran out of time. But I was proud the way we came back."

Savanna Wood and Hannah Margolis led the Pioneers in scoring. Wood finished with 12, Margolis had 11. Whitney Dunnigan had eight points. Kelsie Clark had nine for the Vikings.

The WHS men and women open Northwestern 3A/4A Conference play Tuesday night at home against Fred T. Foard.

"And with the exception of Hickory, which made it to state finals (in Class 3A) last year, I really feel all the teams in this conference are pretty even," Anderson said. "We just have to do a good job of protecting our home floor. If we can do that, and steal a couple on the road, it could be a good year for us."

Our coverage Tuesday night begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: Avery defeated the JV girls, 38-28. Rachel Foutz led WHS with 11 points; Clare Harris had eight.....The JV boys (6-0) remained undefeated by knocking off Avery, 70-57. Trevor Eggers led four players in double figures with 17 points. Cameron Baker had 13 points, four assists, and six boards; Jake Chasteen had 12 points, three steals and six rebounds. T.J. Poulos had five assists and three steals.

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### **AVERY 48, WHS 42**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
AVERY	6	20	15	7 -	48
WATAUGA	6	15	12	9 -	42

**AVERY:** CLARK 9, DELLINGER 3, RIGDON 4, HEATON 7, ESTEP 5, BURLESON 13, TENNANT 5, BYRD 2.

**WHS:** WOOD 12, DUNNIGAN 8, MARGOLIS 11, EPPLY 4, DERRICK 2, WILSON 1, McNEILL 4.

### **FRIDAY NIGHT'S GAMES**

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### **WOMEN:**

#### **AVERY 48, WATAUGA 42**

BANDYS 51, FRED T. FOARD 38

ST. STEPHENS 41, BUNKER HILL 25

EAST BURKE 42, SOUTH CALDWELL 37

WEST CALDWELL 55, HIBRITEN 37

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 64, NORTH LINCOLN 50

HICKORY 62, HUNTER HUSS 5

### **MEN:**

#### **WATAUGA 57, AVERY 48**

FRED T. FOARD 61, BANDYS 54

ST. STEPHENS 64, BUNKER HILL 41

EAST BURKE 54, SOUTH CALDWELL 43

WEST CALDWELL 21, HIBRITEN 16 (OT)

HICKORY 89, HUNTER HUSS 77

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 59, NORTH LINCOLN 51

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