

## Pifer Pours In 34, Pioneers Whip Tigers

Written by Mike Kelly

Wednesday, 14 December 2011 12:34

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Watauga High seniors Jake Pifer and Matt Proffitt each turned in a stellar performance Tuesday night, and the Pioneers needed

those efforts in the worst way.

Pifer poured in a career-high 34 points, including six three pointers; Proffitt, who had been dormant in his last two games, dropped in a career-high 20 points as the Pioneers (4-1; 1-0) knocked off Fred T. Foard 76-65 in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference opener for both teams at Lentz-Eggers Gym. Proffitt jumped started the Pioneers by scoring 13 of his points in the opening quarter.

And the Pioneers, who trailed 11-7 in the opening stanza, put together a 14-point run that gave them a ten point lead at 21-11, and they never trailed again.

"I've said it all along, Matt is a great athlete," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "He is so fast getting up-and-down the floor. I told him that if he hustled tonight, he could beat this team down the floor. He did that, and he put himself in a position to score."

And it also put him in a position to dominate the boards. Proffitt grabbed a game-high 15 rebounds, one shy of his career high of 16 that he pulled down against Avery (on December 2). The Pioneers led by as many as 11 in the first half, and they were up 52-42 when Pifer picked up his third foul with 3:42 to play in the third quarter and was forced to leave the game. The Tigers (6-1; 0-1), who have lost 25 consecutive NW3A/4A Conference games since the league was formed, chipped away and got within three, at 56-53, at the end of the period.

"It's typical of a (Fred T. Foard coach) Rob Bliss team," Sanders said. "There's no quit in them at all. I knew they would make a run at us, especially with Jake out of the game. But like I told our guys, 'it's time for someone to step up,' and they did. They went out, maintained the lead, and we won this game."

And with Pifer back in the game to start the fourth quarter, the Pioneers kicked it into overdrive. They went on a 13-0 run and in turn, they kept the Tigers scoreless. The end result, WHS went up 69-53 with 4:50 left to play. Jordan Turner finally scored for the Tigers at the 4:42 mark of the final stanza. But a three-pointer by Pifer gave WHS its biggest advantage at 17 points, 72-55, with 4:07 to go.

The Tigers made a run and got within seven with 1:14 to play, but they never got any closer.

"It was a nice win, that's for sure," Sanders said. "But Foard is very improved. And that's a tribute to coach Bliss. He isn't concerned about the past, he's worried about the present.

They're playing a lot better. They really challenged us tonight.

"But like I told our guys, if we want to win a conference title, we have to play everyone like it's the championship game. We need to have a strong intensity level every time we step on the floor."

Proffitt also had three steals. Ben Howser came off the bench and scored eight points. He also had three steals; Ethan Poulos had six assists; DeWayne Mackey had four assists. Spencer Matthews led Fred T. Foard with 17 points; Jordan Turner had ten. The Pioneers take on Ashe County at home tonight.

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### WHS 76, FTF 65

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
FTF	13	23	17	12	- 65
WHS	23	20	13	20	- 76

**FTF:** MATTHEWS 17, TURNER 10, WINN 3, SIMS 2, DICKENS 6, FALGOUT 9, ROBINSON 7, ISENHOUR 9, KIRK 2.

**WHS:** PIFER 34, POULOS 2 (6 ASSISTS), PROFFITT 20 (15 REBOUNDS), CHASTEEN 2, KOPPENHAVER 1, STURGILL 1, MACKEY 2 (4 ASSISTS), CHAMBERS 6.

### WHS WOMEN RALLY PAST FOARD

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The Watauga High women's basketball team may have finally turned the corner Tuesday night. The Pioneers (2-3; 1-0) staved off Fred T. Foard 54-50 in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference opener for both teams at Lentz-Eggers Gym. Hannah Margolis hit the game-winning bucket with 54 seconds left, snapping a 50-50 tie.

Margolis and Savanna Wood backboned WHS offensively as those two combined for 42 points. Margolis finished with 22 points; Wood had 20, including four trifectas.

"And those two have to carry us," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "I really liked our intensity level tonight. It was similar to what we did (last) Friday night against Avery. The only difference was that our shots were falling tonight."

The game went back-and-forth. There were numerous lead changes, and the biggest lead between the teams was a five-point advantage by the Tigers. Fred T. Foard (4-3; 0-1), mired in a two-game losing streak, led 17-15 after one, and 25-23 at the break. But the Pioneers jumped on top with a six-point run to start the third quarter.

"And we also got some big contributions from some of our other players," Anderson said.

"Haleigh Wallace, Ana Makarova and Kaelin McNeill all hit big shots for us in the second half. And you need contributions like that if your going to win games like this."

And you also need a strong defensive effort. And like they did against Avery last Friday night, the Pioneers buckled down on defense. The Pioneers held the Tigers scoreless for three minutes and 49 seconds in the final period.

"I am so proud for the opportunity to coach these girls," Anderson said. "They have really bought into our system. They're practicing what we preach. We will control what we can control. It doesn't take any basketball skill to hustle, to box out. That's what we're trying to instill in these girls. It's so much fun to watch this team grow. Half the teams in the league are 1-0 tonight, and we're one of them."

McNeill finished with six points for the Pioneers; Chelsea Turner led the Tigers with 15 points; Hannah Skeen had 12, but only three in the second half.

Ashe County comes to town tonight. On the men's side, Marc Payne, who coached the Pioneers for 14 years, is 0-9 against his old team at Lentz-Eggers Gym since leaving WHS after the 2001-02 season. On the women's side, the Huskies have beaten WHS 15 consecutive times. The last WHS win came in 2003-04 in Boone. Todd Dixon was coaching the Pioneers that year. Our coverage begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: The JV girls defeated Fred T. Foard 59-20. Brooklyn Carroll had 11 points; Elle Sloboda had ten and Ryan Loflin had eight.....The JV boys are 7-0. They defeated Fred T. Foard 40-19. Jake Chasteen had 14 points and six steals; Cameron Baker had eight points and nine rebounds; Matt Lambert had six points; Eli Gailes and T.J. Poulos each had three assists.

**WHS 54, FTF 50**

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FTF	17	8	12	13	-	50
WHS	15	8	16	15	-	54

**FTF:** DANNER 2, HULL 5, HOYLE 2, ROBINSON 4, WHITWORTH 10, TURNER 15, SKEEN 12.

**WHS:** WOOD 20, WALLACE 4, MARGOLIS 22, MAKAROVA 2, McNEILL 6.

**TUESDAY NIGHT'S GAMES:**

**WOMEN:**

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**WATAUGA 54, FRED T. FOARD 50**  
SOUTH CALDWELL 63, HIBRITEN 18  
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 73, ST. STEPHENS 32

### **MEN:**

**WATAUGA 76, FRED T. FOARD 65**  
HIBRITEN 56, SOUTH CALDWELL 51  
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 54, ST. STEPHENS 43

### **WEDNESDAY NIGHT'S GAMES:**

**(MEN & WOMEN)**

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**ASHE COUNTY @ WATAUGA**

**HICKORY @ PFAFFTOWN-REAGAN**