

SIMMONS SAYS

**JEFFERY
SIMMONS**



Finding positives in Pioneers

Maybe it's a part of getting older and maturing, or just a fondness for the program, but I've made a decision this fall.

I'm retiring the "Good, Bad and Ugly," column when it comes to Pioneer football.

I don't think I will trend toward the "Everlasting Joy" editor James Clark likes to bring, but I do think I'm going to adopt Tom Moore's approach of relentless positivity when talking about the Pioneers.

They're going to need it this fall.

With the season just nine days away, Warren County is almost ready for the fourth installment of its very own Mission Impossible. There will be winnable games early - DeKalb County and White County most notably - before Murfreesboro comes calling.

Those matchups with Blackman, Oakland, Riverdale and Siegel make up four of the final five games for the Pioneers. It's the hand the program was dealt four years ago and Moore has tried to make the most of it.

Warren County, led by a once-in-a-decade talent Isaiah Grayson, improved its win total each of the last three years. But at some point, getting dealt bad cards over and over will break anybody.

I'm worried it's starting to break local football.

Knowing full well I may become the local "Chicken Little," I'm worried this schedule is going to put the Pioneer football program under. Much like city league participation, football is seeing its own decline.

At next week's pep rally, which I encourage everybody to attend, there may be only 60 players combined on the WCMS and WCHS teams. There will be opponents who bring more kids on their junior varsity squads to Nunley Stadium this fall.

As one fan told me last Friday, it's a three-fold problem for the Pioneers. First, the program's 27-year run of losing seasons discourages participation. If that's not bad enough, the prospect of having to compete against state powerhouses to reverse the trend is bleak. Throw in the national coverage of concussions and you have a blend that could leave an empty football stadium in the future.

I don't know what more Warren County could do. Moore, and his predecessor Scott Smith, both have state championships on their résumés. The school board approved the construction of a \$1.1 million athletic facility - heavily geared toward football - that been operational the last few years.

And yet, nothing seems to be changing in a positive manner.

So if the only thing I can contribute is being positive in columns, then so be it. There may be only 30 kids who put on the pads this fall to go represent the Pioneers against the big, bad Murfreesboro schools.

I respect every single one of them.

Jeffery Simmons photo

Terry Kidd chips out of the bunker on the par-5, No. 9 at McMinnville Country Club. Kidd was one of over 100 golfers to take part in the Rotary Classic held Saturday.



Chipping in for charity

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

Over 100 golfers set out Saturday in hopes of claiming the Rotary Classic Championship. The four who paired for the title had to turn in a scorecard almost too low to be believed.

Dann Stout, Joel Lavalley, Allen Hitchcock and Jordan Turner teamed to shoot a 19-under, 53 Saturday, claiming the title in

the championship flight.

The foursome outpaced a field of 28 teams, which were split into three flights. The first flight finished in a three-way tie at 61, with Pieter van Vuuren, Andrew Brock, David Marttala and Andy Knowles claiming victory on a scorecard tiebreaker.

The second flight was won by Greg Smartt, Micah Lawrence, Josh Elam and Steve Beard, who combined to shoot 65.

Cindy Huth won the most accurate drive of the day on the par-5, No. 8. She finished

out the hole by draining a 26-footer for her team as well.

The longest drives of the day belonged to Lavalley on No. 3 and Andrew Brock on No. 18, while the longest putt on the par-3, No. 7 was sunk by Scott Griffith.

Putting it closest to the hole on the course's four par-3s were van Vuuren (No. 2), Shane Brock (No. 7), Lea Street (No. 14) and Kendall Smith (No. 17).

Continued on **2B**



Jeffery Simmons photo

Upcoming senior Tyra Wright has chosen to take her talents to Charleston Southern next fall.

Wright makes college choice

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

Tyra Wright hasn't stopped growing. And as her stature rose, so did the thought of her having a college career.

Now a senior, Wright won't have to worry about recruiting. She's already decided to make her future known. She'll be attending Charleston Southern next fall.

"They make me feel like I'm already part of their team. They talk about how great I could be," said Wright, who has visited the campus twice. "It's just where I think I should go. It's a pretty campus and it's close to the beach too."

Wright chose Charleston Southern over offers from Eastern Kentucky, Tennessee State and Trevecca College.

Wright has been playing basketball since fourth grade at Morrison, but didn't start thinking about a future in the game until she arrived at the high school. An immediate contributor on the varsity level, she realized her talents were starting to grow.

"My freshman year I started to get better. I wasn't very good when I started," said Wright.

District 6AAA got to find out just how good Wright was last winter, when she regularly posted double-doubles and patrolled the paint with a fury. Wright's full skills were on display in the play-in game, when she posted 16 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks to send Cookeville packing - her favorite memory in her career.

"That play-in game when I made Chloe Grace (Savage) sit down," said Wright, referencing her fouling out the all-district Cookeville post, "I loved that."

Wright scored a season-high 24 points against White County last year, a season where she averaged nearly 15 points per game. If she continues her high scoring output, she should reach 1,000 points this winter.

Lady Pioneer coach Shea Panter has seen Wright's growth over the last three seasons. She believes Wright's thirst to dominate is what got her noticed by college coaches.

"She plays more confident now. I believed in her when she was a goofy kid with a strap on her glasses that didn't stand up straight or want to hit people," said Panter. "She's gotten more confident and coaches took notice."

"She's tapping into her potential. She's very athletic for her size and has soft touch around the rim."

Wright's signing is a new landmark for the program, which has churned out college players in the past. Wright is the first, however, to sign in the fall signing period.

Continued on **2B**



A BBQ Competition and so much more!

August 10 & 11 at the Civic Center Complex

FRIDAY

Rib Sampling 6pm
Corn Hole Tournament 6pm
Kan Jam Tournament 6pm
Youth Grilling Competition 6pm
Home Run Derby 7pm

SATURDAY

Disc Golf Tournament 8am
Kickball Tournament 8am
Best of the Butts Charity Luncheon 11am

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