

**SIMMONS SAYS**

JEFFERY  
SIMMONS



## Guessing spring win totals

Off one of the best seasons in decades, the Pioneer basketball team has set the bar high for team success this year at Warren County High School.

Knocking the 23-win Pioneers off their perch as the best WCHS team will be tough, but there are three teams capable of doing it. In fact, this could be a huge spring for all local teams.

Let's set the bar on expected win totals for the spring, but first a few ground rules. I'm going to list the potential over/under, where people can guess if the team will finish above or below the total. These are also guesses for just the regular season.

**WCHS BASEBALL**  
**O/U: 19.5 WINS**

Trice Powers has a packed schedule, with the potential to play over 30 games. The Pioneers are coming off a 20-win season and return enough pitching (Tyler Hollingsworth, Trevor Collins and Brooks Helton) that should be able to keep Warren County in games as the new coach tinkers with his defense and batting order.

I have a good feeling about the Pioneers, so I'm going with **OVER** 19.5 wins for the Pioneers.

**WCHS SOFTBALL**  
**O/U: 14.5 WINS**

Don't think I'm sleeping on the Lady Pioneers, last year's District 6AAA regular season champions. If the win total for the Warren County girls is lower on the diamond than the Pioneers, it may only be because of fewer games.

Ashton Whiles may be the best all-around player in the district, and she leads a potent junior group which has won at every level. The Lady Pioneers are set up for sustained success in the coming years, so I think they'll go **OVER** 14.5 wins this season.

**WCHS SOCCER**  
**O/U: 9.5 WINS**

Matt Jackson has five straight CTC titles on his resume, but middle school success hasn't been a predictor for excellent high school teams for whatever reason. Still, he brings back a roster he knows well, including many Pioneers who contributed to a region run last year.

Jackson has 15 games on the slate in the regular season to get to double-digit wins. I'm going to say the Pioneers finish **UNDER** 10 wins (the schedule is daunting), but I think they win the district tournament. Speaking of championships though...

**SPRING TEAM TITLES**  
**O/U: 5.5**

Here's a special bonus category which ties in the WCMS baseball, softball and soccer teams. Counting the regular season and tournament, the six teams mentioned have 12 chances to win either CTC or District 6AAA crowns.

I think it's going to be a great spring for Warren County, so I'm going with at least **SIX** championships. Let's hope I'm right.

# Play ball

## Powers prepares Pioneer baseball

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

The Trice Powers era will begin soon.

The Pioneer baseball team has hit the field in the last few weeks in preparation of the season. Before getting started March 12, coach Powers would like to see one thing: less rain.

"Everyone in the state is behind right now because of the weather we have had, including us," said Powers. "The great facilities we have are giving us a chance to get better each day, which a lot of people don't have. Hopefully that pays off when we get started."

Wet conditions have forced Warren County to postpone scrimmages, as well as moved several practices inside. The effects of having little field time could linger into the season.

"I'm looking forward to getting more time on the field. We may not hit our stride until we are a few weeks in because of the rain," said Powers.

The Pioneers are hoping to get

field work in Sunday with a pair of scrimmages. The varsity team is scheduled to travel to Grundy County for a 2:30 p.m. scrimmage that will feature 14 innings.

The junior varsity team will stay home at Patrick Ramsey Field and welcome the Grundy County JV team for 10 inning of work at 2:30 p.m.

Deciding who will play with which team is something Powers is still deciding. He's not filled out of his entire varsity roster, which was to be expected as Warren County tries to replace the majority of its starters from a 23-win team.

One place the Pioneers will have plenty of experience is on the mound. Seniors Tyler Hollingsworth and Trevor Collins return after pitching in pressure-packed games last season. Hollingsworth was the starting pitcher for Warren County in its region loss to Ooltewah, while Collins had the ball against Cookeville in the district championship game.

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Jeffery Simmons photo  
**Jack Keele fires to first base during baseball practice last week. Keele and the Pioneers will get their season started Monday, March 12 against Stone Memorial at home.**

# WCHS ready for title defense



Jeffery Simmons photos  
**Junior Ashton Whiles will be a key component of the Lady Pioneer title defense. Whiles will pitch, play infield and provide a strong bat in the lineup for WCHS.**

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

After winning the district last season, the expectations couldn't be higher for the Lady Pioneer softball team.

Good thing coach Gooby Martin's team has more than enough talent on hand to live up to the hype.

"We're real excited about this team. They have worked extremely hard this offseason," said Martin. "This is the most athletic team I have coach from top to bottom. It's our job to teach these athletes consistent softball skills."

The Lady Pioneers will have to replace Motlow signees Skylar Youngblood and Neva Tackett in the lineup, but there's plenty of options for coach Martin. With a host of starters returning and several CTC championship-winning players littering the junior varsity team last season, Martin's depth will make for tough decisions on the lineup card.

"The competition will be tight for playing time. That's what good teams do: they push each other daily in practice and in games," said Martin.

The Lady Pioneers will be strong in the circle. Juniors Maddie Cantrell and Ashton Whiles have been pitching at the varsity level since their freshman years and have experience pitching in big games. Cantrell and Whiles helped pitch the Lady Pioneers to a 15-8



**Hailey Wood's strong defense in the middle of the infield will help the Lady Pioneers.**

record and district title last season.

Offensively, Warren County will rely on a trio of seniors. Hope Mullican and Kyra Hillis were two of the team's top hitters last year, while Lexie Chadwell – a defensive dynamo at first base – has made the most of her opportunities at the plate. Whiles also is counted on to be a factor in the middle of the order.

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