

Lady Engineers Win District With Win Over Powell

Estill shuts out Jackson City, 10-0, to advance in 14th Region

by **MIKE WISEMAN**
Estill Tribune Sportswriter

On Tuesday night in Booneville, the 2016 Lady Engineers claimed their 11th consecutive 56th District Title by defeating arch rival Powell County by the score of 9-1. Mission accomplished!

Next on the to-do list for the Ladies is claiming a 5th straight 14th Region Championship and a trip to the State Tournament in Owensboro.

Estill 9, Powell 1

In the title game, Estill would start on fire as they strung together four consecutive hits in the opening frame and take a commanding 3-0 lead. McKinley Meek and McKeely Muncie would hit back to back singles and Taylor Wiseman would drive them both in with one of her own. Zoe Deaton would plate Wiseman with a double. Estill

would put up single runs in the second and third innings. Meek would drive in Haley Bishop with a base hit off the first base bag and Bishop would drive in Abby Winkle an inning later with a three base hit.

Powell's defense would let them down in the 5th and Estill would make them pay with two more runs and a 7-1 lead. T. Wiseman would add icing to the cake when she hit a two-run bomb in the bottom of the sixth. Estill would

place five players on the All-Tourney Team: Taylor Wiseman, McKeely Muncie, Zoe Deaton, Hayley Puckett, and Haley Bishop, who also received the J. L. Thomas Golden Glove Award.

Estill 10, Jackson City 0

On Monday night in Hazard, the Lady Engineers would begin defense of their Region Title with a first round matchup with Jackson City. It would be

all Estill in this one as a 10-0 lead would end the game after 5 innings.

Estill would come out on fire in this game as well by putting up a eight spot in the first. Muncie would toss a perfect game and add 10 K's while collecting three hits at the plate.

Meek would hit a three-run "inside the park" homerun in her second at bat of the first inning. T. Wiseman, Deaton, S. Wiseman, Winkle, and Puckett

would add RBI's in the first inning as Estill basically ended this game.

District Championship

Estill will take on Perry Central in the semi-finals on Tuesday night and try to advance to the title game on Wednesday night as they "strive for five."

Engineer nation—load up and head to Hazard and support these girls. GO BIG BLUE!!!!

Engineers Win District's Season & Tourney Titles

The Estill County Engineers got off to a good start in the 14th Region Tournament with a 11-0 shut out of the Breathitt County Bobcats on Monday night at Perry County Central in Hazard.

That set them up against another of the region's top teams, the 22-14 Hazard Bulldogs, on Tuesday night at 8 p.m.

The other semi-finalist teams, Letcher County Central and Perry County Central play at 5:30 p.m.

The winners of the two games play for the championship on Wednesday night at 7 p.m.

Estill won the 56th District 11-5 over Powell County in Booneville. That gave the Engineers both the season and tourney district titles. Estill had beaten Owsley County, 15-1, to get

into the district finals.

The Powell win was the third this season over the Pirates as Estill finished 8-0 in the district.

The Engineers improved to 22-14 with the win over Breathitt County. Tuesday night's opponent, Hazard, is 27-11 and won over Estill in the regular season, 7-2.

Senior Zach Withers pitched most of the district championship game for Estill over Powell. The Engineers had hot bats early in the game and could actually have ended the game early with an 11-1 lead but an infield error let a fly ball drop that would have been Powell's third out. Then the Pirates scored to cut the lead to less than 10-runs required for the mercy rule, 11-2 and scored two more runs later.



Coach Crowe gets dunked after Estill's win.

Hard To See Assistant's Impact



Larry Vaught

Kentucky coach Mark Stoops says it is now hard to see the impact receivers coach Lamar Thomas has with players.

"I just think you see a very energetic guy that brings credibility. He played in the NFL, was one of the great college football players. He has a great presence about him, does a great job in recruiting," said Stoops.

Junior receiver Garrett Johnson watched an ESPN special on Thomas, who played for Miami and set a school record for receptions before going on to play eight years in the NFL. He was an assistant coach at Hampton, Western Kentucky and Louisville before coming to Kentucky after the 2015 season.

"To see him joke around and having fun with us is great. You can see he knows the game and it just makes you want to be engaged even more. His coaching style is great," Johnson said. "The swag he has, receivers love. But of course, winning has to happen. The little swag is just to get you going to get those wins we need."

That's what Thomas believes he can do by helping Kentucky's receivers become more productive. Recently he offered these insights on the program.

Question: Is tough love a fair explanation of how you coach?

Thomas: "I enjoy coaching. These kids, man, some of them need some tough coaching but they also need somebody to let them know they care. As a player, that was important to me. I played for a coach that could get on me real hard, but I knew that he cared for me. I try to use that philosophy because kids do bet-

ter. You can be tough and get on them all you want as long as they know you care about them."

Question: Is that hard to do with a group of players you have not known but a few months?

Thomas: "My personality helps. I am outgoing person. I really enjoy the game. The game has been very good to me and I try to pass on that passion to these players and let them know if you do what you are supposed to do this game could be get to you also. I try to get them to understand that you are here to become a better man and grow as a person. If you do that, you will become a better player because it goes hand in hand. If you get out there and you are not doing the right things and are not going to class, not going to study hall, it will show up on the field. A lot of times I start a meeting out by talking about doing the right things. They seem to have picked it up. I don't get many e-mails (about players) and I like that. That means they are doing the right things and it is starting to show up on the field."

Question: Do kids play harder if they understand how much you care?

