

WCHS anglers compete at state

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

If fish are biting, then it won't take long for the Warren County angling team to come around.

Members of the Pioneer angling team descended on Old Hickory Lake last weekend, taking part in a two-day state championship.

Pioneer standouts Samuel and Matthew Vandagriff were once again near the top of the field, finishing second out of 162 teams who cast the reels in search of the biggest bass. The brothers bagged five fish each day, with a total combined weight of 27.33 pounds.

The Vandagriffs held the lead after the first day, but Ezra Smith and Devin Howard surged on the second day to win the event, bringing in a combined weight of 32.73 pounds.

The Pioneers had eight teams compete in the event. Ethan Harris and Harley Muncey (10.37 pounds) finished 64th, followed by Jeff McCormick and Curtis Grissom (9.72 lbs., 69th), Will Prater and Aiden Grissom (9.41lbs., 71st), Blake Delong and Asa Robertson (9.19 lbs.,

74th), Lane Lassister and Johnathan Walls (8.52 lbs., 77th), Jaymeson Hale and Easton Snider (7.46 lbs., 86th) and Jacob Frizzell and Trace Pack (1.17 lbs., 148th).

Along with taking in second over the weekend, the Vandagriffs were awarded for being the best bass fishing team in the state this year. The Vandagriffs won the TN Bass Nation points race, blowing away the competition by 31 points.

The brothers won on Center Hill Lake, took second in the state tournament and Battle of the Chick, and never finished lower than fourth in a tournament. The points race prize was a \$2,000 scholarship to any school, along with a \$40,000 scholarship offer to Bethel University. The brothers also took home \$700 for second place.

Samuel capped the day by receiving the Hunter Northcutt Memorial merit scholarship worth \$3,000.

The Vandagriffs will take part in the Bassmaster Texas Fest in two weeks, an event Samuel qualified for when he was named an All-American. The duo will also compete in the Bassmaster Nationals in August.



Photos provided

Asa Robertson hits Old Hickory Lake early over the weekend to compete in the state championship. Robertson was one of 16 Pioneers to take part in the event.



Matthew and Samuel Vandagriff placed second in the state tournament. Pictured are, from left, Matthew, state director David Lowery and Samuel.

Baseball

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The sophomore pitched out of a jam in the fourth after allowing an RBI double, striking out Eli McDonald on three pitches with runners on second and third.

The Pioneers got two more runs in the sixth on an error, ending the Warrior season with a two-game sweep.

Cookeville swept Rhea County on the other side of the bracket, setting up Wednesday's championship game.

The Pioneers were up to the task, but Joshua South was too much to overcome.

The dominant senior shut down Warren County, while Jacob Stamps provided the lone run on a solo homer in the fourth.

"One pitch was the difference," said Powers. "We didn't do enough at the plate, plus their guy was good."

"It's the third time we've seen South and that's probably the best he's been. Brooks (Helton) and Dylan (Ward) threw it well, we just couldn't scratch one across."

Helton took the loss, surrendering a two-out solo shot in the fourth for his lone run while striking out three. Ward didn't allow a run in his two innings of work.

Ethan Smith led the offense with two hits, while Adams and Estes had one hit each.

For more information on the region tournament, check Sunday's *Standard*.

WCHS softball

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"Maddie was huge for us. She really dominated while she was in the game," said coach Gooby Martin, whose team is now 5-2 in the last two seasons against Rhea County and handed the Lady Eagles both their losses – by a combined score of 19-2 - in the double-elimination district tournament.

The Lady Pioneers used the long ball to give Cantrell plenty of run support. Emily Mikkola launched a solo shot in the first inning, launching the third pitch of the game over the left-field wall. It was part of a two-hit, three-RBI night for the junior shortstop, who added a two-run single in the fourth.

Ashton Whiles highlighted a five-run fourth inning with a monster blast, again sending a hanging pitch to left field. It was Whiles' seventh home run of the season and 12th of her career.

Kyra Hillis added a two-



Jeffery Simmons photo

Emily Mikkola tries to turn two against Cookeville while second baseman Hailey Wood backs up the play.

run double in the second, while Hailey Wood, Hope Mullican and Lexie Chadwell all added RBI hits in the blowout.

Freshman Rhealee Johnson pitched the final

two-plus innings, holding the Lady Eagles without a hit to seal the deal.

"We swung the bats really well," said Martin. "These girls will always play hard until the end."

The victory propelled the Lady Pioneers into the district championship, where Warren County would need to beat Cookeville twice to earn the title.

Step one was completed Wednesday night.

The offense continued to surge for the Lady Pioneers, who topped Cookeville 15-9

to set up a second title game. The final meeting occurred Thursday night and was still underway at press time.

Mikkola continued her hot streak at the plate, collecting four hits and two RBIs. Bri Young also provided a big boost, finishing with three hits and four RBIs, including a solo homer in

the sixth to make it 12-9.

Wood also went deep against Cookeville, with her solo shot expanding the Lady Pioneer lead to 9-6 in the third.

Warren County bust the game open in the second, erupting for eight runs on seven hits. Mikkola, Mullican, Hillis, Young, MaKenna Mason and Elia Atterson all had RBIs as the Lady Pioneers built an 8-1 advantage

Cookeville narrowed the gap to 10-9 going into the fifth, but Whiles gave the Lady Pioneers some breathing room with a two-out RBI single.

Mikkola, Hillis and Young helped put the game away with RBIs in the seventh.

Whiles earned the win, pitching the final five innings and allowing three runs while striking out three.

The Lady Pioneers will be in action in the region tournament next week. The opponent and location will be determined after the outcome of Thursday's game. Check Sunday's *Standard* for more details.

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