

Lady Jackets claim first district crown

By Josh Shephard
The Carlisle Mercury
CYNTHIANA, Ky. (Mar. 7) — For the first time since the Nicholas County Lady Jackets began district competition 12 years ago, they have succeeded in taking the 37th District title.

The win Tuesday night over Harrison County was the first district tournament win for the Lady Jackets.

The Jackets accomplished the feat of claiming the district title over the favored Paris Lady Greyhounds, 41-37, in front of a packed house of Nicholas County fans at Harrison County High School last night.

It is also the first district basketball crown for any team at NCHS since 1968.

The game was played dead even throughout, but the Jackets managed to pull out the win in the final minutes of the fourth quarter.

Tacy Earlywine opened up scoring for the Jackets right from the start, but they would not control the score board early enough as a score from Angie Fields was disallowed.

Yvonda Brown tied the game, 2-2, as two free throws after an Earlywine lay underneath.

In opening round... Jackets advance with win over Pillis

By Josh Shephard
The Carlisle Mercury
CYNTHIANA, Ky. 7 — Harrison County's Pillis threatened, but couldn't pull the upset.

The Pillis led by the end of the first half but the Nicholas County Lady Jackets won the game 42-35 with one team only Harrison County.

The win propelled the Lady Jackets into the district finals and will provide the first ever trip for the girls' team to the 10th Region tournament.

Nikki Smoot fired in several shots to boost Nicholas County to a 14-7 lead at the end of the quarter.

Nicholas senior Chris Auster picked two personal fouls in the quarter and Kim Denkins drew one.

However, the second quarter was a turnaround for the Pillis as Helen Winkles, scored twice by Chris Barnes, brought Harrison County within four of the Jackets, 14-10, with 6:23 left in the half.

Winkles brought the Pillis to within three before Smoot broke the Jackets scoring drought.

Cathy Barnes helped put the pressure back on the Jackets bringing Harrison County within three, 16-12.

Tacy Earlywine pushed the Jackets lead back to five, but Winkles continued to score steadily, maintaining considerable pressure on the Jackets.

Nicholas County was clinging to a 23-17 lead with two minutes left, and it appeared the Jackets had gained some breathing room, but Barnes brought the ball the length of the court firing in a pointer to cut the Lady Jackets' lead to three, 23-20.

Shelly Liszer continued the Pillis' challenge, sinking two free shots to cut the deficit to one with 14 seconds left in the second quarter.

Harrison County called another basket before the horn sounded to close the first half, and went to the locker room with a 24-23 advantage.

The Jackets opened the second half with four straight points to lead 27-24 with 6:47 to play in the third, until Barnes tied the game 27-27 with her third-point shot.

The Jackets mounted another lead as Smoot knocked in two shots and Earlywine bucketed two free shots for a 33-27 advantage, but Harrison called another 3-point shot and the Pillis had tied the Nicholas lead to 33-30.

Harrison reclaimed the lead, 36-34, at 2:00 of the third quarter with another 3-pointer from Barnes, but the Jackets bombed in several shots to cut the third period and went into the final minutes trailing 42-38.

The Jackets hoped to add 41-37 until the 5:22 mark when Barnes cashed in 3 points to draw in more Harrison County within four points.

The game, closely called, forced three Harrison County players to the bench with personal fouls.

In the final seconds, with Nicholas holding a 10-point advantage, 60-50, Barnes landed her seventh and final 3-pointer of the evening to seal the final margin at 62-53, as Nicholas County called a final basket.

Nicholas County Head Coach Barbara Kenney said she felt very proud when her team fell behind, the Jackets could still outlast them.

"It was their last game on their floor before their own crowd. They were going to play as hard as they could and win because that's the point line, they give us quite a scare," Kenney said.

On the ability of the Pillis to shut down Kim Denkins, Kenney said she would like to have her own Denkins, but she said she knew they'd play hard and they were fortunate to have other strong players to help pick up the work left by Denkins.

"This is the dream come true. It's the first time the girls have ever made it to the district finals and leading to the region," Kenney said.

The Lady Jackets battled Paris in the 10th Region district Friday night, and will advance to the regional tournament, also played at Harrison County.

in another 3-pointer for a 39-34 Paris lead.

However, shots from Earlywine and Denkins brought the Jackets back into contention, 41-37, Paris, with 2:23 left in the third and at 1:27 Hatten tied the score at 41-41.

Fans poured onto the court to celebrate the victory as the Lady Jackets charged to each other, many crying freely at their first District Championship win.

NCHS Head Coach Barbara Kenney, excited over the win, said she knew the Jackets would take the game as they sank their first shot.

"I told them before the game they were quakes. They said we were too young, but we are a mix to the Hounds and I said in the girls' 'Let's show 'em'," Kenney said.

The girls' quickness and their determination at the free throw line carried the day, Kenney said.

"I was very impressed with the way my girls handled themselves over the court. Kurti Burton was up 11 feet and the win for the game as they could have," Kenney said.

"This is my 12th year coaching the Lady Jackets and I have spent time preparing for this moment, but you've never quite prepared when it finally comes. I look forward to coaching this club through the regional next week and through the years to come."

Tacy Earlywine was high scorer in the evening with 19 points, followed by Nikki Smoot with 14. Hatten scored 13 points and was 10 from the free throw line. Denkins also chucked up 13 points and was 7-8 from the line as well as being in 11 rebound.

Paris improved the record to 14-11 with the win. The Greyhounds defeated Moyville in the 10th Region Tournament. The two met square of March 7 at 8:30 p.m. at Mason County High School.

Paris claims boys' crown

By Jeff Spradling
The Carlisle Mercury
FABES, March 3 — The Paris Greyhounds dethroned Bourbon County 75-69 in the finals of the 37th District Tournament.

