

## SIMMONS SAYS

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## A victory worth savoring

It's not a feeling the Pioneers get to experience a lot. Elation filled the sideline in Sparta when Eric Haywood went high for an interception in the final minutes, securing a 20-13 victory over the Warriors.

Once the team broke the victory formation and went through the post-game handshakes, players flocked to their families. A celebration ensued.

The Pioneers are going to enjoy this one.

"It feels great. Nothing is sweeter than a victory, especially when they're hard to come by," said coach Tom Moore, who pulled double duty as a play caller Friday night.

Friday's jubilation was in stark contrast to the week before, when the Pioneers weren't able to hold a lead late against the DeKalb County Tigers.

The formula wasn't much different in Sparta, the lead just held up this time.

The Pioneers leaned heavily on CJ Taylor and Haywood again, hoping the talented tailbacks could carry the team to victory.

Taylor was the first-half hero, scoring on a 15-yard swing pass on the game's first possession and adding a 68-yard punt return TD just 100 seconds later. The sophomore, who rushed for 150 yards in the opener, looked destined for another big night until he went down with an ankle injury in the third quarter.

Haywood more than picked up the slack, scoring the eventual game-winning touchdown and sealing the game with an interception.

Warren County has always been built around the individual talents of just a handful of players, but there's plenty of unsung heroes as well.

Moore knows it too.

He was excited about the big catch and run Kain Haywood had in the second half. He praised Ethan Sanchez's hustle on a big tackle late, one that helped stop a Warrior drive.

He talked all summer about how strong his offensive line would be this fall. All the big guys – Austin Jakes, Devin Jordan, Kaden Jordan, Dillon Haley and Noah Martin – have made Moore look like a prophet, paving the way for 550 yards on the ground in the first two weeks.

If there's anything Moore would like, it's just more players to praise on a young squad.

"We have lots of young players playing, and we need more," said Moore after the game. "This young group has improved every week. From the first scrimmage until now, they've improved every time."

The only thing holding back the celebration Friday night was that more players weren't there to enjoy it. It's something that was said before the year and the talk about numbers isn't going away.

Fans were there to give love. The players were there rejoicing with the dedicated Pioneer faithful who made the trip. It's pretty obvious that being a Pioneer football player is still very special to many people.

Hopefully more people attend the party next fall.

# VICTORY



Jeffery Simmons photo  
**CJ Taylor breaks away from White County defenders during his 68-yard punt return TD Friday. Taylor scored twice before leaving with an ankle injury in Warren County's 20-13 victory.**

## Pioneers hold off Warriors

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

Lying just feet away from his fumble, Eric Haywood took a moment to regroup. The Pioneer star wasn't filled with regret. His mission was redemption.

He got it.

Haywood scored a lead-padding touchdown in the fourth quarter and snared a game-sealing interception as the Pioneers downed White County 20-13.

"Eric is a game-changer," said Tom Moore, who won for the seventh time as Pioneer coach. "He made a great play."

Warren County (1-1) was clinging to a 13-7 lead early in the fourth quarter and was on the move after a 19-yard reception from Kain Haywood. His older brother got the call on the next play and broke outside, flying down the sideline intent on scoring.

Eric got inside the redzone, but was upended and dropped the ball. White County came up with a recovery, leaving the defense needing to come up with a stop.

Noah Martin came up with a big sack, running down Sydreck Leftwich from behind on a short third down to force a punt.

Haywood took over from there.

The senior broke a 41-yard run on his next touch, plowing over two White County defenders to punctuate the play. Moore didn't hesitate to go back to his workhorse and Haywood was ready, bouncing off a big hole on the right side and going 19 yards for a score.

"My teammates needed me and I had to suck it up," said Haywood, who finished with 120 yards on the ground. "My coaches put me in the right place at the right time and my teammates had great blocking."

Continued on **2B**



Photo courtesy of Painted Barn Media  
**Eric Haywood sprints down the sideline for a long run in the fourth quarter. Haywood made all the big plays late to preserve a Warren County win.**




20

13

283 total yards  
1 fumble, 1 INT

253 total yards  
1 lost fumble, 1 INT

WARREN RUSHING

ERIC HAYWOOD 25 for 120 yards, TD  
CJ TAYLOR 12 for 75  
CLAY THOMPSON 9 for 41  
SETH MEEKS 1 for 1  
TONY CURTIS 1 for minus 7 (-7)

WHITE RUSHING

ALLEN SHOUPPE 18 for 140 yards, TD  
CALEB CHARLESON 3 for 19  
WILL GRIGGS 1 for 12  
SYDRECK LEFTWICH 4 for 3  
CALEB BAILEY 1 for 1

WARREN PASSING

CLAY THOMPSON 4 for 7, 53 yards, TD, INT

WHITE PASSING

SYDRECK LEFTWICH 11 for 21, 78 yards, TD, INT

WARREN RECEIVING

KAIN HAYWOOD 1 for 19 yards  
CJ TAYLOR 1 for 15, TD  
DANTE ELAM 1 for 11  
ELI BUCHANON 1 for 8

WHITE RECEIVING

WILL GRIGGS 1 for 35 yards, TD  
KADE CLARK 2 for 19  
NATHAN MCALLISTER 4 for 13  
MICHAEL SHANK 2 for 10  
ALLEN SHOUPPE 2 for 1

WARREN PENALTIES

9 for 70 yards

WHITE PENALTIES

7 for 60 yards



Jeffery Simmons photos  
**Clay Thompson made plays on the ground for the Pioneers Friday.**



**Noah Martin, right, celebrates a sack with teammate Bryson Elrod.**