

Pioneers Pull Off Season Sweep Against Huskies

Written by Mike Kelly

Thursday, 10 January 2013 08:06

Sports is so similar to every day life. One day, no matter what you do, things just don't go right. And on some days you just can't do anything wrong. Well that scenario best describes the Watauga High

girls basketball team. On Tuesday, WHS let one slip away in a seven-point loss at Wilkes Central. But the Pioneers (5-6) bounced back in a big way as they clobbered Ashe County 56-25 Wednesday night at the Dog Pound in a non-conference game in West Jefferson, N.C. Hannah Margolis jump-started the Pioneers with a pair of threes on the first two possessions of the game.

"Hannah hits a pair of threes in the first 30 seconds of the game," said WHS coach Klay Anderson. "That really gave us a lift. It really raises the level of our team. When your senior leader comes out and sticks the dagger in early, it's big for us."

And it was a huge lift for Margolis, who only scored seven points and fouled out the night before against Wilkes Central. Margolis finished with 16 points. She also had six rebounds, four steals and a team-high five blocked shots. Savanna Wood continued her torrid pace as she poured in a game-high 18 points. Danielle Welsh had ten points, a team-high seven rebounds and two blocked shots.

"I've been saying it all year," Anderson said. "We need to get 30 points or more from Hannah and Savanna, and we need at least 14-16 points (combined) a night from Danille and (Kaelin) McNeill. If we can do that on a consistent basis, we can be a very competitive team."

The Pioneers, who have struggled at times on offense this season, showed no ill effects against the Huskies. The Pioneers erupted for a season-high 22 points in the first quarter, and they built their lead to 14 points by the intermission. In turn, the Pioneers' zone defense had the Huskies (7-7) on their heels for the most part in the first half.

Ashe County only scored two points in the second quarter. Emily Flanagan picked up Ashe County's only bucket with 12 seconds left in the period.

"We more active tonight," Anderson said. "You take the same team just 24 hours later, and we had more energy tonight compared to our game (Tuesday night) at Wilkes Central. Like we've told the girls, if something is important to you, you're going to do it. We did so many good things (Tuesday) night against Wilkes Central, but they just took the game away from us."

The Pioneers finally broke the game open in the second half. WHS led 38-21 after three quarters, and they outscored Ashe County 18-4 in the final stanza. The Huskies only scored nine points in the second half. And the Pioneers hope to carry the momentum of this win into their Northwestern 3A/4A Conference match up Friday night at Alexander Central.

"I firmly expect Alexander Central to compete for the conference title," Anderson said. "They have the total package with (Marie) Richtie inside and Madi Sudderth on the outside. But if we play our zone defense like we did tonight, I think we're going to give them fits."

Paige Spell led the Huskies with six points; Morgan Hudler had five----all of those coming in the first quarter.

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WHS 56, ASHE COUNTY 25

SCORE BY PERIODS 1st 2nd 3rd 4th TOTAL

WATAUGA 22 8 8 18 - 56

ASHE COUNTY 14 2 5 4 - 25

WHS: WOOD 18 (6 REBOUNDS, 4 STEALS), DERRICK 2, MARGOLIS 16 (6 REBOUNDS, 4 STEALS, 5 BLOCKED SHOTS), HARRIS 2, McNEILL 4 (6 REBOUNDS), MAKAROVA 2, WELSH 10 (7 REBOUNDS, 2 BLOCKED SHOTS). FG: 21, 3FG: 3, FT: 5-6.
THREE-POINTERS: MARGOLIS 2, WOOD.

ASHE COUNTY: REED 2, HUDLER 5, SPELL 6, REAVIS 4, LOPP 2, FLANAGAN 2, BROWN 4. FG: 8, 3FG: 1, FT: 6-8.
THREE-POINTERS: HUDLER.