

Central opens softball district with 14-4 win

BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

The 17th District softball season opened Thursday night with Central Hardin rolling to a 14-4 five-inning win over host John Hardin.

It also was the season opener for the Lady Bruins, while John Hardin fell to 1-1 overall and 0-1 in district.

Central Hardin got off to a fast start, leading 2-0 after just four batters in the game.

The Lady Bruins play today at Western Hills against Montgomery County at 11:40 a.m., Mercy at 1:20 p.m. and Western Hills at 4:40 p.m.

John Hardin is scheduled to return to action Tuesday against an unnamed opponent.

NORTH HARDIN 8, LARUE COUNTY 3

Host North Hardin improved to 20 on the season in a rematch of last year's 5th Region Tournament semifinal matchup that North Hardin also won.

LaRue County fell to 1-1. North Hardin hosts Fairdale at noon today, while LaRue County is off until a Thursday 6:30 p.m. home game against Adair County.

MEADE COUNTY 3, BULLITT EAST 2

The Lady Waves opened the season Thursday night by going on the road and knocking off Bullitt East.

Meade County will host Apollo at 1 p.m. today.

BASEBALL CENTRAL HARDIN 10, ANDERSON COUNTY 0

The host Bruins bounced back from a five-inning loss Wednesday



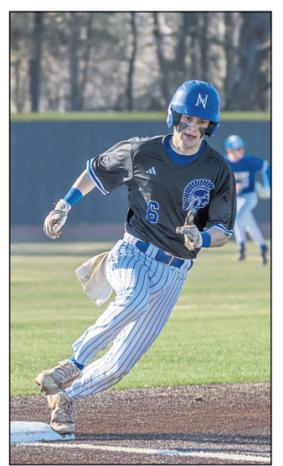
GINA CLEAR/The News-Enterprise

Kamiyah Brice of John Hardin slides into second base for the steal ahead of the throw to Central Hardin junior second baseman Ashley Searcy during a 17th District game at John Hardin. Central Hardin shortstop Kady Shive covers second. The Bruins won 14-4 in both teams' district opener.



GINA CLEAR/For The News-Enterprise

Central Hardin junior Claire Taylor smacks a double Thursday in the Bruins' first game of the season and a 17th District win at John Hardin High School. Central Hardin won 14-4 in five innings.



DAN TOWNSEND/The News-Enterprise

Thatcher Edlin of North Hardin rounds third base Thursday night in a game against Bethlehem.

to run-rule the Bearcats Thursday night.

Senior Caleb Irwin no-hit Anderson County and struck out eight batters, while freshmen Logan Robertson had two hits and two stolen bases and Colton Pyles had two hits and a run batted in.

Junior Garren Hayes had a double and knocked in two runs and junior Chase Higdon added a single.

The Bruins play at 1 p.m. today at Lexington Catholic.

ELIZABETHTOWN 13, FERN CREEK 1

The Cody Bridges era at Elizabethtown started off with a big win on the road Thursday night.

Bridges is a former Panther player now in his first season as head coach.

The Panthers are scheduled to play at 11 a.m. today at Breckinridge County.

LARUE COUNTY 16, BARDSTOWN 1

The host Hawks (2-0) unleashed a 10-hit attack Thursday night to win going away in a four-inning game.

Junior Dekker Thomas had a pair of hits and two runs scored with two runs batted in, while senior Kobe Cahoe also had a pair of hits and scored two runs.

Senior Ryan Hughes scored four runs and belted a homerun. Junior Brayden Singleton added two runs batted in and scored three runs.

Junior Cooper Wotton picked up the win by allowing two hits with three strikeouts over 3 1/3 innings of work. Senior Ayden Seidl finished up with two

strikeouts. The Hawks host North Oldham at noon Saturday.