Thomas: "Yes I do feel that if they know you care they will run through a brick wall for you. A lot of coaches yell and there is nothing behind it. I have had coaches like that and I kind of played for myself. But the coaches that really cared about me, I didn't mind them getting on me because I knew if I did the wrong thing, I kind of felt like I was letting them down. That was big for me."

Question: What are you trying to get through to this group?

Thomas: "The first thing I talked to them about was consistency on and off the field. I felt it was important. Obviously wherever I go in the city, the first thing people say when they find out I am the receivers coach is, 'Congratulations. Can you teach them how to catch?' I tell them all the time what is the definition of you. Do you want to be known as a group that was not consistent? We challenge each

other. I challenge them actually. I talk to them all the time about working hard and then good things happen but you have to put in the extra time to be the best. It just does not happen by osmosis. You have to study the plays. You have to go out every day ready to work. I love for them to be loose, but you have to work. Football is a great game, but being on the field there were a lot of people who wish they had that opportunity to be out there. Don't let a day pass you by that you don't work."

Question: Are they catching the ball better?

Thomas: "Yes. For some of them that have casts on, they are still catching the ball. Sometimes you have to excuse a guy with a cast on for dropping one or two. But if no cast on, they better catch every one and they are doing a good job. From what I saw on film a lot of times (last year), they were running without catching the ball. They weren't focused on catching the ball and properly looking the ball in. We do a lot of drills on that. A lot. You have to be able to catch the ball away from your body and need strong hands."

One of Kentucky's top recruiting targets in the 2017 class continues to be 6-9 Jared Vanderbilt of Houston.

He's coached by former Louisville standout Rodney McCray, but Vanderbilt's father, Robert, says McCray would have no problem with Vanderbilt picking any school, including Kentucky.

"We all want what is best for him. As coaches and parents, we want the best for him. He (McCray) wants to teach about life, not just basketball. Sometimes Scooter (McCray) will come around. (Kentucky assistant coach) Kenny Payne came down to visit. We always have them talk to players to make sure players know what is going on," Robert Vanderbilt said.

Kentucky could also get a recruiting boost from incoming freshman De'Aaron Fox of Texas.

"They get along very well. They socialize, hang out during AAU season,"

Robert Vanderbilt said. "He is a good player. I am very impressed by him. I tell him all the time it is great to have talent he has. He comes from a good family, too.

"Very good kid. He is low key, he is leader of his team. He has a good time and carries himself in the manner he is supposed to. Kentucky is really getting a good player.

"We have a relationship with him and his parents. We are originally from Mississippi and they are, too, so we connected right away. Sure they will be more than happy to give us information on Kentucky. We are all trying to get to the same place."

Jarred Vanderbilt played in Kentucky four times last season and had plenty of UK fans let him know they would like to see him play at Kentucky.

"This is one of our favorite states. We love the support and appreciate it," Robert Vanderbilt said.

As the recruiting offers continue to grow, Florida quarterback Mac Jones continues to insist he's not only solid with his verbal commitment to Kentucky but gladly accepts being the face of the 2017 recruiting class.

"I've always had a chip on my shoulder," said Jones. "I am getting a lot more attention now. Early, I did not get evaluated as much as I wanted. That has changed by people hearing my name and wanting to see me."

He admits recruiting can be "stressful and crazy" at times. He tries to keep a level head and focus on his goal.

"I also try to keep all the (UK) recruits together while I am also focusing on my high school senior season coming up," he said.

Even though he created a social media buzz a time or two for UK fans when he thanked different schools for offering scholarships -- including Alabama and Louisville -- he is careful about what he posts on social media.

"I make sure I don't post anything stupid. My mom and dad did a good job with me on social media," Jones said.

Wanderings from the Woods & Water
by **Jay Bicknell**
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Three Day Weekend

Memorial Day means a three-day weekend for a lot of us. I took the day off and hung out with the family. I caught up on some yard work. I finished the day up at the ballpark watching my boys play ball.

The one reoccurring thought came to me on Monday Memorial Day. It was a thought about my cousin Master Chief Greg Bicknell.

You see my cousin didn't get to spend Memorial Day with his family. He spent his day in Afghanistan. While I was back enjoying my day off he was in a foreign country where a lot of evil people live. I will probably hit the snooze button a few times on Tuesday morning and complain and wish I had another day off. My cousin and many more will wake up in Afghanistan for several more months. It will be months before they get to spend the day with their families.

One thing that really gets under my skin is you wouldn't even know we've got troops fighting in Afghanistan and yes, still in Iraq! I guess it doesn't fit the media's agenda. When it fits the liberal media's agenda they let us know exactly how many soldiers got killed.

I hope you took a few minutes out on Memorial Day to remember all those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Those soldiers who died, did it for our Freedom. The Freedom

we love has come at a high price. Some scripture comes to mind when I think about all the fallen soldiers.

John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that lay down his life for his friends."

Well, no hunting or fishing this week. Just a big THANK YOU to all those that have served. The free can never repay the debt owed to the American Soldier. May God Bless all of our troops and their families.

Greg, if this makes it way to you in Afghanistan be safe, we love you, and THANK YOU. Please tell all the soldiers around you we said THANK YOU and they all are in our prayers.

My challenge to everyone! Every veteran you see, shake their hand and tell them thanks for their service.

Land of the Free because of the Brave!

Until next week, get out and enjoy God's creation!

Birding BITS BY Cindy Brook

Blue Skies
Eastern bluebirds love an open habitat. Bring them into your yard by painting bluebird houses blue, providing meal worms in smooth plastic bowls and giving them something tall to perch on, since they like to look for food from high places. Don't forget fresh water, too.
E-mail: birdingbits@cfl.rr.com
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