

Pioneers battle to draw

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

Ties rarely leave either side happy, but Warren County Middle School soccer coach Ario Zadeh decided to look at the positives.

After battling Siegel to a 1-1 draw on their home field, the Pioneers were heaped with plenty of praise from their first-year coach.

"We always know the Murfreesboro schools are going to bring talented teams," said Zadeh. "I thought our kids did really well. We had a couple of great chances late to win, but just barely missed converting. It was a good step as we get into the heart of the schedule."

Jorge Vasquez provided the equalizer midway through the second half for the Pioneers, while Siegel was held off the scoreboard for the final 40 minutes as Warren County put on the clamps defensively.

The Pioneers went into halftime trailing as Siegel struck first. The Stars dominated action midway through the first half, ultimately getting several looks at the net. One shot look destined to break the early tie, as it flew over Brodie Cowans in the net.

The ball hit the top bar, bouncing back into play. The Stars rushed the net, getting a one-on-one opportunity against the Pioneer keeper. Cowans, who had to leave early in the game after a collision but returned to finish the game, had little chance to stop to short rebound shot as Siegel took an early lead.

Warren County shifted the momentum in the second half, getting aggressive offensively to put Siegel on its heels. The Pioneers kept a steady flow of fresh bodies attacking the net as coach Zadeh rotated strikers.

The fresh legs paid off with 15 minutes to play. A long lead pass left Vasquez in a race to the ball between two defenders. The Pioneer speedster won the race just before the Siegel keeper could come out to stop the ball, leaving Vasquez with a

split second to score.

He hit a shot just before two defenders and the keeper converged and it rolled into the lower right corner to knot the score.

Warren County would get a final chance to break the tie.

The Pioneers were rewarded a corner kick in the final minutes, a result of a rush that was pushed wide. The pass went right in front of the Siegel goal, with Uriah King right in the neighborhood. King leapt for a header, but just barely missed the ball before it was punched out.

The referee stopped the game moments later, ending the game in a draw. Zadeh believes the strong performance give the Pioneers some solid momentum entering the final weeks of Central Tennessee Conference play.

"We have some important games coming up in the CTC. I believe we can continue to perform at a high level against our conference foes," said Zadeh.

The Pioneers will have the rest of the week off before heading to White County next Monday, April 9. Kickoff in Sparta is set for 5:30 p.m.



Jeffery Simmons photos
Jorge Vasquez gets to the ball and scores just before the Siegel defense closes in. Vasquez's goal was the equalizer in a 1-1 tie Monday for the WCMS soccer team.



Uriah King just misses scoring on a header against Siegel Monday.

District W for WCHS baseball

BY **JEFFERY SIMMONS**
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Tyler Hollingsworth seems to save his best stuff for district games.

The senior hurler was dominant again Monday, throwing a complete game to help the WCHS baseball team down White County 6-1.

Hollingsworth allowed just four hits and one run – surrendered in the final inning after the Pioneers had built a commanding lead – for his fourth victory overall. For the season, Hollingsworth is 3-1 in district play, helping Warren County to 4-3 record overall against District 6AAA foes. In district games, the senior has a miniscule .913 ERA, allowing just three earned runs in 23 innings.

Warren County (7-8) gave their starter a big lead with a flurry of hitting in the third inning. Brandon Hennessee started the frame off with a single, then would score on a RBI double by Wesley Jennings driven to center-field.

Ethan Smith moved Jennings to third with an infield single, then a passed ball made it 2-0.

Cole Estes put runners on the corners with another infield single, both on bunts, to keep the Pioneer offense rolling with no outs.

Estes easily moved into scoring position, never drawing a throw while swiping second base. Warren County followed with back-to-back sacrifice fly balls from Jack Keele and Brooks Helton to make it 4-0.

Hollingsworth had to pitch out of a jam in the third after a hit batter and error put two runners in scoring position with one out. The senior fell behind Drew Young 2-1, but calmly delivered two straight called strikes for the second out. David Smith followed with a groundout, eliminating the scoring opportunity.

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Lady Pioneers rolling

SIMMONS SAYS

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Right before the start of the regular season, I made several predictions for the WCHS spring sports teams. It looks like my crystal ball may have had a crack, because my prophecies seem about as useless now as the hundreds of Kawhi Leonard will win the 2018 MVP columns written last fall.

The WCHS baseball team would need to win over 70 percent of its games the rest of the way to top 20 regular-season wins, while my guess that we'd see at least six titles combined in the CTC or District 6AAA looks like a severe case of homeritis.