MEADE COUNTY 17, JOHN HARDIN 2

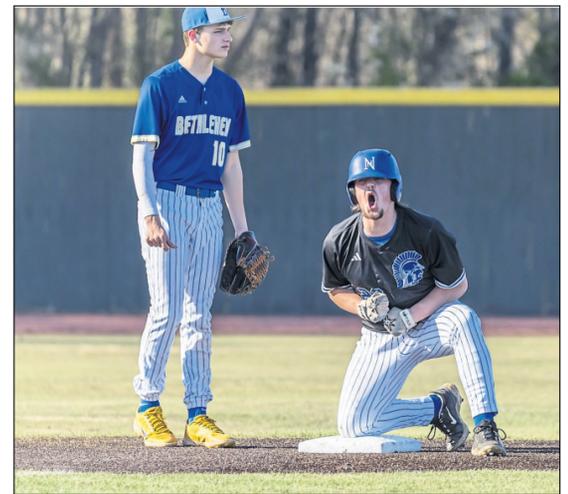
Meade County improved to 1-1 with a rout of visiting John Hardin Thursday night in four innings.

The Bulldogs fell to 0-2. Meade County hosts Stowe-Munro Falls, Ohio for a doubleheader at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Wednesday. John Hardin plays at home Monday at 6 p.m. against an unnamed opponent.

BETHLEHEM 12, NORTH HARDIN 8

The Trojans (1-1) lost at home Thursday night in a 5th Region game.

North Hardin plays at 5:30 p.m. Monday at Breckinridge County.



DAN TOWNSEND/The News-Enterprise

North Hardin junior Carson Thompson reacts after sliding into second base Thursday against Bethlehem. The Trojans lost, 12-8.

OWEH

FROM PAGE B1

the ball out quick, and get as close as I could to the goal. I was looking at the clock the whole time," Oweh said. "It was really just trying to get a shot off, and not let the season end."

Moments before Oweh's buzzer-beater, Santa Clara's Allen Graves had given the Broncos a 73-70 lead on a 3-pointer with 2.4 seconds left, seemingly the shot that would end UK's season. Right before that, Oweh tied the

game at 70 on a layup with 9.9 seconds remaining.

His deep 3 was the kind of shot that puts the madness into March Madness but it didn't end Santa Clara's postseason hopes — that came when UK scored eight consecutive points in OT to pull away in a battle that was marked by 12 ties and 20 lead changes.

For the second year in a row, Mark Pope's team advances to the second round of the NCAA Tournament, a place the program had been only once since 2019 before he took over for John Calipari two years ago. Kentucky

advanced to face second-seeded Iowa State in the round of 32 on Sunday.

Oweh led Kentucky with a career-high 35 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. Mouhamed Dioubate scored 17 points. Denzel Aberdeen had 16 points. Garrison added 10 points, seven rebounds and six blocked shots.

Kentucky, which led for most of the first half but trailed by one point at the break, took a 51-44 margin after a poster dunk by Garrison and then a 3-pointer from Aberdeen with 12:21 remaining, but Santa Clara fought back from there.

The Broncos went on a 10-2 run over the next three minutes and change to retake the lead, 54-53, and — after Oweh briefly put the Cats back on top with a bucket — Santa Clara guard Sash Gavalyugov scored five points in two possessions to make it a 59-55 game.

Two free throws from Dioubate and a fast-break layup from Oweh, who got fouled on the play and hit the and-one free throw, gave Kentucky a 60-59 lead with under eight minutes left.

The game was tied at 68 with two minutes left on the clock, but Graves grabbed

an offensive rebound and scored on the putback to give the Broncos a 70-68 advantage, leading Mark Pope to call a timeout with 1:25 left.

Oweh got an open look at a 3-pointer on UK's ensuing possession, but that shot rimmed out, and — after forcing a miss on the other end — the Cats couldn't corral the defensive rebound, giving Santa Clara the ball back with 20 seconds on the shot clock and 39.6 seconds left in the game.

After forcing another miss, Oweh jumped on a loose ball, and Kentucky was able to

call a timeout with 24.2 seconds left before Santa Clara could get a jump ball call.

That set up the dramatic final seconds, which were not without controversy.

Santa Clara coach Herb Sendek believes he was denied a timeout after Graves' go-ahead 3 and would have allowed his team to set its defense in the final seconds.

"You know," Sendek said afterward, "it was a really euphoric high followed by a tough one to swallow."

Ben Roberts of Tribune News Service contributed to this report.

GRIMM

FROM PAGE B1

making the First Team All-Area Team.

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR, ELLI KITTINGER (MEADE COUNTY)

Kittinger might be a seventh-grader but she doesn't let that be a reason to shy away from competing with much older and more experienced swimmers.

