

Watauga High sophomore Aaron Dobbins simply dissected Fred T. Foard Friday night as the Pioneers belted the Tigers 48-10 at Tiger Stadium in Newton, N.C. The win leaves the WHS football team in a three-way tie for first place in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference with Freedom and Hibriten.

Dobbins did throw his first two interceptions of the year (one of those on WHS' opening possession of the game), but he came charging back to throw for 228 yards and four TD passes on the night. Dobbins was 7-14 passing. He hooked up with his favorite target, senior wide out Cam Baker, three times. A 66-yard strike with 5:08 left in the first quarter gave the Pioneers a 7-0 lead.

Baker finished with four catches for 182 yards.

"Cam is a great receiver," Dobbins said. "He has the speed to get down field. All I have to do is throw it up there, and Cam can run it down."

The Pioneers, like they've done in their last four games, jumped out to a huge lead. An 18-yard toss from Dobbins to Baker early in the second quarter gave the Pioneers a 14-0 lead; a 17-yard screen pass to T.J. Poulos with 6:32 left in the first half made it, 21-0. The last scoring drive covered 73 yards in just 49 seconds.

"Teams haven't seen that play," Poulos said. "It's something new coach (Ryan) Habich added this week. "Aaron did a good job swinging the ball the other way, and I had some great blocking in front of me. It feels nice to be 6-0, but we're confident right now, not cocky."

The Tigers (0-6; 0-2) finally got on the board late in the second quarter. They rallied to score twice just before halftime. Sophomore quarterback Alexander Toy, who was 13-22 with a pair of interceptions, marched his team 80 yards in nine plays. He hooked up with Deante Powell, who caught a screen pass, and made his way through traffic into the end zone. Following Dobbins' second interception of the game, the Tigers marched it 70-yards in ten plays and scored again on Ryan Campbell's 27-yard field goal as time expired.

"I wasn't real happy the way we played defensively late in the first half," said WHS coach Ryan Habich. "But our defensive coaches, Roy Carter and Dustin Kerley, made the proper

adjustments at halftime. We really held them down in the second half. Our defense played real well in the second half and we just found a way to win tonight."

The Pioneers were in total control in the second half. WHS outgained the Tigers 263-29 in the third-and-fourth quarters combined. And Tigers, who never crossed midfield in the second half, gained most of their yardage on their final possession of the game. Foard finished with 246 total yards. WHS finished with 444.

Dobbins set the tone as he rambled in on a 49-yard run on WHS' first possession of the second half. He faked the option pitch, turned the right corner and was off to the races. Linebacker Jackson Carr set up the knockout blow on Foard's fourth play from scrimmage in the third quarter.

He picked off Toy and gave the Pioneers a first down at the Tigers' 15-yard-line. Poulos marched it in two plays later on a 13-yard run for a commanding 35-10 lead. The Pioneers scored twice in just 54 seconds.

"That was a big play by Jackson," Dobbins said. "We had to pick up our intensity in the second half. We just came out and established things early. Those two touchdowns early in the second half basically shut them down for them."

"It feels good to be 6-0," Habich said. "We just took care of business. We have players that can score. Aaron made some great throws, Cam made some nice catches. I think when we get up on teams like that, it's hard for them to come back. (Foard) played hard tonight, but they don't have an explosive offense, so that played in our favor. When we scored quickly in the second half, that allowed us to remain in control."

And the Pioneers picked up their running game in the second half. Held to just 27 yards in the first half, the Pioneers finished with 216 yards on the ground, including 189 rushing yards in the second half. Dobbins led the charge with 61 yards on just three carries.

"We threw it quite a bit in the first half," Habich said. "We really concentrated on establishing the running game in the second half. I think we might have thrown it, maybe two times the entire second half. Like I've said in the past, I want a balanced attack, and we did that in the second half tonight,"

The Pioneers were also without linebacker Dakota McCrary, who sat out Friday night's game with a concussion. The team was notified on Thursday that McCrary, their leading tackler,

wouldn't play.

Anthony Deiters, Austin Northern and Willis Ellis helped fill the void at linebacker on Friday. The Pioneers are off to their best start since 2006, and they have a first-place showdown scheduled next week at home with Freedom.

