

## Lady Jackets tame Wildcats in second quarter run

By Josh Shepherd

Of the Carolina Mercury Staff

PARIS — Before the Lady Jackets could step up to their rematch with the Lady Cardinals in the 10th region championship, they had to get past the Bath County Lady Cats.

The second round region game against Bath had Lady Jackets concerned.

It hadn't been long since they had looked horns in the second round of the



Nicholas County Lady Jacket cheerleader Lori Berry gets caught up in the game excitement as hundreds of Nicholas County Basketball fans rushed the court.

All-A Classic regional tournament. While Nicholas was the game, Bath County had come off an impressive victory over the Ferns Lady Hornets. It was apparent they had the talent to upset them and emotion, the unpredictable factor in any tournament ball game, could be in Bath's favor.

At tip off, Nikki Smoot picked off the ball and broke quickly toward the basket for an early two point lead. But Bath set the early pace, hauling out an 8-2 run led by the efforts of Wildcats seniors Teri Casdill and Kristi Refitt.

Nicholas County bounced back in the final minute of the game of the quarter with Smoot leading a pass in to Tary Earlywine to tie the score at 10-10.

Another shot from Earlywine fell short, but Kim Derkins was inside to carry off the rebound and put the Lady Jackets up, 12-10.

Ruffitt tied the score once more, but at quarter's end, the Jackets had come back to a 14-12 lead.

The second quarter, however, belonged solely to the Jackets. Led by Earlywine bombing the net from inside, Nicholas went on a devastating 8-0 run on the boards.

At the end of the half, Christie Hutton capped off the 12-6 destruction of the Lady Cats with a last second three pointer that put the Jackets 11 points ahead, 25-16.

Bath County cut the lead to seven in the early minutes of the second half, but

got no closer as the Lady Jackets game went into overtime.

A highlight in the third came from a full court play with Hutton passing down to Smoot, who found Kristi Barton open on the side of the key. One moment's hesitation and Barton found Earlywine at the backdoor for a smooth, easy lay up that rocked Nicholas County fans.

In the fourth, almost every point Nicholas made came from the free throw line.

With 38 left to play, Tim Fryman snatched the ball away from a Bath County player and connected with

Michelle Hopkins capped off the Lady Jackets victory, hitting both ends

of a one plus one to give the Jackets a 34-27 victory.

Derkins, who was recuperating from an ankle injury prior to Friday night's game, logged 22 points, 16 rebounds and five blocked shots and was 6 for 6 from the charity stripe. Meanwhile, Hutton cut up 11 points, followed by Smoot with 10, eight for Tary Earlywine and two points from Hopkins.

"Bath County was a very good team but our girls played very good defense. In fact it was a good game overall. We were able to defend against Casdill and still affect the rest of Bath's play."

"But on top of that, we had outstanding offensive play. We have the confidence to go on. I think, and win it all," she said.

**We Support The  
N.C. Lady Jackets.  
Good Luck At State.  
Berry's Service Station  
3030 Concrete Rd. Carlisle  
289-9132**

**We're Proud Of The  
N.C. Lady Jackets  
Good Luck At  
State!  
Dee Jay Auto Parts  
Owned/Operated By  
Lyle Anderson  
& Ronnie Letcher  
340 West Main -  
Carlisle**

**Good Luck & Best  
Wishes Lady Jackets.  
Sally Watkins  
N.C. Circuit Clerk**

**BRING THAT TROPHY  
HOME. LADY JACKETS  
ARE #1!  
Garrett's Restaurant  
215 N. Broadway  
289-7562**



Cutting into victory, history, and the Sweet Sixteen

Lady Jackets Junior guard Nikki Smoot and sophomore center Kim Derkins wrestle gladly with a pair of tape scissors to slice and hack their way through the first victory net at the conclusion of the Lady Jackets 10th Region victory. Smoot, who posted an outstanding defensive performance in Sunday's performance, and Derkins, responsible for 18 points in the 23-18 victory, both were starters in 1990 when the Cardinals pounded the Lady Jackets for a 37 point victory in the Jackets' first appearance in the 10th region finals. 1992, however, saw them re-enter the battle and come out victors.



**You Won It!  
Now Go  
Get It!  
State All  
The Way!  
Kimball and  
Jane Ellen Booth**

**We Love You  
Lady Jackets!!  
Congratulations &  
Good Luck At The  
State Tournament.  
N.C. Judge-Executive  
Reese Smoot & Wife, Patsy**