

SIMMONS SAYS

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Injuries mount for Pioneers

When is somebody going to ask if enough is enough?

The Pioneers suffered another demoralizing loss Friday night, falling at home to previously winless Coffee County 35-13. The Pioneers took a beating - literally. Warren County looked like the walking wounded in the second half, barely plugging one leak before another sprung.

I started this year saying I would be positive about the Pioneers. And I'm going to be true to that word. These kids are absolutely giving their all. They lay it on the line every Friday, only to get ravaged by the weight of workloads not many teenage bodies can handle.

At one point Friday night, coaches yelled at Douglas Wells to come off the field defensively. It wasn't because he was playing poorly or completely gassed. They had just lost a piece of the offensive line a play before and Wells was going to have to go in the next series. The coaches needed to get him up to speed in the next minute.

CJ Taylor hasn't been the same since twisting his ankle when a Sparta defender grabbed his facemask and drug him to the ground. He's been able to play through the pain, but Friday he had to leave after two plays with a shoulder injury that didn't look good.

Taylor is a two-way starter at running back and cornerback and one of the most talented players on the Pioneers. His absence takes away a huge chunk of the Warren County offense and leaves the team susceptible to the deep ball on defense.

Dillon Haley - the line-man who was lost - couldn't put weight on his ankle when he was hurt in the fourth quarter. Haley starts at guard and linebacker.

Garrett and Aaron Ashburn were the brothers in bandages by post-game. Both left with leg injuries, which had to be deflating for Aaron considering he just returned from a foot injury suffered in preseason.

The list goes on too.

I'm not one who bemoans the damage football can do to a person. As Tommy Johnson put it to me when we talked about NFL players who were balking at concussions years ago, "we know what we signed up for."

These kids know what they want more than I ever would. I see it in their eyes and hear it in their voices. They want to turn it around. They want to be part of the change.

Sadly, the easiest part of the schedule just wrapped up. Four of the last five games are against Murfreesboro schools - squads who roll to the stadium with 75 to 100 players ready.

The Pioneers look like the final 20 minutes of the movie "300," gamely trying to hold the fort against forces they know will take them down.

They're ready to make the sacrifice. Is anybody going to ask if they should?



Jeffery Simmons photos
Eric Haywood flies by defenders on his 45-yard touchdown run in the first half. Haywood finished with 163 yards, upping his season total to 604 yards in five games.

Red Raiders roll Moore: 'They kicked our butt'

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

If Andrew Mahaffey didn't have a highlight reel before, he's got one now.

The Red Raider running back dominated Friday's contest at Nunley Stadium, rushing for 300 yards and two touchdowns to help Coffee County down Warren County 35-13.

"Andrew played with a lot of heart," said Coffee County coach Ryan Sulkowski. "He had a stellar first quarter then kind of wore down in the second quarter. We talked at half-time and told him we needed the guy from the first quarter."

"He left it all on the field. I can't sing his praises enough. Lots of guys around him made it possible."

Warren County (1-4) countered with a huge night from Eric Haywood, who had 163 yards and two scores to continue his sterling season. It wasn't enough though, as the Pioneers were manhandled by the visiting Red Raiders.

"They kicked our butt," said Pioneer coach Tom Moore. "It was my concern looking at tape. They're pretty physical and we're pretty immature, age wise."

We just couldn't stop them. They controlled the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball."

Coffee County (1-3) came in struggling offensively, managing less than 100 yards in each of its previous two games. Mahaffey did that and more in the first quarter.

The Red Raider started the scoring with a 7-yard plunge, then shrugged off several tacklers on a 66-yard run that put his team ahead 14-6. Mahaffey finished the first quarter with 123 yards rushing.

Coffee County QB Mathew Pittman added a 32-yard touchdown in the first quarter, which saw the teams combine for four scores in less than four minutes. Sandwiched between Mahaffey's scores was Haywood's 71-yard house call.

Warren County cut the deficit to a single score in the second quarter. Aided by a pair of pass interference penalties, the Pioneers were able to cross midfield against the Red Raiders.

Haywood did the rest, getting outside on a counter and working his way down the sideline on a 45-yard bolt. Tony Curtis added the extra point, drawing the Pioneers to 21-13 by half-time.



The Pioneers were bottled up in the second half, while Mahaffey just got stronger. Mahaffey had a 26-yard run to set up a 24-yard touchdown toss from Pitman to Trace Bryant at the end of the third quarter. Bryant made a leaping grab, though Warren County protested the receiver didn't control the ball to the ground.

Warren County didn't get a first down in the second half until midway through the fourth quarter. Haywood made a diving catch to move the chains on a 21-yard gain, but the drive stalled in the redzone when the Pioneers failed on a fourth-down conversion.

Coffee County took over and leaned on Mahaffey to put the game away. He rushed six times, including five consecutive plays, for 65 yards before Marshal Haney punched in a 10-yard run to seal the victory.

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35 13

414 total yards

245 total yards

COFFEE CO. RUSHING

50 attempts for 390 yards, 4 TD

ANDREW MAHAFFEY - 35 for 300 yards, 2 TD
MATHEW PITTMAN - 10 for 71 yards, TD
MARSHAL HANEY - 3 for 13 yards, TD
CJ ANTHONY - 1 for 5 yards
TRACE BRYANT - 1 for 1 yard

WARREN CO. RUSHING

29 attempts for 209 yards, 2 TD

ERIC HAYWOOD - 18 for 163 yards, 2 TDs
XANDER LEE - 4 for 27 yards
CLAY THOMPSON - 3 for 6 yards
KAIN HAYWOOD - 1 for 5 yards
CJ TAYLOR - 1 for 3 yards
CARTER MANSFIELD - 1 for 3 yards
SETH MEEKS - 1 for 2 yards

COFFEE CO. PASSING

MATHEW PITTMAN - 1 for 7, 24 yards, TD

WARREN CO. PASSING

CLAY THOMPSON - 3 for 10, 36 yards

COFFEE CO. RECEIVING

TRACE BRYANT - 1 for 24 yards, TD

WARREN CO. RECEIVING

ERIC HAYWOOD - 1 for 21 yards
KAIN HAYWOOD - 2 for 15 yards

COFFEE CO. MISC.

PENALTIES - 7 for 55 yards
ELI NORTON - Fumble recovery
ANDREW MAHAFFEY - Entered game with 51 carries, 150 yards
Coffee County missed two FGs (45, 23 yards)

WARREN CO. MISC.

PENALTIES - 7 for 45 yards
AARON MYERS - 5 punts, 36.8 yard average
HAYWOOD - 5 carries, 1 yard in second half
Three-and-out on first two second-half possessions, missed PAT after first touchdown



Above, Devin Jordan is able to corral Andrew Mahaffey for no gain. It was one of the few times the Pioneers were able to stop Mahaffey, who finished with 300 yards on 35 carries and scored twice.

At left, Kain Haywood throws a stiff arm at a Coffee County defender. Haywood had two catches in a disappointing loss for Warren County. The Red Raiders entered the game winless.