

SPORTS

NCHS Lady Jackets finish 1-2 in All-A state event

JEFFERSONTOWN - It was a weekend a group of young ladies from Nicholas County will never forget.

The Nicholas County High School softball team won its first game in the Touchstone Energy All-A Classic state-wide softball tournament on Saturday morning, defeating Fort Knox.

Two very competitive games followed for the Lady Jackets. Nicholas County fell short in each of its last two games, but still made some memories in one of the 2007 edition small school state tournament.

Nicholas County only allowed runs in three separate innings of the three state tournament games combined.

Before beginning play in the Class A Statewide tournament, Nicholas County had played stellar defense. "We held our opponents scoreless in 18 of the 21 innings we played at the state tournament," Nicholas County Coach Barry Bretz said.

"That says a lot about our defense. Our hitting and lack of productivity from top to bottom has been our Achilles heel for our team. Our defense has been very solid."

The Lady Jackets used a rally to edge Fort Knox 3-2 on Saturday morning in their first game.

Nicholas County faced a two-out situation with the bases empty in the seventh inning, trailing talented Fort Knox 2-1.

Hollis Bretz delivered an infield single and stole second base, where she was eventually brought home by Shelby Sosby on a hard hit ball to the Fort Knox short stop that was overthrown to first base.

Bretz's run tied the game. Edwina Fryman then delivered the game-winning RBI, driving Sosby home with a line shot to center to put the

Lady Jackets ahead 3-2. Shelby Brown pitched a perfect seventh to seal the emotionally-charged win for the Lady Jackets.

The Lady Jackets manufactured their three runs on seven hits. Tiffany Wilson smacked a triple while Bretz and Fryman each had a double.

Wilson got the Lady Jackets on the scoreboard when she scored from her leadoff hitter's spot in the third inning after tripling.

Defensively, Nicholas County only had one error in the win over Fort Knox.

After defeating Fort Knox, Nicholas County faced two of the state's premier pitchers in its next two games. In a winner's bracket game, Raceland shut out the Lady Jackets 5-0.

The 16th Region champion Raceland, Nicholas County's next opponent in an afternoon game, scored five runs in the fourth inning while managing just three hits to get the run support it needed for the tournament victory.

Raceland had 10 hits in the 5-0 shutout. Lady Rams pitcher Paige VanHoose held Nicholas County to just two hits.

Kala Blevins and Jessie Clark finished two-for-three for Raceland. Betty Anne Fannin was two-for-four for the Lady Rams.

Nicholas County, after dropping down into a loser's bracket game, faced Livingston Central, which had just beaten 16th Region champion Paintsville 11-1 in five innings in its previous game.

The Lady Jackets were leading 2-0 on Saturday evening in the game against Livingston Central when they had to wait through a half-hour injury delay before play resumed.

The break in action didn't phase Livingston Central, though. The Living-

ton team scored three runs in the fourth to take a 3-2 lead. Once Livingston Central took the lead, Nicholas County was held scoreless the rest of the game.

Fryman and Tiffany Wilson each scored once in the first inning versus Livingston Central. Fryman, Bretz, Tiffany Wilson, Ashley Brogman and Tara Wilson each had a single for Nicholas County in the tournament-ending setback.

Bretz is very appreciative of the supportive fan base his team drew from during the state tournament.

"The officials at the Class A spoke highly of our overwhelming crowd support we had in Louisville," commented Bretz.

"We want to thank everyone who was cheering us on, it helped us tremendously. The people in charge of the Class A were impressed with our solid play and enthusiasm throughout the Tournament and were very complimentary of our team and how we conducted ourselves on and off the field."

As a coach, that is the highest compliment you can receive.

The Lady Jackets, in addition to playing three state tournament games, also had the chance to get out and see some of the Louisville area.

"We had a great time in Louisville and the experience will help us in the future," Bretz added. "The girls really enjoyed themselves."

"This was a first class event and our girls gave a great account of themselves. Penny and I are so proud of the team."

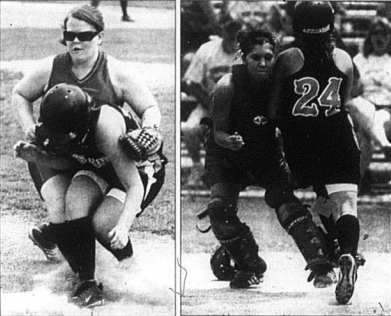
Nicholas County exited the state event with a 15-6 record.

The Lady Jackets are finishing up regular-season play and preparing for the next week's district tournament.



Photos by Tim Webb

Above Morgan Kelly slides safely into third base against Raceland. Far below left, Tara Wilson slides in under the tag against Raceland as well. Near below left, Jessie Clark of Raceland sneaks in under the tag of Ashley Brogman at third base. Right, Clark of Raceland is tagged out of home plate by Hollis Bretz in the second round of the Touchstone Energy Girls Softball All-A Classic in Jeffersontown, May 12.



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