Right now, one may be optimistic.

I may have nailed the WCHS soccer team winning less than 10 games, but who wants to celebrate that?

The only place I can hang my hat is deciding to put my faith in the Warren County High School softball team. They've made me look smart.

The Lady Pioneers are not only the best WCHS spring team thus far, they're also a blast to watch. Coach Gooby Martin said prior to the season this was his most athletic team, and it shows in the way they play.

Ashton Whiles is the Lady Pioneer prototype, an uber-skilled player who does damage in the field and at the plate.

The junior slugger has already hit four home runs this season, including a two-homer performance Friday against Huntland. To make the feat even

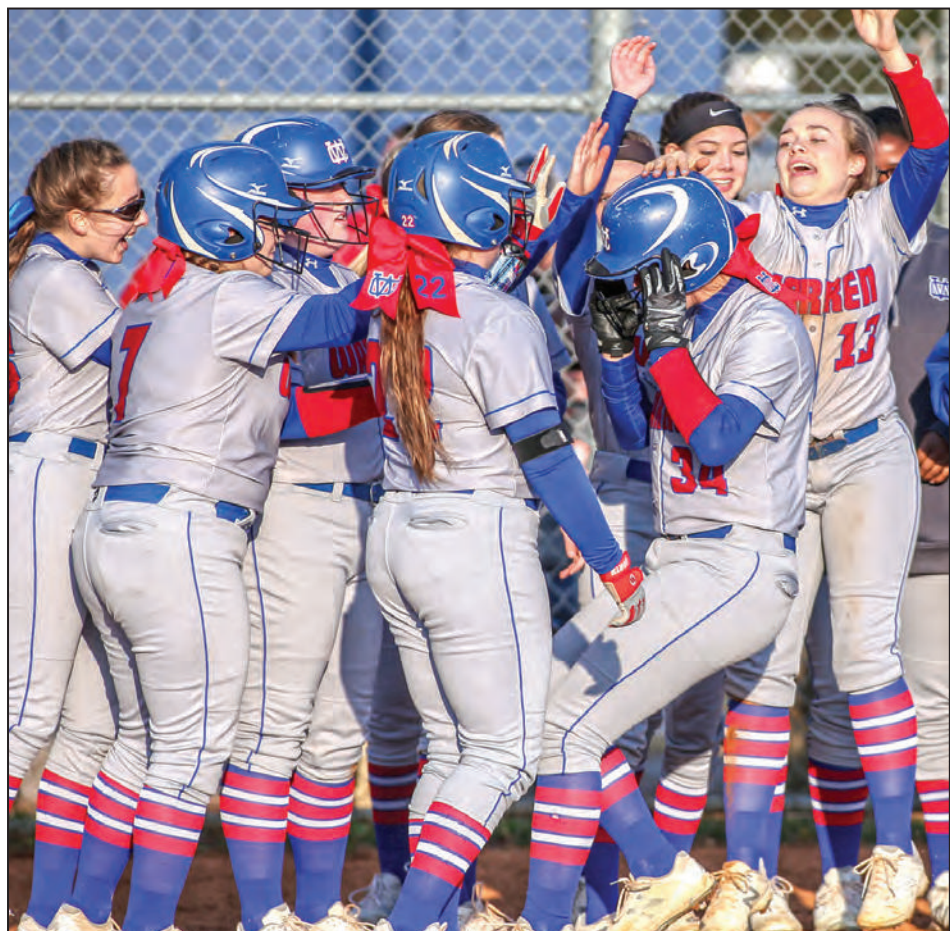
more impressive, Whiles hit both her round-trippers in the same inning.

It's not the just the bat that makes Whiles special though. She's equally as talented in the circle, where Martin deploys her in spells just to keep his ace sharp. When it's money time in the May, expect Whiles to get the call in the circle and in the heart of the order. She's the Lady Pioneer equivalent to Babe Ruth.

But Whiles doesn't win on her own. The Lady Pioneers are deep and talented, with a roster of multi-sport stars dotting the lineup.

Emily Mikkola is a starter in three sports: volleyball, basketball and softball. She may be at her best on the diamond though, as evidenced by her Ted Williams-esque .400 batting average in 13 games.

Continued on **2B**



Jacob Dodd photo
Ashton Whiles, No. 34, is swarmed after hitting a home run against Huntland last week. Whiles has been a driving force behind the Lady Pioneers starting the season 10-4, showing her power at the plate and precision in the pitching circle.



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