

WHS Women Snap Losing Streak

Written by Mike Kelly

Thursday, 29 December 2011 09:46

What a difference a day can make.

On Tuesday the Watauga High women's basketball team looked slow and confused in a 12-point loss to West Stokes. A day later,

that very same team looked more energetic and efficient as the Pioneers (3-8) snapped their five-game losing streak with a convincing 52-37 win against South Stokes on the final day of the Alleghany Christmas Tournament in Sparta, NC.

A three-pointer by Hannah Margolis as time expired in the first half, narrowed a six-point deficit down to three, and the Pioneers were on their way. They blitzed the Sauras (6-5) 17-3 in the third quarter and took control of the game.

"We looked like we were running in mud on Tuesday," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "I thought we played all right on defense, and we got some good looks at the basket, but we just couldn't get going. We seemed to be moving in slow motion. And like I said (Tuesday), taking nothing away from West Stokes, we just beat ourselves with too many silly mistakes."

But the mistakes were far and few between on Wednesday night against the Sauras. WHS finally took control of the game in the third quarter. Trailing 23-20, the Pioneers went on a ten-point run and took a 30-23 lead. And they did it with defense. The Pioneers employed a full-court zone press and that derailed the Sauras.

"We knew coming in that they liked to shoot the three," Anderson said. "They love to drive and pitch. But we went to our zone press, and to our hybrid (3-2) zone and it slowed them down. And we also got a step on them as the game went on. We were getting to loose balls on the floor, and we were aggressive on the boards. It was a great effort by our girls."

The Pioneers, thanks to that strong run to start the second half, built a 37-26 lead at the end of the third quarter. The lead ballooned to 19 points in the final stanza. Margolis led a balanced scoring attack with 21 points. She also had seven rebounds, three steals and two blocked shots. Whitney Dunnigan had a double-double with 14 points and 12 rebounds; Savanna Wood had eight points, five assists and four steals.

"And I was real proud of Haleigh Wallace and Tasha Wilson," Anderson said. "Haleigh is finally becoming a leader on the floor; she finally getting comfortable with her surroundings, and she's not hesitant anymore. Tasha just earned her playing time tonight with her efforts in practice. That girl has really worked her tail off.

"And that's why I love coaching this team. They know when I'm serious, and they know when we can joke around. The girls are buying into what we're doing and they're starting to get better. We're not a great team by any means, but we're getting better, better and better and it shows." Wallace finished with three points and four steals; Wilson had two points, but she also had seven rebounds and two steals.

The Pioneers also did a great job clamping down on Hannah Wood of the Sauras in the second half. She finished with 13 points, but she only scored two of those points in the second half---on a pair of free throws.

"Every game I go into, I want to give myself a chance to win the game going into the fourth quarter," Anderson said. "I would rather give great effort and lose, than to win and coast through it. This is a big win for our girls with Wilkes Central (Tuesday) and Alexander Central (Friday)

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coming up on the schedule. This will give us some momentum in practice as we prepare ourselves for those games."

WHS 52, SOUTH STOKES 37

	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	TOTAL
SOUTH STOKES	10	13	3	11	- 37
WATAUGA	8	12	17	15	- 52

SOUTH STOKES: MOUNCE 2, JAMIE 5, K. FULP 3, SCOTT 3, J. FULP 2, GOOLSBY 1, WOOD 13, JONES 4, HILL 4.

WHS: WOOD 8 (5 ASSISTS, 4 STEALS), DUNNIGAN 14 (12 REBOUNDS), WALLACE 3 (4 STEALS), MARGOLIS 21 (7 REBOUNDS, 3 STEALS, 2 BLOCK SHOTS), DERRICK 2, WILSON 2 (7 REBOUNDS, 2 STEALS), McNEILL 2.

SOUTH STOKES UPENDS PIONEERS

Just when it looked like the Pioneers were about to turn the corner with their new uptempo style, they hit a snag on Wednesday night.

The Watauga High men's basketball team dropped a 64-52 decision to South Stokes on the final day of the Alleghany Christmas Tournament in Sparta, NC. And the Pioneers were victimized by one of their biggest pratfalls this season----a poor showing in the third quarter. Leading 36-34 at the break, the Sauras (6-5) went on a ten-point run and built a commanding 12-point lead.

The Pioneers (5-6), who have lost five of their last six games, rallied, but came up short. WHS cut the lead to 50-44 after three, and the Pioneers got a little closer as they narrowed the gap to 56-52 in the final period. But South Stokes staved off any comeback ideas the Pioneers may have had. A conventional three-point play by Josh Wright with 1:49 remaining gave the Sauras a 61-52 advantage.

The Sauras triple teamed Jake Pifer on the baseline and that led to Wright's steal, and backbreaking play. The Pioneers also hurt themselves by scoring just 18 points in the second half.

Only had three players scored for WHS on Wednesday night. Pifer led the way with 28 points; Ben Howser and Matt Proffitt each had 12. Hower had eight rebounds, Proffitt had seven boards and DeWayne Mackey had six. Proffitt also had five steals; Ethan Poulos had three assists.

Aaron Hawks led the Sauras with 20 points, 18 of those in the first half. South Stokes best player, Jaron Withers, did not play. He sprained his ankle during Tuesday night's game against Elkin. The WHS men and women return home to play Wilkes Central Tuesday, January 3. And because there is no school that day, the games will begin at 2 p.m. with the JV girls. Our coverage begins at 4:30 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM. Tuesday night's game also kicks-off a three-game home stand for the Pioneers. Alexander Central comes to town Friday, January 6; South Caldwell invades Lentz-Eggers Gym Tuesday, January 11.

SOUTH STOKES 64, WHS 52

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	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	TOTAL
SOUTH STOKES	20	16	14	14	- 64
WATAUGA	20	14	10	8	- 52

SOUTH STOKES: WRIGHT 8, SANDS 8, WILLIAMS 6, GRAY 6, R. SMITH 5, HAWKS 20, PRICE 3, JOYCE 8.

WHS: PIFER 28, HOWSER 12 (8 REBOUNDS), PROFFITT 12 (7 REBOUNDS, 5 STEALS).

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES:

COLVARD OIL HOLIDAY CLASSIC (WEST JEFFERSON)

WOMEN:

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ASHE COUNTY 45, HIBRITEN 20
TEAM AUSTRALIA 68, NORTH FORSYTH 15

MEN:

ASHE COUNTY 69, NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN (FLORIDA) 49
HIBRITEN 52, TEAM AUSTRALIA 32

CATAWBA VALLEY HOLIDAY CLASSIC (HICKORY)

WOMEN:

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NEWTON-CONOVER 44, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 33
HICKORY 71, SOUTH CALDWELL 37
FRED T. FOARD 57, ST. STEPHENS 35
MAIDEN 56, BUNKER HILL 43

MEN:

FRED T. FOARD 38, MAIDEN 37
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 70, SOUTH CALDWELL 35
HICKORY 83, ST. STEPHENS 47
NEWTON-CONOVER 51, BUNKER HILL 36