

SIMMONS SAYS

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My perfect sports weekend

What is the perfect line-up?

It's a common question asked this time of the year. With Bonnaroo and CMA Fest both within earshot of McMinnville music lovers, fans daydream of which artists they'd most want to see over a four-day festival.

My favorite suggestions are when people suspend belief, conjuring up time machines to bring back to life their favorite acts. If we're going there, give me Rat Pack Frank Sinatra, skinny Elvis, the Temptations (with David Ruffin) and the Avett Brothers.

But really, if I had a time machine to control events so I could see them over a four-day span, I'd take myself to all my favorite sporting events once again. My four-day event would look a little something like this:

DAY 1 – SEPT. 19, 1998 TENNESSEE VS. FLORIDA

Most people may prefer the Florida State game a few months later, when the Vols hoisted their first-ever BCS championship trophy (Yes young kids, Tennessee was good at football at one point in time). Me though? Give me the 20-17 OT victory against the Gators.

This game is easily influenced by the fact I was there live as a 12-year-old with my dad. There's moments of true joy you'll remember the rest of your life. One of those for me is the shared moment with my dad the seconds after Collins Cooper's short field goal sailed wide in overtime.

DAY 2 – APRIL 22, 1995 - THE NFL DRAFT

Please let me flash back to that time just so I can convince myself to not become a Jacksonville Jaguars fan because they drafted James "Little Man" Stewart. I'll bring my iPhone just so I can show highlights of Blake Bortles to younger me.

DAY 3 – SEPT. 22, 2012 – WCHS VS. COOKEVILLE VOLLEYBALL

To this day, it's my favorite game I've covered since I started doing this job in February 2010. It is the shining example of what happens in Warren County when you take a talented group of players who all push each other to the highest level possible. The added flair came when the Lady Pioneers rallied from a 2-0 deficit to defeat Cookeville for the first time in 26 years.

I was given a signed volleyball from that 40-win squad following the season, as a token of their appreciation of my coverage. It'll probably be the one thing I take from this job long after I've stopped writing.

DAY 4 – JUNE 15, 2014 – SPURS VS. HEAT

We weren't getting through this without a Spurs reference. This was the night the Spurs dethroned the King, and the legend of Kawhi Leonard began to grow. I've watched this game probably 100 times in the last four years. Chances are I'll watch it at least 100 more times.



Jeffery Simmons photo

Carter Lee couldn't help but celebrate after his inside-the-park home run. Lee helped T&M Farms sweep a doubleheader Friday with Leann Cordell.

Jumping for joy

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

As Carter Lee crossed the plate following his inside-the-park home run, he couldn't help but celebrate. Jumping up and down, he was greeted by his coach telling him "he was their MVP." Lee didn't know what it meant, but he was sure if he kept it up he'd deliver W's.

Lee performed like the most valuable player Friday while leading T&M Farms to two wins in the boys 7-8 machine-pitch league at McMinnville Civic Center. T&M Farms downed Edward Jones Leann Cordell in a doubleheader, winning 16-4 before following it up with a 9-6 victory.

Lee's impact was everywhere. The talented pitcher

set the tone early, turning the middle of the field into a no-fly zone in the first inning by snagging two line drives and turning a hard grounder into a putout.

He followed with a big blast in the second inning, showing off blazing speed as he scored standing up on a two-run, inside-the-park home run to make it 3-1.

Lee would go on to add a RBI double in the fourth and a two-run triple in the fifth to finish a single short of the cycle in the blowout.

Braylon Burch added three hits for T&M Farms, including his own inside-the-park home run in the first. Brently Jones also finished with three hits, while Tucker Gann, Case Livesay and Malachi Wilcher had two hits each. Aden Johnson and Dylan Casey had one hit apiece.

Nicolas Castenada and Danny Dillman led Leann Cordell with two hits apiece, followed by Jacob Graves, Jaxton Smith, Caleb Hawthorne, Harrison Sparkman and Zeke Laxson with one hit each.

Wilcher provided the big boost in the second game offensively, with his two-run, inside-the-park home run jump-starting a six-run second inning for T&M Farms. Lee also had two extra-base hits in the outing, while Burch finished a perfect night at the plate with three more hits. Aaron Cannon added two hits to improve his team to 5-3.

Leann Cordell, which fell to 2-8, jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the first and got hits from Graves, Castenada, Smith, Hawthorne, Dillman, Declan McAbee and Kipton Davis.

Power surge

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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All anybody had to hear was the sound. There was no doubt Aiden Miller had gotten all of the ball.

Miller, who was recently named to WCMS baseball team, highlighted Moose Lodge's 8-1 victory over Custom Collision Friday with his second home run of the 9-11 junior league season.

The star shortstop jumped on a 2-0 pitch from Paige Sweeton, sending it sailing to deep left field. The blast spotted Moose Lodge a 3-0 lead in the first, an advantage which would grow to six by the end of the frame.

Cameron Glover doubled and scored in the first as well, while Jaelyn Munoz knocked in two runs with a double.

Custom Collision had a chance to claw back in the second, with Preston Melton slapping a two-out RBI single before being

joined by two teammates on walks. Andrew Key, who earned the victory, was able to pitch out of the jam with a swinging strikeout, one of four for the starter.

Key and Garryn Duggin added the final touches in the second, reaching on walks before stealing around and taking home on passed balls.

The victory improved Moose Lodge to 7-2, while Custom Collision fell to 0-6.

In other action at Sam Martin Field, Brent's Computers ran its record to 9-0 with an 11-1 win over Bob Young's Nursery.

T-Bone Adams was victorious on the mound, striking out seven in four innings of work. Adams added a two-run double, one of six hits for Brent's Computers. Corban Felton finished 3-for-3, while Brody Womack had two singles.

Braxton Gibbs had the lone hit for Bob Young's Nursery, which fell to 3-6 with Friday's loss.



Jeffery Simmons photo

Aiden Miller's two-run home run helped Moose Lodge win 8-1 Friday over Custom Collision.



James Clark photo

Allison Cripps, pictured after winning Homecoming Queen in the fall, received the leadership award last week at the Tennessean sports banquet.

Born leader

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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Leadership comes natural to Allison Cripps. Stepping up to a challenge isn't something she shies away from. It's what she strives to do.

The recent Warren County High School graduate, and daughter of Air Force Col. Jason Cripps, was honored for her ability to take charge Monday when she received the leadership award at the Tennessean sports banquet in Nashville.

A senior captain on the soccer team, her coach Todd Willmore nominated Cripps for the prestigious state award. Willmore noticed immediately Cripps had the qualities of a leader, most noticeably her drive to make the people around her successful without needing credit.

"She is a kind and caring individual who seeks to build others up. She's

one of the most selfless leaders I've ever been around," said Willmore. "She leads by example. As a result, both her peers and adults enjoy and respect her greatly."

It's not just on the field where Cripps excels though. The student body president teamed with her classmate Hope Mullican to spearhead a fundraiser in September for Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. The project raised over \$4,000 in hurricane relief.

She also was a driving force behind charitable events which helped raise over \$3,000 for Baylor Bramble, a former Siegel football player who was injured while playing at Nunley Stadium in 2015. Cripps was part of the senior class which presented the Bramble family with a check on homecoming, the same night Cripps was named Homecoming Queen.

Continued on **3B**




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