

Pioneers down Franklin South

BY **JEFFERY SIMMONS**
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Give Chance Hunter run support and he'll give you a win. It's been the easiest path to victory for the WCMS Pioneers

this season. Hunter earned the victory Monday as he held the Franklin South bats in check at home in a 5-1 victory for the Pioneers. Warren County (4-1) has won all three of Hunter's starts this sea-

son. Their ace was on the top of his game Monday, holding Franklin South to just one hit while the visitors struck out 10 times. Even Franklin South's lone run came on a fluky play. Hunter forced a pickle with two outs in the third with a solid pickoff move.

The Pioneers had the majority of their team between second and third in an attempt to get off the field, Franklin South's Trey Craig slid safely into third before a tag. Standing on the bag, Craig noticed nobody was covering home. He popped up and scored with ease.

It tied the game at 1-1, but the Pioneers quickly bounced back.

Will Vance's RBI single in the bottom of the frame broke the tie, then Hunter helped himself with an RBI groundout in the fourth to score Raleigh Gilliam.

Warren County put the game away in the fifth with two more runs. Vance and Kyle Johnson both reached base and came around on an error. Curtlan George singled and scored in the second to open the scoring.

The Pioneers made the trip to Franklin South Tuesday night. The score was unavailable at press time. Warren County will be back on its home field Thursday with a 6 p.m. game against Upperman.



Jeffery Simmons photo

Logan Earls swipes third during Monday's action.

Lions roar to win



Jeffery Simmons photo

Chase Newby helps lead the Covenant Academy Middle School Lions to a 5-3 victory Monday. The high school team also was successful at home at Pistle Park, winning 9-0. Both teams faced Academy of God.

Roadblocks await top seed

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Virginia earned the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament, its reward for one of the best seasons in Atlantic Coast Conference history.

The selection committee didn't do the Cavaliers any favors on their side of the bracket.

The No. 1 seed in the South Region, Virginia is in a bracket that includes Arizona, Kentucky, Cincinnati and Tennessee. Kentucky and Arizona are both in the top half of the Cavaliers' draw.

Virginia (31-2) opens against UMBC in Charlotte on Thursday.

"I told our players that everyone can play if they're in there," Virginia coach Tony Bennett said. "UMBC, I just

started to know more about them. You just see the teams in your bracket and there's some really quality teams."

Virginia set a school record for victories, won the conference tournament for the second time in five seasons and earned its sixth No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

The Cavaliers did it with no surefire NBA lottery picks and a shutdown defense that led the nation with the fewest points allowed per game.

But a gauntlet of quality teams could be waiting for them.

Kentucky coach John Calipari had the youngest of his always-young teams this season, but the Wildcats

(24-10) are playing their best basketball and won the SEC Tournament.

Arizona (27-7) also is peaking at the right time, following a Pac-12 regular-season title with a dominating win over Southern California in the conference tournament. The Wildcats also have multi-talented freshman big man Deandre Ayton, who had two monster games in the Pac-12 Tournament.

Cincinnati (3-4) also has a stifling defense and won the American Athletic Conference title.

Throw in Tennessee (25-8), the SEC tournament runner-up, and the South is loaded with roadblocks in Virginia's path to the Final Four.

WCHS softball

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Fellow senior Kyra Hillis followed with an RBI single, putting runners on the corners and the Lady Pioneers down by just one with no outs. Coach Martin turned to Taylor Swan to run for Hillis, and her speed would show up immediately.

On a night where she'd be the hero on both sides of the ball, freshman Rhealee Johnson connected on the first pitch she saw and sent it to the centerfield fence. Mullican trotted in from third, while Swan sped around the bases to give the Lady Pioneers the lead.

Warren County's rally was thwarted by a double play, but the game went back into the hands of Johnson.

The freshman entered the game in the third after Shelbyville scored

seven runs in the first two innings. Johnson stayed on the mound until the final inning, when she retired the first hitter before giving up a double.

Coach Martin decided to go with his veteran, as Whiles came in with the tying run in scoring position. She quickly forced a grounder back to her, which allowed her to keep the runner at second while recording the second out.

On the next pitch, a lazy flyball was snagged by Johnson at third to seal the victory.

It only seemed fitting the freshman would record the last out, as her calming presence and huge hit were vital in the victory.

"Rhealee was huge for us. She came in and pounded the strike zone," said Martin.

Warren County took a 2-0 lead in the first frame

when Wood scored on a passed ball and Whiles was able to come around on an error. Shelbyville followed by scoring the next eight runs, including seven off starter Maddie Cantrell.

Johnson entered in the third and navigated a potent Lady Eagle lineup for four-plus innings, surrendering a lone run in the sixth inning to earn the victory. Whiles got the save on three pitches.

Mikkola and Mullican finished with two hits apiece for the Lady Pioneers, while Mullican and Johnson shared the team lead with two RBIs apiece.

Warren County made its home debut Tuesday against Coffee County. The score was unavailable at press time. The Lady Pioneers will be back in action Thursday with a road game against Tullahoma.

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