

## WHS Women Nearly Pull Off Upset

Written by Mike Kelly

Wednesday, 25 January 2012 01:05

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Watauga High women's basketball coach Klay Anderson, despite his mild-mannered looks, has a daring attitude. He resembles a man, who when challenged to cross that line, will take that step with determination and confidence. Well, Anderson has brought that persona to the women's basketball program at WHS during his five-year stay. And the Pioneers, thanks to that attitude,

gave the No.1 team (in Class 3A) in the state some anxious moments Tuesday night at Lentz-Eggers Gym.

Unfortunately, Hickory staved off WHS's comeback attempt and went on to win the game, 59-42. And while the final score seems lopsided, it was a lot closer than one might think.

"They jumped on us early," Anderson said. "But we switched to a 2-3 zone and it slowed the game down. I'm not a big fan of the 2-3 zone, but it was effective for us last Friday night (at Fred T. Foard), so we went back to it tonight."

The Pioneers (5-13 overall; 3-5 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) fell behind 17-5 in the first quarter, but they outscored Hickory 16-12 in the second period and trailed 29-21 at the intermission.

And WHS continued its frantic pace to start the second half, cutting the deficit to four at 34-30 on a three ball by Savanna Wood with 5:04 left in the third quarter. But from that point on, Hickory (18-1; 7-0), riding a nine-game winning streak, took control.

The Red Tornadoes went on a 16-2 run to close out the period and built a 50-32 lead after three. Their advantage grew to a game-high 21 points in the final stanza.

"It is so hard to maintain a team like Hickory," Anderson said. "You're right there with them, and within a three-minute span they can take the game completely over. We missed some shots that could have kept things close in the third quarter, but to their credit, they jumped on our misses and took the game over."

Danasia Witherspoon, who buried WHS in their last meeting (on December 16), was kept in check this time around. She finished with 14 points, but 11 of those came in the first half.

Andrea Miller picked up the slack for Hickory in the second half by scoring seven of her 11 points. Freshman Yazmen Hannah had nine.

Wood led WHS with 16 points, including five threes, four in the second half. Hannah Margolis had nine; Kalie Eppley had seven.

"I'm disappointed for the girls," Anderson said. "They gave us a great effort tonight. Our biggest inconsistency right now is scoring. But we're also a pretty young team. I loved the effort, and we're getting better."

The Pioneers also remained in a fourth-place tie with Fred T. Foard Tuesday night. The Tigers (10-9; 3-5) dropped a 68-47 decision to Alexander Central in Taylorsville.

The WHS men and women travel to Taylorsville to play Alexander Central next Tuesday night, January 24.

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### HICKORY 59, WHS 42

#### SCORE BY PERIODS 1ST 2ND 3RD 4TH TOTAL

HICKORY.....	17	12	21	9	59
WATAUGA.....	5	16	11	10	42

**HICKORY:** YOUNG 8, HOYLE 8, BOWERS 5, HANNAH 9, TROUTMAN 2, WITHERSPOON 14, ANDREA MILLER 11, PASPA 2.

**WHS:** WOODS 2, WOOD 16, DUNNIGAN 6, WALLACE 2, EPPLEY 7, MARGOLIS 9.

### RED TORNADOES STAVE OFF PIONEERS

The Watauga High men's basketball team put forth a much better effort the second time around

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against Hickory.

Following an embarrassing 31-point loss back in December, the Pioneers (8-10 overall; 4-4 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) gave Hickory, which is ranked fifth in this week's NCPreps.com Class 3A Poll, all it could handle Tuesday night.

But the Red Tornadoes, who have won 14 in a row (they haven't lost since December 6 when Statesville beat them) prevailed in the end, 61-48 at Lentz-Eggers Gym. The Pioneers, who wiped out a 15-point first half deficit, got within five early in the fourth quarter on a conventional three-point play by Ben Howser that made it 49-44.

But from that point on, Hickory (17-2; 7-0) took over and put the contest on ice.

"That second group we put out there (Sub Steury, Howser, Jesse Chasteen, Allan Koppenhaver and DeWayne Mackey) did a good job getting us back in the game (in the second quarter) after we fell behind early," WHS coach Rob Sanders said. "We switched to a zone (a 1-3-1), and it slowed the game down. They weren't penetrating and getting easy layups. We forced them to shoot jump shots, and I'll take my chances with those."

The Pioneers, who trailed 22-8 after the first quarter (thanks to a 12-0 run by the Red Tornadoes in the opening stanza), held Hickory to 11 points in the second period and cut the lead to eight points at the break.

"We did a great job controlling tempo tonight," Sanders said. "But we also stopped scoring in the fourth quarter. And they did a good job running clock, being patient and getting good looks." The Pioneers went seven consecutive possessions without scoring. In turn, the Red Tornadoes went on a run of their own and built an 11-point lead, taking a 55-44 lead with 1:49 left.

"We did a good job of getting ourselves back in the game," Sanders said. "Unfortunately, we were struggling to score. But we must focus on the positives that we can draw from this game. And if we can take care of the remaining teams on our schedule, we can solidify a playoff berth. And it all starts next Tuesday with Alexander Central."

Zach Jarrett and Raheim Connelly paced the Red Tornadoes with 13 points apiece; Jalen Byrd finished with ten. Jake Pifer led WHS with 12 points. Jesse Chasteen had four points and seven rebounds; Matt Proffitt, Koppenhaver and Mackey each had six points.

And the Pioneers, despite the loss, remain in a third-place tie with St. Stephens in the league standings. South Caldwell snapped a five-game slide and beat the Indians 69-65 in Sawmills Tuesday night. The WHS men and women travel to Alexander Central next Tuesday, January 24. Our coverage of that game begins at 6 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

**NOTES:** The JV girls win again as they knocked off Hickory 33-28 Tuesday night, handing the Red Tornadoes their first loss of the year. Clare Harris led the way with 15 points, Ryan Loflin had six and Courtney Edwards had five.....The JV boys (18-0; 8-0 NW3A/4A Conference) won their 18th consecutive game by knocking off Hickory 67-45 at Lentz-Eggers Gym. Jonathan Plyler led three players in double figures with 14 points and six rebounds. Jake Chasteen had 11 points and six boards; Cameron Baker had ten points. Eli Gales had six assists and two steals.

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### HICKORY 61, WHS 48

#### SCORE BY PERIODS 1ST 2ND 3RD 4TH TOTAL

HICKORY..... 22 11 14 14 61

WATAUGA..... 8 17 14 9 48

**HICKORY:** LINBARGER 2, JARRETT 13, WARDRICK 7, BYRD 10, CONNELLY 13, WALLS-DAVIS 4, FULLER 4, MASON 2, SIMS 2, MALBON 2, HUFFMAN 2.

**WHS:** PIFER 12, POULOS 2 (3 ASSISTS), PROFFITT 6 (2 STEALS), MARGOLIS 5, HOWSER 5, CHASTEEN 4 (7 REBOUNDS), KOPPENHAVER 6, STURGILL 2 (4 REBOUNDS), MACKEY 6.

### NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

### TUESDAY'S GAMES:

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### WOMEN:

#### **HICKORY 59, WATAUGA 42**

SOUTH CALDWELL 48, ST. STEPHENS 21

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 68, FRED T. FOARD 47

HIBRITEN - BYE

### MEN:

#### **HICKORY 61, WATAUGA 48**

SOUTH CALDWELL 69, ST. STEPHENS 65

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 48, FRED T. FOARD 41

HIBRITEN - BYE

### WEDNESDAY'S GAMES:

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**(MEN & WOMEN)**

HIBRITEN @ WEST WILKES