

Red Tornadoes Sweep WHS

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 17 December 2011 11:30

It was a long night for both the Watauga High men's and women's basketball teams on Friday at

David Craft Gymnasium in Hickory, NC.

In the women's game, WHS (2-5 overall; 1-1 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) actually came out and matched Hickory blow-for-blow in the opening minutes of the game. The Pioneers hit their first five shots from the floor and led 10-8.

But the tide turned quickly as the Red Tornadoes (8-0; 1-0) went on a 17-point run and grabbed a 25-10 lead after the opening stanza. Hickory was 12-15 from the floor in the first quarter. And it was all downhill from there for the Pioneers as Hickory prevailed 66-27 in its conference opener.

"(Hickory coach) Barbara (Helms) did a great job adjusting her defense," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "She saw that we were beating her press and getting up the floor for some good looks at the basket. So, she switched to a 1-2-2 zone, and for a young team, that's a tough defense to face."

The end result, the Pioneers only scored nine points in the second-and-third quarters combined. Meanwhile, the Red Tornadoes were scoring at will and they eventually built a 47-point lead by the third quarter.

Danasia Witherspoon did the bulk of the damage as she put the Red Tornadoes on her back and scored 15 points in the first quarter. She finished with a game-high 22 points.

Witherspoon's effort brought back memories of Jada Payne (now at LaSalle University), who ripped the Pioneers for 23 points in the third quarter of last year's NW3A/4A Conference championship game.

"She's not as big as Jada, but man, that girl can play," Anderson said. "And like Jada, she's not afraid to step up when her team needs it. We had no answer at all for her. She simply dominated us inside."

Yazman Hannah came off the bench and poured in 19 for the Red Tornadoes; Savanna Wood and Hannah Margolis, who picked up three fouls in the first quarter and was forced to leave the game, finished with seven points apiece.

"Despite the loss, I'm still proud of my girls," Anderson said. "We lost (Margolis) our leader to foul trouble early, and that really hurt us. But we kept executing, doing the things we feel we need to do to be successful. Hickory is a dominate team, and we're still very young."

The Pioneers have lost two in a row.

HICKORY 66, WHS 27

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	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
WATAUGA	10	6	3	8	27
HICKORY	25	14	19	8	66

WHS: WOODS 4, WOOD 7, DUNNINGAN 2, EPPLY 2, SEAMONE 1, MARGOLIS 7, DERRICK 2, WELSH 2.

HHS: ABERNATHY 2, YOUNG 2, HOYLE 6, BOWERS 9, HANNAH 19, TROUTMAN 2, WITHERSPOON 22, ANDREA MILLER 4.

HICKORY 67, WHS 36

The story was much the same for the Watauga High men's basketball team Friday night. Jake Pifer gave WHS (4-3 overall; 1-1 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) a short-lived 2-0 lead on a steal by Matt Proffitt. But from that point on, the Red Tornadoes (6-2; 1-0) simply took control as they blasted WHS 67-36 in their conference opener.

The Red Tornadoes scored 20 consecutive points and led 20-2 after one; it was 39-10 at halftime, and the game for the most part was over.

"We told our guys before the game that we needed to play under control and to take care of the

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basketball," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "And we told them that if they had any idea to run up-and-down the floor with these guys that they would blow us right out of this gym. Well, if they didn't believe me then, they certainly do now."

The biggest problem was rebounding. The Red Tornadoes simply dominated WHS on the offensive boards. Gavin Huffman and Zach Jarrett did most of the damage for Hickory inside with their size advantage.

"Huffman especially," Sanders said. "He's a monster in there. But if we block out like we're suppose to, that doesn't happen. We never got positioning inside. They simply beat us to spots, and we paid for it."

Ironically, the Red Tornadoes didn't have anyone scoring in double figures. Jarrett led the way with nine points; Jalen Byrd, Kei-Shea Sims and Darius Malbon each had eight points apiece. Everyone who played for Hickory scored with the exception of Dishawn Witherspoon.

Allan Koppenhaver led the Pioneers with a career-high ten points. Jake Pifer, for the second game in a row, struggled from the field. He finished with seven points, a career-low, and five of those came in the second half.

"All we did all night was run up the floor and shoot the ball," Sanders said. "We never ran our offense. We don't play like that. We run when the opportunity is there, otherwise, we're looking for the good shot. And you can't play like we did tonight that against a team as athletic as Hickory. They simply controlled the tempo and dominated us. "

The Pioneers, mired in a two-game losing streak, had their most productive quarter in the third, when they scored 17 points. But they still trailed 55-27 after three, and Hickory eventually built its lead to 31 points.

"We have two tough teams coming up in Cloudland (Tuesday at home) and at Wilkes Central (next Thursday on the road), and we better be ready to play," Sanders said. "We've got to go back to work. And we have a lot of work to do. What happened tonight is totally unacceptable." The WHS men and women return home to play Cloudland, TN., Tuesday night. Our coverage begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: The JV girls (2-7; 1-1) lost 50-36. Clare Harris had ten points in the loss; Courtney Edwards had seven and Brooklyn Carroll had six.....The JV boys won 57-37. Cameron Baker had 11 points, four steals and 14 rebounds to pace the Pioneers; Matt Lambert had ten. T.J. Poulos had eight points, five assists and three steals; Eli Gailes had seven points, six steals and five assists.

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HICKORY	20	19	16	12	67

WHS: PIFER 7, PROFFITT 4, HOWSER 4, KOPPENHAVER 10, STURGILL 5, MACKEY 4, CHAMBERS 2.

HHS: LINEBARGER 2, JARRETT 9, WARDRICK 5, BYRD 8, CONNELLY 2, WALLS-DAVIS 3, FULLER 5, MASON 2, SIMS 8, MALBON 8, BARNES 5, POWELL 3, HUFFMAN 7.

FRIDAY GAMES

WOMEN:

HICKORY 66, WATAUGA 27
SOUTH CALDWELL 56, ST. STEPHENS 36

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ALEXANDER CENTRAL 61, FRED T. FOARD 58
HIBRITEN 68, CHALLENGER 14

MEN:

HICKORY 67, WATAUGA 36

ST. STEPHENS 59, SOUTH CALDWELL 55

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 47, FRED T. FOARD 36

HIBRITEN 80, CHALLENGER 27

OTHER GAMES:

(WOMEN) ASHE COUNTY 47, ALLEGHANY 34

(MEN) ASHE COUNTY 65, ALLEGHANY 49

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