She did that for several years as a member of the Capital Aquatics team in Corydon, Indiana. That made

the transition to high school competition much easier.

"I wasn't really nervous about swimming with people older than me because the only way to swim with them was to have similar time cuts," Kittinger said. "Everyone at Meade County has been very kind. They made me feel like I was part of the team family and not just someone who was swimming for points."

Kittinger did quite well in racking up points for the Lady Waves.

During the regular season, she captured a pair of first-place finishes (50 Freestyle and 100 Butterfly) and was second in two meets in the

butterfly and another time in the backstroke.

Kittinger perhaps had her best showing when it counted the most. She won the 50 Freestyle and was third in the butterfly. Kittinger also helped the Meade County relay teams to a second-place finish (200 Freestyle) and a third (200 Medley Relay).

She gained valuable experience for the future by competing in the first round of state competition. Kittinger recently reflected back on her first season with Meade County.

"I was more focused on breaking a school record as a middle-schooler, which I

haven't done yet," she said. "(Some of the high points of the season) being on the relay A-teams, making it to semi-state and getting first place at region."

Kittinger tallied 16 points to win the award. Ashlyn Burnett of Central Hardin (8) was second in the voting and Kittinger's teammate Cara Hall (7) was third."

GIRLS' ALL AREA SWIM First Team

Savannah Grimm, North Hardin
Annabelle Preen, Central Hardin
EV Moore, Fort Knox

Sydney Wright, Central Hardin
Zoie Barr, Meade County
Elli Kittinger, Meade County
Lia VanZant, Central Hardin
Adelaide Seadler, John Hardin
Kayden Monnett, Central Hardin
Marley Spencer, Elizabethtown

Second Team

Francesca Mele, Elizabethtown
Sara Ricks, North Hardin
Jolie Burks, Elizabethtown
Anja Nikandrova, Fort Knox
Cara Hall, Meade County

Elaine Brookhart, Meade County
Emma Barr, Meade County
Kaela Dwyer, Fort Knox
Aliana Beifeld, Fort Knox
Brynleigh Blair, Elizabethtown

SWIMMER OF THE YEAR

Savannah Grimm, North Hardin

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

Elli Kittinger, Meade County

COACH OF THE YEAR

Natalie Miller, Central Hardin

NORTON

FROM PAGE B1

their best finish in the last five years.

"Kids at school are also taking note of what we've done and wanting to be on the swim team," Miller said. "We had several cross-country kids come out for swim. We have a lot of kids who have never swam before join the team. It is amazing because you just don't know the impact you have until you see the smile on these kids' faces."

Miller appreciates the friendships and relationships she's made with coaches in the area, and admits she is humbled by them recognizing the job she has done at Central Hardin. Her teams have gone from being regional contenders to teams who can contend at the state meets.

"All of the coaches in our region are very close," she said. "We are like a little family."

Getting this award is uplifting because they notice the impact you're making. We do this for the kids. My husband and I don't have any kids yet so our swimmers are a part of our little family."

BOYS' ALL-AREA SWIM First Team

Lochlan Huerth, Central Hardin
Zach Preen, Elizabethtown
Joshua Reardon, Meade County
Jacob Norton, Central Hardin
Hayes Harness, North Hardin
Sam Martin, Elizabethtown
Stephen Chevalier, Central Hardin
Cameron Speten, Central Hardin
Matthew Pickett, Meade County
Carson Hester, North Hardin

Second Team

Nathan Kittinger, Meade County
Owen Toms, Elizabethtown

Patrick Kulkofsky, Meade County
Noah Dale, North Hardin
Chase Minton, Central Hardin
Nic Sloan, Elizabethtown
Carter Browne, Elizabethtown
Eli Ortega, Fort Knox
Brysen Woehler, Meade County
Levi Stiff, Meade County

HONORABLE MENTION

Miguel Garcia, North Hardin
Matthew Williams, Elizabethtown
Gavin Wright, Meade County

SWIMMER OF THE YEAR

Jacob Norton, Central Hardin

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

Nathan Kittinger, Meade County

COACH OF THE YEAR

Natalie Miller, Central Hardin

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