

The Watauga High junior varsity boys basketball team went undefeated this season. Twenty-two wins without a loss. A generous team that checked its ego at the door, and a solid team that was led by a coach that was justly rewarded for all of his years of hard work and dedication. Jerry Moretz is a humble man, a gentleman and a tactician. But under that quiet demeanor

lies a fiery competitor that knows how to win. And despite a bump in the road here and there, Moretz has quietly turned in a successful coaching career at his alma mater. And despite his modest gestures of deflecting the praise, the truth is evident.

"We've got a great team," said T.J. Poulos. "But we couldn't have done it without coach Moretz. He's a great coach. He made it a lot fun for us, and he really believed in us. He gets a lot of credit for what happened this season."

It's the first time Moretz has ever coached an undefeated team. And that effort also led the JV boys to the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference championship with a perfect 12-0 record. And for Moretz it was a true blessing for a guy, who at one time, thought his coaching career might be over.

"I lost confidence in myself after what happened when I was coaching the varsity girls," Moretz said. "It was a tough time in my life. Coaching and working with kids was something I really wanted to do when I was in college. I want to see them work towards a goal. And basketball has always been a love. I love the game, and I love to see them work hard and improve. It takes a team of 13 or 14 to pull things together. It's real rewarding.

But during those hard times, I had some doubts. I really didn't have any belief in myself. I didn't think I was a very good coach, so, I decided to stay away for a couple of years."

But like any great professional, failure and disappointment are part of the equation. And the real question is reflected on how one responds to that adversity. And for Moretz, his blessing came when current WHS men's coach Rob Sanders asked him to join his coaching staff.

"I was driving Rob to team camp at Emory & Henry (College)," he said. "And he asked me to work with him. The fact that he believed in me had a lot to do with me being back in the game. It brought back my confidence."

And a wise move it was. Thanks to Moretz and a talented group of youngsters, they have laid the foundation for what seems like many successful years to come.

"These have no fear," Moretz said. "But they aren't over confident. Their focus was tremendous, and they have that "it" coaches are always looking for. They smell a team getting in trouble and they go in for the kill. That even happened when we scrimmaged against the varsity. When they felt those guys were backing up a bit, our guys picked it up a notch. You can't coach that. It's something the kids have to have, and this team is blessed with it."

And despite their success, the Pioneers never let up. And when they were challenged, the Pioneers delivered the knock-out blow and left their opponents reeling in agony.

"People say we made it look so easy," Moretz said. "In reality, it was never easy. Our guys just never let up. They were determined, and focused on the game at hand. They rarely, if at all, were caught looking ahead to the next game. They did a great job. One of our team goals was to go undefeated this season, and I told them it was going to take a strong dedication and a lot of hard work. But these guys were committed all year. They're a motivated group and a coach's

## WHS JV Boys Go 22-0

Written by Mike Kelly

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dream."

"It was a great season," Poulos said. "We had a lot of hard practices, and coach Moretz is the man. He was always there for us, especially in the tough games. He was committed to us, he believed in us, and that's why we love him."

As the old saying goes, God pre-destines all of us. In Moretz's case, he was destined to be a teacher and a coach. And Moretz, despite some anxious moments, has more than achieved his goal. Just ask the former and current students he's worked with over the years. His gift has been a blessing to others.

### **Watauga Pioneer Basketball JV Basketball 2011-2012**

11-22-11 Cloudland Watauga 51 Cloudland 18 1-0  
11-25-11 W Jefferson Watauga 50 Hampton 24 2-0  
11-26-11 W Jefferson Watauga 46 Avery 23 3-0  
12-2-11 Newland Watauga 57 Avery 32 4-0  
12-6-11 Lenoir Watauga 40 West Caldwell 29 5-0  
12-9-11 Boone Watauga 70 Avery 57 6-0  
12-13-11 Boone Watauga 40 Fred T Foard 19 7-0 1-0  
12-14-11 Boone Watauga 41 Ashe 26 8-0 1-0  
12-16-11 Hickory Watauga 57 Hickory 37 9-0 2-0  
12-20-11 Boone Watauga 74 Cloudland 35 10-0 2-0  
12-22-11 Wilkesboro Watauga 51 Wilkes Central 36 11-0 2-0  
1-6-12 Boone Watauga 47 Alexander 27 12-0 3-0  
1-10-12 Boone Watauga 49 South Caldwell 20 13-0 4-0  
1-11-12 W Jefferson Watauga 47 Ashe 25 14-0 4-0  
1-17-12 Conover Watauga 45 St. Stephens 19 15-0 5-0  
1-18-12 Boone Watauga 58 Hibriten 25 16-0 6-0  
1-20-12 Newton Watauga 40 Fred T Foard 22 17-0 7-0

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1-24-12 Boone Watauga 67 Hickory 45 18-0 8-0

1-31-12 Taylorsville Watauga 56 Alexander 30 19-0 9-0

2-3-12 Saw Mills Watauga 60 South Caldwell 40 20-0 10-0

2-7-12 Lenoir Watauga 68 Hibriten 27 21-0 11-0

2-10-12 Boone Watauga 45 St. Stephens 25 22-0 12-0