After struggling in the first half, Paris took charge in the second to meter and the Colonels.

Paris got four players in double figures for the game.

Yvonne Kravitz tallied 20 points for Bourbon County and was the game's high scorer.

The Paris defense managed to hold Bourbon senior David Ahrens to only six points.

Bourbon County played without sophomore sensation Corey Williams, who was unavailable for the game.

"Williams makes all of the other players better," said Paris Coach Bob Kilduff.

Paris managed to keep it close in the first quarter and trailed by only 17 after the first eight minutes.

Bourbon County came on strong in the opening minutes of the second quarter, building a 25-16 lead when Ahrens ran out a layup.

Paris fought back to tie the lead to 28-28 when Travis Earlywine hit a basket at the 3:10 mark.

A 3-point play by Juan Bryson cut the Colonels' lead to 36-28.

A free throw by Clint Richardson with 54 seconds remaining in the half gave the Colonels a 35-30 lead.

Luke Summers started a basket with less than 10 seconds remaining to cut the advantage to 35-22.

Collier Mathews came up with a steal and a basket for Paris at the buzzer to make the halftime score 36-24.

Kenney said he decided to change the Paris defense for the second half.

Although Paris got beat on penetration in the first half and only had 12 of 29 from the field, Kenney said his team was "in the right frame of mind."

"We tried to be positive with them (Bryson) on the second half," Kenney said.

Jeff Stamper gave Bourbon County the edge with a 3-point play at 38-35.

Brown tied the score to 38-38 with a layup at 38:30.

Paris went to 51-47 when Earlywine stole the ball and ran it out for a slam dunk.

Bourbon managed to score the next four points and the quarter ended with Paris leading 44-46.

The Greyhounds got a 10-point lead at 66-46 when Jerry Barnes made a 3-point play on a 3-point play at the 7:38 mark.

The 10-point margin was the closest Bourbon County came to Paris in the final period.

Bourbon County went to the 3-point shot in an effort to cut into the lead, but the shot would not fall.

Bourbon County Head Coach Bruce Stamer said the Paris Greyhounds' defense was "tough as nails."

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LADY JACKETS REGIONAL ACTION

Nicholas girls push way to semi-finals

By Hank Brown
The Carlisle Mercury
CYNTHIANA — With the entire Nicholas County cheering section holding its breath, Randall drilled another from 19 feet out to make it 10-0 at the end of eight minutes.

Nicholas was scoreless in the last 4:32 of the first quarter prompting Nicholas County Head Coach Barbara Kenney to make adjustments at the first stop.

"We were simply standing around and I told them at the end of the first quarter we had to loosen up," an excited Kenney said just after the game.

"We were just absolutely intimidated by Montgomery County."

And after tonight, "It's certain Jenny Randall is one of the best free throw shooters in the 10th region."

The second quarter gave evidence Nicholas County team that they could have.

Coming into the second minute trailing by five points, Christine Hatten nailed both ends of the basket to make it 10-7, as Nicholas County continued to apply strenuous full court pressure.

Seit pushed the Montgomery County lead back to five, 12-7, with a tip-in... but nothing bottom shot from the free throw line with 6:15 to play in the first quarter.

Montgomery County retook the lead as Jenny Randall pushed an errant shot to make it 4-2, Lady Indians.

Nikki Smoot hit one of two free man-to-man press, with double teaming on the ball, the Jackets clawed their way back into the game.

Hatten drilled a 15 foot shot from the right side after a side by side by Nichol's only lead of the first quarter, 5-4.

Earlywine was whistled for a foul under the Montgomery County basket, but a violation on the inbound play gave the ball back to the Lady Jackets.

Nicholas County had four tries at taking the period end but could not convert. On the other end of the court, Montgomery County could care no longer.

On their fourth trip down the floor the Lady Jackets finally broke the tie as a smooth-needle pass from Smoot to Denkins resulted in a layup and a 12-12 NCHS lead with 4:17 to play.

With 3:18 to play in the half Montgomery County took its first timeout after Serena King had been whistled for a foul.

Earlywine stepped to the line and only sank two free throws to make it 15-12 Nicholas County.

Auster also connected on both ends of the one-and-one, and Earlywine added two more charity tosses with the clock running with 1:09 to play in the half to make it 19-12 Nicholas County.

Denkins broke the score drought for the Lady Indians with a layup to tie it 19-14 and Montgomery County kept the ball at the end of the half.

Nicholas ended its season with a 10-14 record.

Scoring: Bourbon: Stamper 26, Rodney Williams 11, Foley 3, Ahrens 19, Richardson 12, Duller 9.

Nicholas: Sparks 7, Hillander 21, Sims 8, Brown 25, Wills 12, Simmons 4, Tibbs 1.



The Carlisle Mercury/Josh Shephard

How Sweet It Is

A full house for the Nicholas County game, at least for the Nicholas County side, cheered on the Lady Jackets in their 36-24 win over Montgomery County in quarter final action of the 10th Region tournament at Harrison County, Tuesday night.



The Carlisle Mercury/Josh Shephard

3's Biggest Fan

Eddie Earlywine, right, who's Nicholas County's Number 3's biggest fan (his daughter Tacy) celebrates with the throng of fans from Nicholas County on hand at the 10th Region Tournament at Harrison County High School, Tuesday night. Using inspired defense and a three foot shot by Tacy Earlywine with 17 seconds to play in the game, Nicholas County upset favored Montgomery County, 36-24, to advance in regional play. Nicholas County will face Deering, a 50-47 upset winner over Fleming County in the semi-finals at 3 p.m. Saturday.

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