

WHS Women Snap Skid

Written by Mike Kelly

Wednesday, 18 January 2012 09:19

They say you have to crawl before you can walk, and you have to walk before you can run. Well, the Watauga High women's basketball team has gotten on its feet a few times this season,. But in their last two games, the Pioneers, similiar to a toddler struggling to stay on its feet, have fallen down

a couple of times.

But WHS (4-11 overall; 2-3 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) maintained its balance Tuesday night and even picked up its pace a bit as the Pioneers defeated St. Stephens 46-27 in a NW3A/4A Conference game in Catawaba County. The win also snapped a three-game losing streak, and with Hickory beating Fred T. Foard Tuesday night, the Pioneers have climbed their way into sole possession of fourth place. The Pioneers play at Foard Friday night.

"We're right in the position we want to be in," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "We knew coming in this was a big week for us. And we got it off to a great start by winning tonight. We attacked, and we made our shots. We finally got the offense going, and we got some nice contributions off the bench."

The biggest contribution came from Danielle Welsh, who's three-point play in the first quarter, snapped a 4-4 tie and put the Pioneers on top to stay. Welsh finished with five points.

"I always tell her to show me something in the transition game, if she wants more playing time", Anderson said. "If we just played half court like they did 40 years ago, she would be a monster. But tonight, despite a slow start, she regroup and played one heck of a game. She stay with it and didn't get discouraged."

The Pioneer, who have beaten the Indians (2-15; 0-6) four consecutive times, led 12-8 after the opening quarter. They broke the game open by outscoring the Indians, who are mired in a seven-game losing streak, 15-4 in the second period. That effort gave the Pioneers a 27-12 lead at the break. The Pioneers extended their advantage to 20 points in the second half.

Hannah Margolis paced the Pioneers with 12 points; Savanna Wood had eight points, including a pair of threes. The Pioneers return home to play Hibriten in a must-win game tonight, and according to Anderson, a win tonight and the Pioneers could make a run in the conference.

"A win (tonight) will give us a .500 record at the midway point of the conference season," he said. "Sure, we would have liked to have beaten Alexander Central and South Caldwell, but it didn't work out that way. But we still have a chance to be a factor in this league. And it all comes down to tonight's game.

"But Hibriten is athletic, and Monte Simmons is a very good coach and he'll get a lot out of his kids. They'll be ready to play us, so we have to respond. This is a big week for our program."

The Panthers (4-9; 1-4), who lost to Alexander Central Tuesday night, come in riding a three-game losing streak. And Hibriten hasn't beaten WHS since the 1997-98 season.

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WHS 46, ST. STEPHENS 27

SCORE BY PERIODS	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	TOTAL
WATAUGA	12	15	10	9	46
ST. STEPHENS	8	4	8	5	27

WHS: WOODS 4, WOOD 8, DUNNIGAN 4, WALLACE 2, EPPLEY 1, MARGOLIS 12, DERRICK 2, MAKAROVA 2, WILSON 4, McNEILL 2, WELSH 5.

STS: JONES 4, HICKS 4, MENARD 2, BIBEY 6, McMAHAN 9, KERLEY 2.

INDIANS RACE PAST WHS, 72-61

The woes continue for the Watauga High men's basketball team.

The Pioneers (6-9 overall; 2-3 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) lost for the eighth time in ten games Tuesday night as they were victimized by St. Stephens 72-61 in an important NW3A/4A Conference game in Catawaba County. The win gives St. Stephens sole possession of third place, and it leaves the Indians just one game behind Alexander Central for the No.2 seed. WHS with the loss remains in fourth place.

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An 11-0 run by the Indians (12-6; 4-2) gave them a nine-point halftime lead and put them on top to stay. A 15-2 run after WHS got within five points at 48-43 with less than two minutes to play in the third quarter proved to be the knockout blow.

"We always stress finishing the quarter, the half or the game on a strong note," said first-year St. Stephens coach and Watauga County native Murphy Post. "That 11-point run to close out the first half really gave us a lot of momentum. But give Watauga credit. They're a good team. They didn't quit."

The Pioneers led 26-24 on a layup by Jake Pifer in the second quarter. It was the last time WHS saw the lead. A three-point play by Jordan James moments later gave the Indians a 27-26 advantage and they eventually pulled away and led 35-26 at halftime. James and Kerigan Farley, who played very well off the bench, did the bulk of the damage.

James finished with 15 points, ten of those in the second half; Farley had 16 points, and his four-point spurt late the third quarter ignited the fatal run that doomed the Pioneers.

"Their initial attack really gave us a lot of problems," said WHS coach Rob Sanders. "We weren't able to shut down whoever ran the point. They were able to get past us and create for their teammates. It would have been really huge for us to get three wins this week, and make a run in the conference. But this one's over and we can't get it back. Now, we have to focus on our remaining conference games, and (tonight's) game with Hibriten is a key game."

The Indians, who led 54-43 to start the fourth quarter, built an 18-point advantage at 63-45 and coasted home. WHS never got any closer than the final margin. Pifer led WHS with 18 points; Matt Proffitt finished with 14 points and ten rebounds; Ben Margolis, who fouled out with 52 seconds left to play, had seven points and six rebounds. Tyler Sturgill had eight points; Jesse Chasteen had seven.

Hibriten comes to town tonight. The Panthers (7-6; 1-4) are mired in a four-game losing streak. Our coverage begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

ST. STEPHENS 72, WHS 61

SCORE BY PERIODS	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	TOTAL
WATAUGA	16	10	17	18	61
ST. STEPHENS	20	15	19	18	72

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WHS: PIFER 18, PROFFITT 14 (10 REBOUNDS), POULOS 2, MARGOLIS 7 (6 REBOUNDS), HOWSER 5, CHASTEEN 7, STURGILL 8.

STS: FARLEY 16, CRAIG 1, SPENCER 11, JAMES 15, HOUSTON 8, D. STARKEY 6, WILLIAMS 1, L. STARKEY 1, BUMGARNER 6, BEASLEY 7.

WRESTLING: ST. STEPHENS 68, WHS 7

The Watuaga High wrestling team lost its second consecutive Northwestern 3A/4A Conference match Tuesday night at home.

The Pioneers fell to powerhouse St. Stephens 68-7 at Lentz-Eggers Gym. Demetre Kostis (who won by decision 8-1) and Jonah Critcher (who won by major decision 14-0) were the only winners for WHS. The Pioneers (0-2 NW3A/4A) travel to Lenior tonight to take on Hibriten in a make-up match that was snowed out last Friday. Tonight's match begins at 5:30 p.m.

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NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

TUESDAY'S GAMES

WOMEN:

WATAUGA 46, ST. STEPHENS 27
HICKORY 75, FRED T. FOARD 52
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 77, HIBRITEN 55
SOUTH CALDWELL - BYE

MEN:

ST. STEPHENS 72, WATUAGA 61

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HICKORY 84, FRED T. FOARD 66
ALEXANDER CENTRAL 51, HIBRITEN 33
SOUTH CALDWELL - BYE

WEDNESDAY'S GAME

(MEN & WOMEN)

HIBRITEN @ WATAUGA
WILKES CENTRAL @ SOUTH CALDWELL