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LADY BEARS CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

quarter of play.

The Lady Bears continued the momentum and pushed the margin out to 24-13 after an and-one by Ava Wilson and a freebie by Ann Marie Skaggs. However, a barrage of three-pointers by the Lady Cougars whittled that down, next to nothing going into the final period.

Grayson County, who had been called for only six fouls through three quarters, seemed poised to take control of the game when the Lady Bears committed four fouls in the first 75 seconds of the final quarter. With a 10-4 run, the visitors thrived ahead, 35-30, at the midway mark. But, the Lady Bears were not laying down on their home floor.

Belcher, who proved a difference-maker, calmly hit four straight from the charity stripe over the next minute to help even the score. Then, Wilson converted another and-one to take the lead with a couple minutes left before Carly Cardwell and Skaggs delivered victory-sealing free-throws.

After punching their region ticket in the 43-40 hard-fought win, the Lady Bears welcomed the Lady Cats of Edmonson County, who had beat Trinity 66-49 in their opener, in the championship game on Thursday night. Like Grayson, the Lady Cats were 20-7 coming into the contest; plus, they had impressive 17 and 18-point wins over Butler during the regular season.

Cardwell, who had nine points and 12 rebounds in the first-round win, put the Lady Bears on the



▲ PHOTO | GREG MOORE
Carly Cardwell, an All-District Season selection, shown here colliding with Shelby Sowders for the tough block/charge decision by the officials. There were many tough calls such as this in the Bear/Cat fight.

scoreboard before five seconds ticked off the clock. The blows were flying in the Cat/Bear fight from early on as the referees allowed them to play. The first period would settle with BC down by two, 14-12.

Edmonson's Shelby Sowders kept getting downhill, but was not highly successful hitting contested shots with excellent rotation from the Lady Bears defense. Still, the Lady Cats built a small amount of momentum throughout the second before Maddie Jones knocked down a jumper from the elbow to pull Butler County within five, 25-20, going into the half.

After the break, Karrington Hunt picked up where Jones left off. The senior guard's jumper and a couple Wilson free-throws lasted a good part of the third quarter. Down 12 with less than a minute, Wilson, who had been defended well, started to get going. Four straight from the junior and the Lady Bears trailed by eight heading into the final period.

Wilson, who had a double-double in both district tournament contests, continued attacking the heart of the Cats' defense. Lady Cats' center, Cariann Williams, who was limited to ten points, picked up a fourth foul as a result. Sowders followed suit. Near the four-minute mark, the point-guard would get her fifth. This sent the Lady Cats' bench into a spiral.

After Coach Jody Booth's meltdown, within less than a minute, Williams was assessed with her final foul and Wilson completed another and-one. The play was a straw that broke the camel's back. It started a 16-2 run over the last three and a half minutes of the free-for-all.

With Edmonson's primary ballhandlers out of the game, the Lady Bears' trapping defense took full advantage of stealing the ball/forcing turnovers. If they fouled, more than likely, the Lady Cats missed. Whereas, the Lady Bears made their free-throws. It made the wave of red throughout the guests



▲ PHOTO | GREG MOORE
Every rebound was a battle and this one is from early in the game. It shows Cardwell and Ava Wilson, who had 23 points and 12 rebounds in the championship, battling with Lady Cats senior Cariann Williams, who was held below her averages.

section sit in disgust. Even show it in other ways.

Three Lady Bears made All-Tournament. Skaggs, who went for ten points and 15 rebounds in the championship game, was recognized along with Wilson and Hunt. Cardwell and Wilson were named All-Season with Jones receiving the Academic Award.

Butler County went 23/30 from the free throw line with Wilson (13/15) and Skaggs (6/7) leading the effort. After a Butler foul on a three-point attempt, Edmonson could have tied the game with only seconds left, but made only one of the three.

Grayson Co
6 7 12 15 40
Butler Co
4 13 9 17 43
Wilson 18, Cardwell 9, Skaggs 7, Belcher 7, Hunt 2

Edmonson
14 11 11 9 45
Butler
12 8 8 21 49
Wilson 23, Skaggs 10, Cardwell 5, Belcher 5, Hunt 4, Jones 2



▲ PHOTO | GREG MOORE
All-Tournament Team Selections: Ann Marie Skaggs, Ava Wilson, and Karrington Hunt.



▲ PHOTO | GREG MOORE
Ann Marie Skaggs, who had ten points and 15 rebounds in the championship game, shown here grinding against Williams, who constantly disrupted the Lady Bears in the post with nine blocks. However, BC's persistence finally paid off.

Butler County Special Olympics Bound for State

After winning their Regional Tournament, the Butler County Bears Special Olympics will compete for a State Championship

on March 14th and 15th in Louisville, KY. If they win their 9:15 EST game on Saturday morning, they will come back for Sun-

day's 8am EST championship game. If they lose their first game, they will play for a bronze medal at 11:45 EST on Saturday.

The games will be played at the following address:

1906 Watterson Trail
Louisville, KY 40299

Cougars End Bears Season

BY Greg Moore
BANNER SPORTS EDITOR

The Butler County Bears knew it was a rebuilding year. First year Head Coach Dustin Barnett stepped up from the middle school ranks where he was distinctly successful for many years as a disciple of the game. Coach Barnett is an intense learner who will continue to be extremely impactful for young men after getting thrown to wolves in year one.

Coach Barnett, in similar fashion as previous Bears' Head Coach, Calvin Dockery, cut his teeth

developing young men in the game of basketball at BCMS. Also like the arguably best coach in BC history, Coach Barnett will continue to build at this new level as he studies and develops.

It has not been easy. However, anyone who witnessed the bulk of the season can speak volumes about the improvement of the Bears as the season progressed. Unfortunately, the Bears were matched up with Grayson County in the first round of the district tournament.

BEARS
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▲ PHOTO | SUBMITTED
State Bound for the Special Olympics Butler County Bears basketball team.