JUN 22 2000

Player From 1

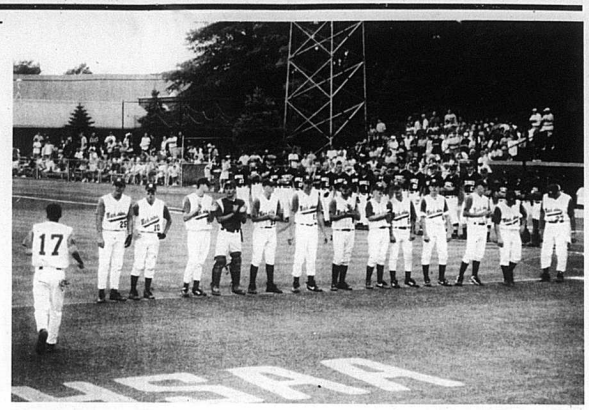
victorious after extra innings. Nicholas County 6, Bourbon County 5 after ten innings. Our celebration was cut short the following night as we fell to powerful Harrison County 19 to 1. We then had to prepare for the region.

Just going to the region was a dream come true. After winning the first two rounds, we found ourselves facing the Clark County Cardinals for the championship. The first six innings seem to be all Nicholas County, we could do no wrong. It was the bottom of the seventh, 10 to 0, our lead. Before we knew what had happened the Cards had scored seven runs. What a relief when I caught a line drive down third base for the third out. It took a while to register, we all just looked at each other. What had occurred in the 7th inning had been so shocking we were just relieved. We were so stunned we failed celebrate. Then it finally hit us, we were region champs. The first for Nicholas County. We were sectional bound.

As we kept winning the crowds kept growing. We had earned the respect of our community. Just going to the grocery or out to eat, fans would congratulate us and talk about the games. it was a great feeling. The fan support was great. newspaper articles, and radio and TV stations were giving us great coverage. We became known as the "Cinderella team". We know this was mainly due to the size of our school, but the feeling was unbelievable. After each victory, we were met at the county line by our law enforcement department and fire trucks for a victory parade through town. Even at practices our fans gathered for cook-outs to wish us luck for the next game and to celebrate our victories. One night after practice, we were invited to a local restaurant to celebrate. Everyone was wearing Nicholas County tee shirts. Signs and blue and white ribbons were displayed through out our community. The support of our community was something I will never forget.

As we headed for the "Sectionals" we felt that we had nothing to lose. We had made it farther than any team in school history. We wanted to win the "Sectionals" for "Coach". We were victorious the first game shocking Covington Catholic, 8 to 6. As we headed to the finals, we knew we were only one game away from a dream come true. The fans turned out by the hundreds to watch their "Cinderella" team face a powerful Pulaski County team, who had made it to the finals last year. Dreams do come true, after nine innings we were The Champs. We were bound for UK and the Final Four.This time we did celebrate. Our dream had come true for our team and our coaches and our fans.

As we ran out on the field at Cliff Hagan Stadium, the fan support was unbelievable. Because of our great fans, we had set a new attendance record. Even though this was to be our last game, it was a great feeling to just be in the Final Four. Our "Cinderella" team had had a great run for the state title. We fell short, but we will always remember this great season. As a Senior, I realized this was my last game in a Nicholas County uniform, as I was feeling really low about losing, then my coaches told me to keep my head up, we had a lot to be proud of. I really wanted to win this one for Coach but looking at him and seeing him smiles, even though we had lost, made me realize he was really proud of us. In the long run, we were winners, because of our coaches, our parents, and our fans. I'll never forget this season and will always remember how our community supported us. To Coach Anderson and Coach Sims, my teammates — I thank you for making my last year with you very special and thanks for the memories.



'Jackets From 1

thank all the crowd support," the coach said. "The folks of this community really jumped on our band wagon and that meant an awful lot to us — I ran into folks I hadn't seen in years and they stopped by to say good luck and it was all a lot of fun for all of us."

The jumble of 'Jacket fans helped boost the tournament to its largest attendance ever for a State Tournament semifinal day of 3,435. Ballard got past Boyd County in Thursday's opener.

Watching the day's first game prior to their clash with Henderson, the Nicholas County club wrestled with a pair of emotions.

"We're nervous but we're having fun so it's a little of both," the 'Jackets' starter and 13-game winner Shane Smith said before the opening pitch. "But mostly it's nerves."

Henderson got a pair of early runs off Smith in the top of the first, but Nicholas County retaliated in their turn with the sticks.

Senior second baseman Davey Anderson led off the boys in blue by driving Colonel right-hander Brandon Scott's 1-0 pitch down the left-field line for a single.

"I thought we'd jump all over that guy," Davey Anderson said. "Because our hitting was pretty good this year -when we got runners on base we could get 'em in."

And that's exactly what Nicholas County did — at least in the opening at bat.

With his back to the wall on the 0-2 delivery, senior third baseman Josh Earlywine eyed his third look, a low and outside try, for 1-2. But on Scott's fourth throw, Earlywine muscled the pitch off the right-field plywood for a stand-up, RBI-triple as Anderson crossed the plate.

Two batters later, Josh Fryman belted a shot over the left-fielder's head for a double that scored Earlywine to knott the score, 2-2.

With two outs, B.J. Tincher singled through the right side of the infield to re-spark the rally. But Fryman was thrown out sliding for the plate, denying the 'Jackets the lead.

