



Caleb Newby had six points to help the Pioneers prevail 52-46 over Stone Memorial Tuesday. After averaging just 2.9 points per game before Christmas, Newby has scored 17 points in Warren County's last two games.

Jacob Dodd photo

## District debut Pioneers down Panthers

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS  
Sportswriter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Running up a great record in the first months was great for Warren County, but skeptics wanted to see what would happen in district play. The Pioneers passed their first test Tuesday night.

In a slow-paced, grinding game, the Pioneers beat Stone Memorial 52-46 in their district debut.

"I'm really proud of our guys and how they battled," said coach Chris Sullens. "I don't know if we've ever won in this gym, so to close this out and get a victory was big. It's been a while since we've started district play 1-0."

Warren County (15-3) had to rally after trailing for the entire first half. Panther guard Brett Newcome was a big reason, scoring 16 points in the first half to push the home team ahead 32-30 at halftime.

Newcome's scoring outburst was part of a great shooting first half for Stone Memorial, when the home team sank eight 3-pointers - four by Newcome.

Sloan Seymour kept the Pioneers afloat in the first half, scoring nine of his 13 points in the first half. Seymour drilled a 3-pointer in the first quarter, then used his length and attacking style to get to the rim at will in the second quarter.

At halftime, Sullens had a

simple message for his team - lock down Newcome and the Panther shooters and the game will flip.

"We came out defensively in the second half and did the things we wanted them to do," said Sullens.

As a focal point of a swarming Pioneer defense, Newcome scored only two points in the second half. Newcome's only points came on two late free throws as Stone Memorial only mustered 14 second-half points.

Isaiah Grayson almost matched the Panthers on his own.

Stone Memorial worked diligently to slow the pace and keep the Pioneers from their preferred style of running and gunning 3-pointers, so Grayson took over in the paint.

The senior forward helped swing the game to start the second half by fueling a 10-2 Pioneer run. Grayson scored on a pick-and-roll with Irving Espinoza, found room inside and got a great pass from Tyree Ladet and sparked two run-out layups for Seymour and Espinoza after swatting two Stone Memorial shots.

Following a Panther timeout, Grayson scored two more times in the paint to push the Pioneers ahead 44-34 in the third quarter.

Warren County kept the lead from there, though the Panthers made one last push.

Continued on 2B

## Stopped by Stone

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS  
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Silencing the stigma of being a potential bottom-dweller may not be easy for the Lady Pioneers.

Warren County was picked before the season to finish last in District 6-AAA play, and Tuesday's debut didn't help the Lady Pioneers' perception. Stone Memorial downed Warren County 78-50, the team's third-worst loss of the season.

"It's not the statement we wanted to make to open district play," said coach Shea Panter. "We had a lack of focus and execution which dug a hole too deep for us to climb out."

Warren County (10-9) has now lost three straight games, including falling in its last two games by a combined 70 points. The Lady Pioneers had lost by 25 or more only twice this season, both times to defending state champion Upperman.

Tuesday's game was supposed to be a measuring stick of where Warren County would be in the five-team district. The Lady Pioneers left knowing there is lots of work to do to get into title contention.

Stone Memorial (14-3) raced out to a 19-8 lead after one quarter, then ballooned its advantage to 15, 42-27, by halftime. The Lady Panthers got baskets from seven different players in the first half, led by eight points each from Emma Capps and Emily Boyd. On the night, Stone Memorial would have five players reach double figures, led by Boyd's 18 points. Alex Eldridge and Tessa Johnson added 13 points apiece, while Capps and Tessa Miller had 10 points each.

Warren County didn't seem to settle in offensively until late in the second quarter. Megan Patch knocked in two 3-pointers in the final minutes of the first half, but it did little to dent the deficit.

Continued on 2B



Jacob Dodd photo

Lady Pioneer Callie Cathcart is unable to corral a loose ball while colliding with Stone Memorial's Tessa Miller. Cathcart scored six points in Warren County's 78-50 district debut loss. 0



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