

## Hickory Hangs On To Nip Pioneers

Written by Mike Kelly

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Well, the big first-place showdown finally took place Thursday night in Hickory. And there were some anxious moments before the game even started. The WHS activity bus had some

mechanical problems on its way to the game, and when the Pioneers finally got there, the game was delayed because the official hadn't shown up.

But things finally settled down and they played the game. Unfortunately, the Pioneers gave up an own goal and spotted the Red Tornadoes (17-1 overall; 7-1 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) an early 3-0 lead. The end result, Hickory hung on and beat WHS 3-2, and with the win, the Red Tornadoes take sole possession of first place in the NW3A/4A Conference standings.

"We need some help, that's for sure," said WHS coach Woody McKay. "But I'm proud of the way we came back. The kids didn't quit, and our comeback tells me that we're on an even keel with this team."

The Pioneers (12-2-3; 4-1-2) finally got on the board at the 53rd-minute mark of the second half. Alex Parsons, who has tickled the twine four times this season against the Red Tornadoes, scored WHS' first goal on a free kick. Logan Raichle picked up the assists. And Parsons struck again seven-minutes later as he tallied on a feed from Cam Linnville.

"We got back in it, but we couldn't put another one in," McKay said. "But our defense was solid. We really shut them down in the second half, and that ignited our comeback. I'm sorry we didn't win. But they have some tough games left with St. Stephens and Fred T. Foard. Hopefully, one of those teams can help us out."

Hickory won the JV game, 1-0. The Pioneers return home to play Alexander Central Monday night.

### Hickory 3, Watauga 2

Hickory Goals: own goal (23rd minute.), Carlos Sevilla from Ben Pleasant (34th minute), Ben Hartman from Ben Pleasant (49th minute)

Watauga Goals: Alex Parsons from Logan Raichle (53rd minute), Alex Parsons from Cam Linnville (60th minute)

Hickory saves: Will Arditti 7 Watauga saves: Jake Chasteen 9

Hickory Record: 17-1 (7-1) Watauga Record: 12-2-3 (4-1-2)

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