

SIMMONS SAYS

**JEFFERY
SIMMONS**



Rivalries increase intensity

The look on Hailey Wood's face said it all.

With her Lady Pioneers locked in a dogfight at home against Covenant Academy, her goal was simple – to win at all costs. The mission itself wasn't as easy, especially against a Lady Lion team looking to plant its flag as the top local team.

Wood helped Warren County rally to victory, flying around and putting her body on the line for the win. After the match, her shoulder was wrapped up, a small price to pay for keeping Warren County atop the pecking order locally.

During the match, Emma Madewell let her game do the talking. The Lady Lion leader was poised and confident, unafraid of taking on the local school with thousands more kids roaming the halls. Madewell was a star, displaying quick feet, even quicker hands and a killer instinct at the net that nearly led to a big upset.

Rising stakes, two veteran leaders giving their all, young players finding their way to contribute – the match was everything you'd want from a local rivalry.

Covenant and Boyd have started facing off in the last few years, but usually Warren County is out of their league – literally. Covenant and Boyd play in the Middle Tennessee Athletic Conference, fueling their natural rivalry while competing in the league standings. Warren County, on the other hand, plays in the TSSAA.

The three programs likely won't ever be on equal footing, but it's fun when games like this occur to add a little extra incentive on both sides.

The first iteration of this happened a few years back, when Warren County and Boyd met on the basketball court. At the time, Chris Sullens was coaching the Broncos and proclaimed his group the best in the county. In the loser's bracket of a Christmas tournament, the Pioneers put together their best game of the season, dismantling the Broncos to assure their local standing.

Sullens is leading the Pioneers now. Perhaps one day he'll get the chance to snuff out another challenger to the county throne.

The best chance to fuel a local rivalry would be if the school system built another high school, spreading the nearly 2,000 kids currently at WCHS over two locations.

County pride would be on the line every time those two schools matched up. And even better, there would always be a local winner.

Winning is always fun, but taking home a victory in a bitter rivalry game is what makes sports great.

Locals clash on court

WCHS tops Lady Lions

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

Midway through the second set Monday night, senior Hailey Wood flipped a switch. The rest of the Lady Pioneers followed.

With Wood flying around making plays, Warren County rallied to a three-set victory over the visiting Covenant Lady Lions.

"I was tired of losing," said Wood, summing up how she found the energy to rally the Lady Pioneers.

Warren County had dropped the opening set 25-21 to Covenant and was staring at a loss if it couldn't improve after a slow start to the second set. The teams were locked at 8-8 before Warren County began to find its footing.

Wood was in the middle of the closeout in the second set, getting a quick pass to Samantha Jennings for a slam to make it 20-13. Wood added a point later when she spotted the Lady Lions scrambling and promptly dumped over a shot at the net. By the time the senior made a diving save to gain another point, Warren County led 23-15.

Jennings followed with an ace before freshman Danika Reno finished the set with a kill.

"We definitely had a slow start," said Lady Pioneer coach Katie Rogers. "We looked very sloppy in the first game and let a lot of balls hit the floor that should not have. Silly mistakes cost us the first game."

All the mistakes had faded by the deciding third game.

Behind senior Marah Wanamaker's serving, Warren County scored three quick points – prompting an early Covenant timeout.

Continued on **2B**



Jeffery Simmons photos
Above, Marah Wanamaker tries to get a spike through the Covenant defense of Sarah Sharpe, left, and Arianna Hutchins. Wanamaker had a team-high nine kills to help the Lady Pioneers claw past Covenant in a three-set thriller.

At left, senior Hailey Wood sets over her head during the local matchup against the Lady Lions. Wood, a senior, took over the match in the second set after Covenant won the opening set against Warren County. Wood is pictured with Daniko Reno, left, and Megan Davis.

Pioneer pep rally set for Thursday



File photo
Pioneer fans are asked to pack Nunley Stadium Thursday night for the Warren County football pep rally. The WCHS, WCMS and local youth football players will be in attendance, along with cheerleaders and dancers from WCMS and WCHS. The WCHS band will also be at the pep rally, which begins at 6:30 p.m.

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