

Rugby splits senior night

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

It wasn't a sport they grew up playing, but the seniors who were honored Friday at Nunley Stadium still love rugby as if they were born to play the game.

Both Warren County High School rugby teams played their final home games Friday, with the Lady Pioneers falling to visiting Spring Hill 25-10 before the Pioneers crushed Lebanon 41-5.

"These seniors are just super good kids," said girls rugby coach George Smartt. "Four of the girls were on our state championship team three years ago. They're all tough, hardworking and are the best kids you can find."

The Lady Pioneers honored seniors India Fann, Molly Hale, Bec Loftis, Lila Loftis, Kennedy Goforth and Kathryn

Stiles. Kyra Garrison, who was unable to attend Friday, was honored before a home match last week.

Goforth and Lila Loftis got a special memory on their senior nights. Both scored on their home turf, with Loftis powering in before halftime and Goforth crossing the line in the second half.

Fann, who joined the team for her senior year, fell in the love with the game almost instantly.

"It's such a fun sport to play. The best part about it is the aggressiveness," said Fann, who battled injuries in her first three years before getting to play this season.

Coach Johnathan Smith, in his second year with the Pioneers, got to send off eight seniors with a big win. It seemed all but assured from the first whistle.



Jeffery Simmons photo

Lakiah Babb breaks a long run during Friday's rugby match at Nunley Stadium.

Continued on 4B



Jeffery Simmons photo

Cole Estes was one of three seniors to be honored Friday at Patrick Ramsey Field. The Pioneers lost for the third straight outing, falling 11-6 to Coffee County.

Raiders rock Pioneers

BY **JEFFERY SIMMONS**
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A roller coaster season for the Warren County High School baseball team has hit a downswing.

The Pioneers fell for the third straight time Friday, falling 11-6 to Coffee County on senior night.

Warren County (11-11) had won six straight before falling at Shelbyville last Friday. The Pioneers proceeded to drop a 9-1 decision Thursday at Mt. Juliet, then returned home and were unable to top the visiting Raiders.

Cole Estes, one of three seniors honored on the night, took the loss for the Pioneers. Estes was tagged for five runs in his three innings of work, with the Raiders turning eight hits and two free passes into five runs.

Tyler Hollingsworth, who had the game off, and Wesley Jennings were also honored during the pregame. A senior night photo can be found on 3B.

Omari Harris finished the game on the mound for the Pioneers. Harris gave up six runs over four innings, only two earned, while allowing seven

hits.

The Pioneers trailed from the outset, with Coffee County getting two runs in the first frame. Nathaniel Tate provided the spark, hitting an RBI double and scoring on a passed ball to make it 2-0.

Warren County struck back with a run of its own in the first – courtesy of Jack Keele's RBI single – before Coffee County extended its lead with three runs in the third.

By the time the Raiders tacked on five more in the fourth, the Pioneers had dug a 10-1 hole.

Brooks Helton and Brandon Hennessee helped the cause with RBI groundouts in the third, while an errant pick-off throw in the fourth allowed both John Garrett and Harris to score to make it 10-5.

It was as close as the Pioneers would get. Coffee County added to its total with a run in the sixth on an error, then survived a seventh-inning RBI single by Ethan Smith to close out the victory.

Warren County will try to get back on track Monday when the Pioneers welcome Rhea County. The pivotal District 6AAA matchup is set to start at 6 p.m.

Cavaliers edge Pioneers on PK

BY **JEFFERY SIMMONS**
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Settling for a moral victory was the last thing the Warren County High School soccer team wanted as an outcome of its trip to Cookeville.

With the memory of a 6-0 loss to the Cavaliers still fresh, the Pioneers had their sights set on flipping the script. Instead, Cookeville defended its home turf with a 1-0 win, the only goal coming on a penalty kick in the first half.

"We played a great game. Neither team really had many chances," said Warren County coach Matt Jackson. "I wish we could've gotten a goal as well, obviously. It

was tough. You never want to see it end on a call."

The ball rarely left the midfield for most of the first half. Both teams struggled to mount attacks, leaving the battle for possession to stay near the center of the field.

Opportunity struck for the Cavaliers in the late stages of the first half. Heitor Alves made a break into the zone, with Pioneer defenders looking to swarm the ball. A foul was called in the box, giving Alves a penalty shot.

Josiah Jackson made a valiant effort on the PK, but Alves' shot was out of reach and Cookeville took a 1-0 lead.

It held the rest of the way. Warren County mounted

two late pushes in the second half, but was halted each time before getting a clean shot on net. Cookeville was able to hold on for the victory, one that all but assured the Cavaliers of a district title.

Coach Jackson thinks the improvement from the first matchup to the second speaks volumes and hopes maybe a third time would be a charm.

"I hope we can see them again. It wouldn't be until the district final, so hopefully we can be there with them," said Jackson.

The Pioneers will get a chance at a District 6AAA victory Tuesday when the team travels to Rhea County. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

Hitting the target



Jeffery Simmons photo

Lane Jones fires a strike for the Broncos during Friday's doubleheader. Boyd is in the midst of a competitive MTAC season.



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