

WHS JV Boy's Fall Short In Finals

Written by Staff Reports

Sunday, 01 December 2013 14:12

The Watauga High boy's junior varsity team squandered a ten-point, fourth-quarter lead and lost to Ashe County 47-45 in the championship game of the Miller Insurance/Dr. Pepper Invitational Saturday night in West Jefferson, N.C. Ashe County (3-1) turned up its defensive pressure in the final stanza to mount its

comeback in the finals.

The entire game was a defensive battle, but it eventually came down to free throw shooting. Ashe County outscored the Pioneers 22-12 at the charity stripe.

"I feel like I let the young men down," said WHS JV coach Jerry Moretz. "I strongly feel that anytime a team loses a game by three or fewer points, it's my fault. I could have made a decision here or there that would have made a difference. But I am extremely proud of how the men played and the effort they gave. This is what a championship game should be. Two really good teams, playing a close game. The atmosphere was unbelievable. That place was loud."

The Pioneers had an opportunity to win or tie the game in the final seconds. On an inbounds play under the basket, Caleb Bryson got open and barely missed a three-point shot that would have won the game. The Pioneers battled inside and came up with two offensive rebounds, but they were unable to find the basket and force overtime.

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"The guys gave a championship effort today, but we just weren't able to finish in crunch time," Moretz said. "We have a great group of young men and I know they were upset. We will work extra hard to get better and be prepared the next time we are in that situation. I am fortunate to be able to coach a group of young men that play with this much heart and effort.

"Congratulations to the Ashe County coaching staff. They do an outstanding job and keep their players believing. I'm looking forward to the rematch next Friday. It'll be fun."

The loss drops the Pioneers to 2-1 on the season. The Pioneers return to action at Lentz-Eggers Gym Tuesday against Avery County.

Bryson and Zach Valet of the Pioneers were named to the all-tournament team. CoCo Clay of Ashe County, who poured in 20 points in the Championship game, was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

ASHE COUNTY 47, WATAUGA 45

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Score By Periods 1 2 3 4 TOTAL

WATAUGA 5 12 20 8 - 45

ASHE COUNTY 3 12 12 20 - 47

Leading Scorers:

Zach Valet 13

Caleb Bryson 9

Harrison Cobb 5

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Connor Renner 4