Fryman came to the mound for Smith after the Colonels put two more on the board in the second.

Things looked good for Nicholas in the bottom of the third, when Anderson Earlywine each smacked their second hit of the night (and their team's fifth and sixth) to open the side with no outs.

Shortstop Jay Grant grounded out to third for the force but Fryman, the clean-up hitter, brought his bat to the plate with the tying runs on the pond.

Fryman belted a worm-burner down third that looked to be past the bag, but Henderson's Neil Sellers made the big-league stop, tagged third for the force and fired back over to first to complete the inning-ending doubleplay. Worse, it deflated what looked to be a "Jacket rally.

"That was the biggest play of the game," Coach Anderson said. "If that hit goes through and we get a run, who knows. But that's baseball."

Earlywine agreed with his coach.

"It was that play at third, that took a lot out of us," Earlywine said. "And on that play at Davey's play at first, I thought he was safe — a break here or there and it would have been a different ball game."

Henderson added an insurance run in the seventh to complete the game's scoring.

But the 'Jacket fans, several hundred strong, had plenty to applaud even after the season-stopping, career-ending out; the seniors, Earlywine, Anderson and Timmy Crump, Smith and Fryman's work from the mound, Tincher's nail-biting trio of one-handed grabs in right field and seeing THEIR team for the final time.

"We had so much support by the fans," Fryman said. "That's the most people we've seen at a game this year — now everyone knows us in the county!"

Losing the trio of seniors will be six big shoes to fill, but the experienced gained by the younger players at this year's State Tournament is valuable for next year's roster.

"Maybe we won't be the underdogs all the time, "Fryman said. "Seven of us will be back, and we'll have a good shot at going back."

Coach Anderson said Henderson's win over Ballard made the 'Jackets' loss a bit easier to take.

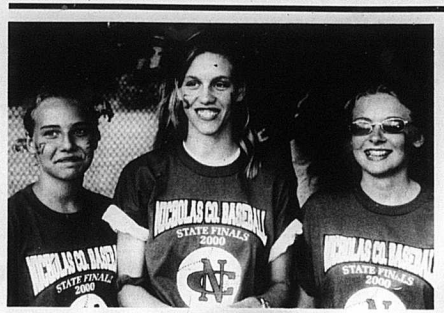
"I was glad they (Henderson) were able to win it if they beat us," Anderson said. "But I knew we deserved to be there — and we played right with 'em."

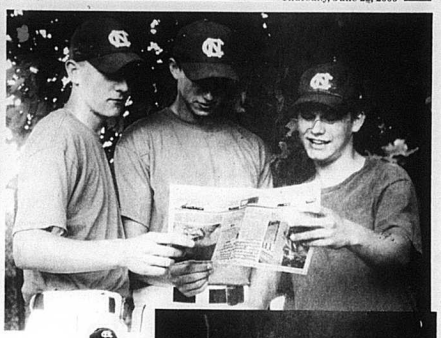
Keep those blue and white ribbons out, spring ball practice is just eight months away!

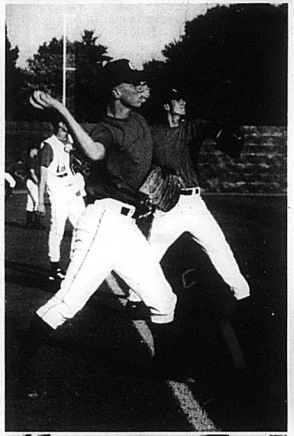
CONGRATS BLUEJACKETS!
FOODLAND
365 East Main Street
289-2291

CONGRATS BLUEJACKETS!
MARK MATTOX AUCTIONEER & REAL ESTATE
106 E. MAIN ST.
289-5720

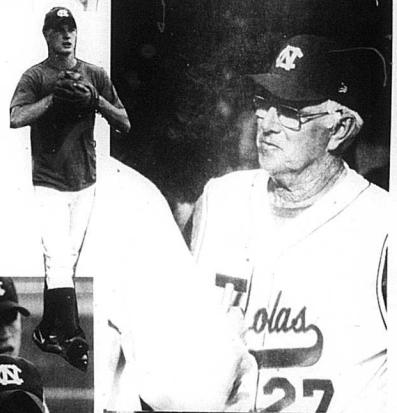
JOB WELL DONE BLUEJACKETS!
NICHOLAS COUNTY FISCAL COURT

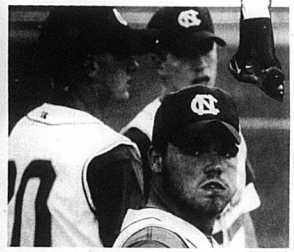


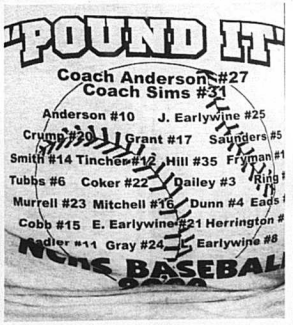




State Tournament
game photos by
DENVER BROWN







CONGRATULATIONS BLUEJACKETS!
DEPOSIT BANK
MAIN STREET
289-2205

Congratulations BLUEJACKETS!
CARLISLE MERCURY
P.O. BOX 272
CARLISLE, KY 40311
606-289-2464 (Phone)
606-289-7900 (Fax)

CONGRATULATIONS BLUEJACKETS!
JOCKEY INTERNATIONAL
PARIS ROAD
289-2221