

SIMMONS SAYS

**JEFFERY
SIMMONS**



A rivalry is brewing

When a string of one-sided humblings turn into a legitimate rivalry, it can happen overnight.

The Boston Red Sox were the New York Yankees' little brother for decades, then the 2004 comeback from 3-0 happened. The Vols had lost for a decade to Alabama, but none of that losing seemed to stop Peyton Manning. Last year, the Predators majestic run to the Stanley Cup final started by humiliating the Chicago Blackhawks, a team and fan base that reveled in taking over Nashville.

And now, during the 2017-18 sports year, somebody forgot to tell Warren County High School teams they are supposed to lose to Cookeville.

The tide has shifted in District 6AAA, starting in the winter with basketball and translating over into the spring on the diamond.

Basketball began bucking the trend, punctuated by a senior night victory in February. If Dave Roberts stealing second was the catalyst for the Red Sox turnaround in 2004, then Tyree Ladet's game-winning layup to win 58-56 would be the matching moment for Warren County.

The boys team took 2-of-3 from the Cavaliers this year, reversing a trend where Cookeville had won nine of the last 10 games.

The Lady Pioneers also won two against Cookeville this year after losing 10 of the previous 11 matchups. Tyra Wright took particular glee in dominating the Lady Cavs, throwing up a near triple double in the district tournament to end Cookeville's season with a 52-42 loss.

Warren County has continued to get the better of the matchups this spring.

Coach Trice Powers made his biggest statement since taking over the baseball program last week, sweeping a two-game series with the Cavaliers. Before the victories, Warren County lost 17 of 19 to Cookeville, with one win being the district championship game in 2014.

Two days after the Pioneers planted their flag near the top of the District 6AAA standings, the Lady Pioneers followed suit. Warren County rallied from an 8-2 deficit to beat Cookeville 13-9 while in pursuit of back-to-back district titles.

The Lady Pioneers may have been a year early on the trend. In 2017, the Warren County softball team claimed its first district title, clinching with a 20-3 thrashing of the Lady Cavaliers.

So between the four teams, Warren County has won seven of 11 games against Cookeville. It's more impressive when considering Cookeville has won 53 of the previous 60 meetings in those four sports dating back to the 2012-13 school year.

It may be past making progress for the Pioneers and Lady Pioneers. It's time to start calling this a real rivalry.

Diamond classic

Lady Pioneers win battle of top CTC teams

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

One streak had to end when Franklin North came to town to face the Warren County Middle School softball team Monday. The Lady Gators were undefeated in Central Tennessee Conference play, while the Lady Pioneers had won 10 straight.

Madison Hollis made sure Warren County continued its domination. Hollis threw a four-hit shutout and added an RBI as the Lady Pioneers downed Franklin North 4-0 on their home field.

"Madison controlled the ball and hit her spots well," said Warren County coach Joe Damon. "We had a couple errors, but also made some plays defensively that took away hits. Our defense needs to continue to play lights out through our last games and the tournament."

Hollis was her usual dominant self, mixing in power to match her precision to keep the Lady Gators off balance. The shutout was her second this season, improving her overall record to a perfect 7-0.

Warren County (13-1) broke through in the second inning, thanks in large part to the quick thinking of Danika Reno.



Jeffery Simmons photo
Juju Pyburn throws to first for an out during the early innings of a matchup with Franklin North. WCMS won 4-0, its 11th straight victory.

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Jeffery Simmons photo
Jordan Ramirez releases a shot between three Franklin North defenders. Ramirez had a goal in an 8-0 WCMS win Monday.

Pioneers end regular season with blowout

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

Central Tennessee Conference soccer teams need to take notice. The Pioneers are starting to look dominant again.

Warren County, winner of the last five CTC titles, has started to round into shape as the season has gone along. The Pioneers turned into their most impressive performance Monday, downing Franklin North 8-0 to end the season on a high note.

"The guys have really bought in to their roles. They have over-

come adversity and fought back from being behind in games and some tough losses to prevail now," said coach Ario Zadeh. "They've learned to trust one another and believe in themselves."

The Pioneers look completely different from the team which lost their season opener in Shelbyville 5-0. Warren County hasn't lost a CTC game since, going 5-0 and outscoring its conference opponents 28-3.

The visiting Gators had little chance of slowing down the Pioneers Monday. Warren County built a 3-0 lead by halftime, then

piled up five more goals in the second half on a successful eighth-grade night.

Yesh Picruiz got the scoring started on a corner kick. His shot made it into the box, escaping the reach of the keeper and bouncing into the net.

Joan Garcia made it 2-0 shortly after, beating almost the entire Gator defense on his own on the way to the goal. Garcia got a run down the sideline before angling toward the goal down the line. Despite the defense converging, Garcia was able to get a quick look, beating the keeper on the short side for his first of two

goals.

Jordan Ramirez made it 3-0 right before halftime, firing in a point-blank shot which ricocheted off a defender and through the hands of the keeper to net another Pioneer goal.

Warren County didn't waste time getting back on the offensive when the second half started. After nearly getting a goal when a ball slipped through the Gator keeper's legs, only to be stopped just short of the line, Uriah King made the next Pioneer shot count.

Continued on **3B**



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