The Patriots (5-1; 2-0) knocked off Hickory 34-27 on the road Friday night. It will be the first meeting between the schools since 2008. The Patriots hold a commanding 28-7-1 lead in the series. But the Pioneers have won two of the last three meetings between the schools.

WHS defeated FHS 14-7 at the old Jack Groce Stadium in 2006, picking up its first win against the Patriots in 22 years; WHS followed that up by beating the Patriots on the road the following season. It was WHS' first win ever at Morganton.

"The meat of our schedule is coming up," Habich said. "The next two weeks, we're playing very, very good competition. Those teams are bigger, faster and stronger than us right now. But I want to compete with those teams. And we have to play better fundamentally. We have to improve offensively, defensively and on special teams. Our goal is to make it a fourth-quarter game, and not get blown out early."

"We're going into the hard part of our schedule now," Poulos said. "We just have to keep it up. And we've just got to keep getting better."

Coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. next Friday night from Jack Groce Stadium on AM 1450, WATA and GoBlueridge.net.

**NOTES:** The Pioneers are 6-0 for the first time since 2006.....They are 2-0 in league play, their best start in league play since 2011....WHS is 5-0 lifetime against Fred T. Foard....The Pioneers are 8-4 against Tigers coach Tom Harper.....WHS is averaging 47.3 points-per-game in its last four outings, and they're averaging 424 yards offensively during that stretch.

**WATAUGA 48, FRED T. FOARD 10**

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
WATAUGA	7	14	14	13	- 48
FRED T. FOARD	0	10	0	0	- 10

**1st**

5:08 WHS - DOBBINS 66-YARD PASS TO BAKER, SHIRLEY KICK, (6-80), 7-0

**2nd**

10:48 WHS - DOBBINS 18-YARD PASS TO BAKER, SHIRLEY KICK, (4-31), 14-0

6:32 WHS - DOBBINS 17-YARD PASS TO POULOS, SHIRLEY KICK, (4-73), 21-0

2:37 FTF - TOY 18-YARD PASS TO POWELL, CAMPBELL KICK, (9-80), 21-7

0:00 FTF - CAMPBELL 27-YARD FIELD GOAL, (10-70), 21-10

**3rd**

9:20 WHS - DOBBINS 49-YARD RUN, SHIRLEY KICK, (2-51), 28-10

8:26 WHS - POULOS 13-YARD RUN, SHIRLEY KICK, (2-15), 35-10

**4th**

11:53 WHS - DOBBINS 42-YARD PASS TO BAKER, KICK FAILED, (5-70), 41-10

6:50 WHS - WILLIAMS 1-YARD RUN, SHIRLEY KICK, (9-28), 48-10

**TEAM STATISTICS:**

FIRST DOWNS: WHS 14, FTF 13

RUSHING YARDS: WHS 216, FTF 109

PASSING YARDS: WHS 228, FTF 137

TOTAL YARDS: WHS 444, FTF 246

FUMBLES/LOST: WHS 0-0, FTF 2-0

TURNOVERS: WHS 2, FTF 2

PENALTY YARDS: WHS 4-40, FTF 3-17

**INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS:**

**RUSHING:**

WHS - WILLIAMS 10-44, POULOS 8-40, DOBBINS 3-61, WILLIS 3-9, NORTHERN 2-18,  
FORD 2-11, GREER 1-17, TRIVETTE 1-10, CAMPBELL 1-6.

FTF - TOY 16-64, GREEN 11-30, POWELL 8-29, CAMPBELL 1 MINUS 13.

**PASSING:**

WHS - DOBBINS 7-14-4TD-2I-228, NORTHERN 0-1-0

FTF - TOY 13-22-TD-2I-137

**RECEIVING:**

WHS - BAKER 4-182-3TD, POULOS 3-46-TD

FTF - TEAGUE 3-58, GREEN 3-26, CAMPBELL 2-20, HEMPHIL 2-13, POWELL 1-18-TD,  
LEATHERMAN 1-2, GIBBS 1-0

**Photo Courtesy: Cam Baker, Rob Moore**