

Nicholas girls push way

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on a follow by Scott with six seconds to play. Scott missed a free throw, after Hatton was called for her second foul, and missed on a chance to cut into the Nicholas lead even more.

"After we took the lead we sort of went flat defensively," Kenney said of Montgomery County getting back into the game late in the first half.

"We let them have the back side and beat us on the boards badly and that kept them in the game," she added.

Montgomery rallies in game's third quarter.

In the third quarter Montgomery County, which fell to 20-8 with the loss, showed it was a team deserving a berth in the 10th Region tournament.

Randall hit one of two free throws to make it 19-17 Nicholas County.

Smoot hit a layup after Denkins got a perfect pass down the baseline to give NCHS a four point advantage. Randall counted two more of her game high 23 points with 4:34 to play in the third quarter.

Smoot hit again with 4:18 to go and Randall countered with another six foot basket to make the score 23-21 Nicholas County with exactly four minutes to go in the third stanza.

After three straight unsuccessful attempts at the basket by Montgomery County Hatton connected again. Randall countered, Randall scored from six feet out in the lane and Hatton sent home a 15-foot shot to make it 27-23 Nicholas County with 2:08 to go in the quarter.

Randall made it four more points the remainder of the quarter on a six foot shot and a tip-in to give the Lady Indians a two point lead going into the final eight minutes of play.

Randall scored all 13 points for Montgomery County in the third quarter, while Hatton had four for Nicholas as did Smoot.

"Christie (Hatton) stayed right in there with them tonight," Kenney said.

"She has been sick, as have several of the players, but they all played hard tonight. We needed them out there... all of them. Nikki (Smoot) came on in the clutch after struggling some."

"We're young... very young... but our babies are tough."

Last quarter is laced with emotion, excitement. The last quarter produced only 14 points between the two teams, but there was certainly no lack of excitement in the gymnasium.

Smoot canned a six foot shot from the right side to knot the score at 29-29 with 6:28 to play in the game.

King gave the Lady Indians a one point lead hitting one of two free throws with 6:08 to play.

Hatton followed a missed shot by King and drew a foul from Greene.

Although Hatton was unable to hit the free throw her basket gave Nicholas County a 21-30 lead.

King gave the Indians another one point advantage with a layup with 5:17 still left in the game.

Smoot countered with a six foot shot from the left side.

Becht, Montgomery County's 5-11 senior center, was whistled to the bench with her fifth foul with 4:42 to play in the game.

Nicholas County called a timeout, after Scott left the game.

Neither team produced a point from the 4:42 mark of the last quarter until there were just 27 seconds left in regulation.

Montgomery County took its third timeout with 1:25 to play after a turnover gave the ball back to Nicholas County with the Indians trailing by one point.

Randall gave the Lady Indians a nervous one point advantage with 57 seconds left to play, after Nicholas County was unable to add to its lead.

With Nicholas County on offense, Denkins had the ball in the lane and was fouled with 40 seconds left to play.

That forced Montgomery County's coach Mike Kindred to call his fourth and final timeout.

Denkins coolly sank the first of a one and one trip to the charity stripe, to tie the score 34-34, but her second shot bounced back off the front of the rim, and Montgomery County controlled the rest of the game.

Wheeling and dealing the ball into front court, Montgomery County gave every sign of being in control.

The ball went inside to a wide open Serena King, who had a direct path to the basket. But as if fate had decided the game...

King went to put the dribble down on the way to the right side of the basket and the ball bounced off her right foot out of bounds and Nicholas County had possession with 20 seconds to play in the game.

Going without calling a timeout, Kenney could only watch as Smoot crossed the three line with the ball, and passed right to Hatton.

The ball kicked around the offense, went inside to Earlywine and the sophomore hit the three foot shot to give Nicholas County a two point advantage.

Montgomery County gave every indication of going for a tie, rather than a 3-point game winning shot, misbanded the ball on the right side of front court.

Nicholas County rebounded the ball with a long pass. It was touched but not stolen by King, and time elapsed with Nicholas County claiming the upset.

The stands erupted when Earlywine hit the winning basket... and fans, players, coaches and cheerleaders poured onto the floor to celebrate the 23rd victory of the season for NCHS in 27 games.

