

Tough two games



Jeffery Simmons photo

Kendall Patrick and the WCMS Pioneers ran into a hot Tullahoma team this week. The Pioneers fell 15-0 and 7-1 on back-to-back nights to their CTC foe.

WCMS softball wins eighth straight game

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

Start classifying the Lady Pioneers as a renewable energy source. They have plenty of power on their own.

Madison Hollis and Bella Cantrell each hit home runs Tuesday, leading the Warren County Middle School softball team to a 7-0 victory over the DeKalb County Lady Saints.

Warren County (10-1) won for the eighth straight time, again using the long ball to its advantage. Last outing, Marli McBride hit a grand slam and inside-the-park home runs. The Lady Pioneers followed with big flies by Hollis and Cantrell, two impressive shots according to coach Joe Damon.

"Madison hit it to left center. It was still going up when it hit the scoreboard," said Damon. "Bella came up later and flew one out to straight center."

Hollis' shot came in the second, belting a three-run home run on a 3-0 pitch that pushed the Lady Pioneers ahead 4-0. Cantrell's came on the first pitch of the fourth, which was followed by a RBI double from Shelby Roberts and RBI groundout to Hollis to provide for the final score.

Warren County took a 1-0



Jeffery Simmons photo

Bella Cantrell, pictured from a prior game, hit a home run in Tuesday's 7-0 win over DeKalb County.

lead in the first inning on a run-scoring single from Halo Armstrong.

Danika Reno dominated in the circle to earn the victory, going the first three innings and allowing just one hit while striking out five. Damon had high praise for his starter, who improved to 6-1.

"Danika hit her spots and pitched ahead of the count," said Damon. "It was her best performance in the circle this year."

Hollis came in and pitched the final two innings, striking out four more Lady Saints.

Warren County is set to finish with a set of games against White County and Franklin North, both Central Tennessee Conference opponents. The Lady Pioneers will play White County at home Monday, with the game serving as eighth-grade night. The first pitch is set for 5 p.m.

Pruitt not afraid to make changes with Vols

KNOXVILLE (AP) — Tennessee's first spring under new coach Jeremy Pruitt is noteworthy for what isn't being said.

Pruitt hasn't mentioned a single player by name at any of his past three post-practice sessions with reporters, which lasted a combined total of more than 45 minutes.

Even when he's asked about a specific player, Pruitt generally responds by referring to that

player's entire position group.

"As soon as you single one out, there ain't no telling what he's going to do the next day," the former Alabama defensive coordinator said. "So I figured we'll wait until we see a whole body of work and see where it goes from there."

That reflects just one of the changes a new coaching staff has brought to Tennessee this spring.

Pruitt replaced Butch Jones, who spent his first preseason car-

rying a microphone in practice and calling out players when they did something right or wrong. Jones was fired last November after going 34-27 in five seasons.

Jones frequently had music playing during practice. The only music that could be heard at Tennessee's Tuesday afternoon workout with Pruitt was coming from the baseball stadium across the street.

"We already just got 20 hours in

a week that we can coach them, so I darned sure don't want music out there where they can't hear what I'm saying," Pruitt said.

Even if Pruitt isn't mentioning any players by name to reporters, players say he's still getting his point across.

"He wants the best out of everyone," safety Nigel Warrior said. "He doesn't expect less."

Tennessee players say position meetings are going longer than

before. They say staffers are letting them know exactly what's expected.

"Everything is about accountability," offensive tackle Drew Richmond said. "You've got to master your job, master what you do. That's what they're preaching, is when everybody is on the (same) page mastering what they're doing at their position, we're going to hit on all cylinders."

WCMS softball

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With Johnson shutting down the Warriorettes, Warren County began chipping away at the lead.

Ashton Whiles continued her power surge to start the fourth inning. The junior fouled off back-to-back potential third strikes before

launching a shot over the left-field fence for her fifth home run.

The solo shot made it 6-2, but the Lady Pioneers were just getting warmed up at the plate.

Emily Mikkola, who raised her average to .424 with a 3-for-5 night, started a huge rally in the fifth with a lead-off single. Senior Kyra Hillis fol-

lowed with a one-out RBI double, sending one deep to center field.

Elia Atterson continued the surge, roping a triple into right field to make it 6-4.

After intentionally walking Whiles and hitting Johnson, MaKenna Mason stepped to the plate with the bases load-

ed with a one-out RBI double, sending one deep to center field.

Errors pushed the Lady Pioneers into the lead, with two throwing errors bringing across two runs for the home team.

Mikkola made it back to the plate and immediately ripped a shot into right field, allowing two more runs to score.

By the time Hope

Mullican brought Mikkola in with a single, Warren County led 11-6.

The nine-run outburst, the most runs the Lady Pioneers have scored in an inning this season, was a product of doing something coach Martin works on everyday.

"I think our hitters made adjustments their second and third at-bats. That's something we preach daily. It makes this group really fun to watch

because they'll play to the final out," said Martin.

Following a lead-off walk, Johnson struck out the side in the sixth, squashing an chance for White County to regain momentum.

Warren County tacked on two more runs in the bottom of the frame, getting a RBI single from Grace Rains and sac fly from Wood to grow its advantage.

Johnson made quick work of the Warriorette lineup in the seventh, ending the game by striking out Parker swinging.

The Lady Pioneers went on the road Thursday in hopes of earning another District 6AAA victory over Stone Memorial. The result was unavailable at press time. Check Sunday's *Southern Standard* for more information.

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