"It was a game of errors" the jubilant Kenney proclaimed. "We knew it would turn out to be the team which committed the least turnovers in the last quarter... when the game was on the line..."

you and hope everyone will be able to come back Saturday... and if we continue to win, Sunday.

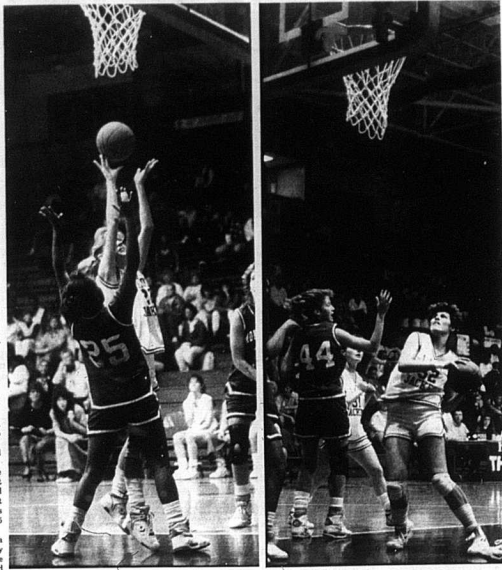
"It's been a great year, and our players just love to play basketball!"

Hatton led Nicholas County's balanced scoring with 12 points. Smoot had nine.

SCORING
Nicholas County (36) Hatton 12, Smoot 9, Earlywine 6, Denkins 5, Ausier 3.

Montgomery County (34) Randall 23, Scott 8, King 3, Greene 2.

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The Carlisle Mercury/Josh Shepherd

Up, Up, and Away

Nicholas County clawed its way to the semi-finals of the 10th Region girls tournament, Tuesday night. AGDeVie, Christie Hatton, who led Nicholas County with 12 points, goes for a basket, while right, Kim Denkins looks for a put back basket against Montgomery County defenders. As the Lady Jackets looked for a victory in their first ever regional game, below, some unidentified flag wavers raced around the court urging support for the Lady Jackets with colorful blue flags graced with the letter N.



Deming upset of Fleming sets stage for semi-finals

CYNTHIANA, Mar. 6 - Nicholas County will play Deming Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m., in the region's second semi-final game.

Deming advanced to the semi-finals with a resounding 50-47 upset win over Fleming County in the second game, Tuesday night.

The Lady Devils, who had lost twice to Fleming County in the regular season, led 14-10 at the end of the first quarter. Deming increased its lead to 33-18 at intermission, following five three point shots by Chastity Shepherd.

In the third quarter, with Deming leading 37-21, the Panthers ran off 14 straight points to cut the Lady Devil's lead to 37-35, at the third stop.

Fleming County led the game with 7:04 left to play, 37-37. Deming was able to mount another offensive drive, canning free throws when necessary, on five out of six shooting, to re-take a four point lead on two occasions.

With 1:37 to play Kristen Gifford blocked a shot, drove the length of the court for a layup to make it 47-43, Deming. Kelly Thompson led the game with two free throws at the :55 mark to make it 49-45 and a bucket by Fleming and a final free throw by Gifford set the final margin.

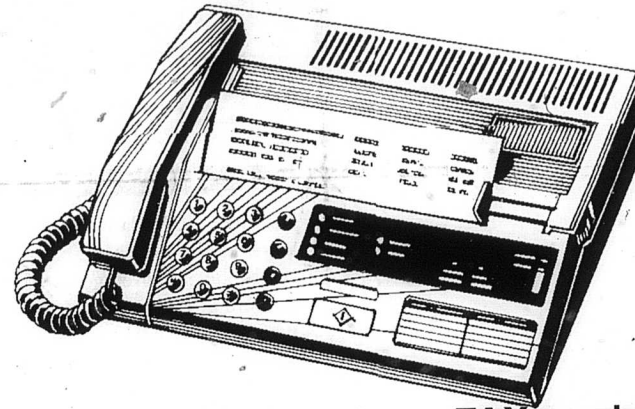
The Lady Jackets and Lady Devils will square off Saturday in the second game beginning at 3 p.m., in the Harrison gymnasium.

"I have the utmost respect for Deming. They have an outstanding program and have the potential to win, as they have shown with the win in the game against Fleming County," Kenney said.

"They wouldn't be here if they didn't. We just feel fortunate to be able to keep playing."

"We just don't want to overlook anything... or any team. It is a matter of being prepared and playing our game."

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