

Columbia 8, Gainesville 7

Comeback Queens

Columbia softball rallies to defeat Gainesville in regional semifinal matchup.

By **KAYLA LOKEINSKY**
 klokeinsky@lakecityreporter.com

The stadium was silent as Columbia junior SK Lewis walked up to the plate. This was the Lady Tigers' last chance to rally and beat district-rival Gainesville. The Lady Tigers were down by two runs in the bottom of the seventh. Make an out, Columbia's season would be over. Hit safely, they still had a chance.

Lewis took her place in the batter's box, ground her cleats into the clay, and shouldered the bat. With a 2-1 count, two outs and two runners on, she knew what she had to do. It was get on base or go home.

The sound of the ball hitting the bat was clear: it was drilled. Lewis drove in the tying run. Her game-saving two-run double allowed the Lady Tigers to tie district-rival Gainesville, and ultimately defeat them, 8-7, in Tuesday night's Region 1-7A semifinal.

After coming back from a 6-0 deficit, Columbia was within two runs of the Lady Hurricanes going into their last at bat. Then Lewis stepped up to the plate with two outs and with runners on first and second. She knew she had to put it in play.

"I was pumped up," Lewis said. "I kind of had a rough night and I got up there and I just thought about my team and how I had to do it for them. We fought back and we fought back and we had runners on and I just had to put the ball in play. Just put it where they couldn't get it. Just find a hole."

Lewis found that hole in centerfield when she ripped a line drive up the middle for a double. She took third when the Gainesville centerfielder lost control of the ball. Her hit brought in teammates Story Giebeig (walk) and Cris'Deona Beasley (single) to tie the



Photos by BRENT KUYKENDALL/Special to the Reporter

Columbia junior SK Lewis prepares to connect with the ball during Tuesday night's home regional-semifinal matchup against Gainesville.

game 7-7. With two outs in the bottom of the seventh and Lewis at third, the Lady Tigers had a chance to win it all.

The entire home side of the stands was on their feet as freshman Morgan Hoyle came to the plate. When she stepped into the box, Hoyle fell behind quick with an 0-2 count. She battled, ticking off a couple foul balls, then evened the count 2-2.

Lewis worked her way down the line, waiting for her moment. She was watching Gainesville pitcher Reghan Young, timing her pitches, and when she saw a wild pitch, she was halfway to home plate. Before the Hurricanes' catcher could even pick up the ball that had bounced off her shin-guard, Lewis was sliding into

home. She stole the game from the Lady Hurricanes and scored the winning run for Columbia in walk-off fashion.

"I knew that the pitcher had gotten tired so I was watching her release point," Lewis said. "When I saw it was going to be low and even if the catcher blocked it and it got away from her the pitcher wouldn't be able to get there in time, so I was just getting down the line a lot because I didn't think she was going to throw it because it was such a close game. As soon as I saw it bounce off of her I went down."

Through a cloud of dirt you could see the umpire's hands signal Lewis was safe,

CHS continued on 6B



Columbia freshman Morgan Hoyle (left) and Story Giebeig embrace after the Lady Tiger's walk-off win against Gainesville.

Columbia 5, St. Augustine 4

Tigers get stung by Yellow Jackets

Columbia ends their season with a loss.

By **TONY BRITT**
 tbritt@lakecityreporter.com

Trailing 5-4 in the bottom of the final inning, Columbia got its lead-off hitter, the tying run, on base, but was unable to push the run across the plate, allowing the visiting St. Augustine Yellow Jackets to sneak out of town with a Region 1-7A quarterfinal playoff victory over the Tigers Tuesday night.

The Tigers (15-14, 5-1) were frustrated throughout the evening at the plate and weren't able to master the off-speed pitches from Yellow Jackets' starting pitcher, Nick Phifer.

Columbia trailed most of the game, yet had multiple opportunities to take the lead. The team could not get a clutch base hit that would put them ahead and stranded seven runners on base during the contest.

CHS head baseball coach



BRENT KUYKENDALL/Special to the Reporter

Columbia pitcher Tyson Ellis releases a pitch during Tuesday's home game against the St. Augustine Yellow Jackets.

Brian Thomas said Phifer came as he was advertised, a crafty left-hander in a right-hander's body.

"He kept us off balance for the first three innings or so with change of speed and location," Thomas said. "He was just masterful. I knew coming in he was going to be a tough cookie to face. He did what he was supposed to do — he kept the momentum in their

dugout and they were able to put a crooked number up on us in that one inning with three runs and that's the killer."

Tiger starting pitcher Tyson Ellis struggled to find the strike zone early in the game, giving up single runs in the first and second innings. In the third inning the Yellow Jackets (15-11, 2-6) roughed him up for three more runs. Then the

gritty, senior right-hander hunkered down, regained his composure and held the Yellow Jackets scoreless for the rest of the night.

"Tyson is a battler and he's been a battler all year," Thomas said. "He wasn't 100 percent healthy and had some issues over the weekend, but he got

STUNG continued on 6B

LOCAL GOLF

Country Club at Lake City to host summer camps

Tennis and golf clinics will be offered.

From staff reports

The Country Club at Lake City will host two camps this upcoming summer: the Carl Ste-Marie's Junior Golf Camp and the Johnny Young's Junior Tennis Camp.

Carl Ste-Marie's popular junior golf clinics are back again this year at the Country Club at Lake City. There will be four junior golf clinics this summer. All the clinics will be held Monday - Friday from 8 to 11 a.m. The clinics cost \$85 for non-members and \$70 for members. The first clinic will be held June 5 to June 9. The second clinic will be held June 19 to June 23. The third clinic will be held July 10 to July 14. The final clinic will be held July 24 to July 28. Free drinks and snacks will be provided to the

participants. The clinics are limited to the first 20 paid kids. Parents can register their children or pick up additional information at the Country Club at Lake City. For more information, call Carl Ste-Marie at 752-2266 or 623-2833.

The Country Club will also be having Johnny Young's Junior Tennis Camps this summer. All clinics will be held Monday - Friday from 8 to 11 a.m. The camp costs \$85 for non-members and \$70 for members. The first clinic will be held June 12 to June 16. The second clinic will be held July 17 to July 21. The last clinic will be held July 31 to August 4. Free drinks and snacks will be provided. The clinics are limited to 16 kids. Parents can register campers or pick up more information at the Country Club at Lake City. For more information on the clinics, call Johnny Young at 365-3827.



BRENT KUYKENDAL/Social to the Reporter

Columbia junior shortstop SK Lewis (left) gives a high-five to her coach after she hit in the game-tying run during Tuesday's game against Gainesville. Lewis went on to steal home to win the game.

TIGERS

Continued From 1B

and the field was instantly flooded with Columbia players and coaches. Lewis was swept up by her teammates and coaches. Lewis was swept up by her teammates into a giant hug while the coaches all embraced and high-fived. The fans were banging on the bleachers, the announcer was screaming on the intercom. The Hurricane fans were silent and their players walked off dejected. Their season was over, and the Lady Tigers advanced to the regional finals.

At the beginning of Tuesday's home game, things looked bleak for the Lady Tigers. The first hit of the game for Gainesville was an out-of-the-park homerun by senior Callen DeLucas, after Hoyle attempted to catch the ball but it ended

up popping out and going over the fence. Then Gainesville rattled off five more runs, putting the score at 6-0 going into the bottom of the second.

The Lady Tigers remained down by six until the bottom of the fifth, when Young began to struggle on the mound. This was when Lewis hit her first double of the game, setting up a four-run rally that put Columbia within two runs of the Lady Hurricanes.

"(Young) was struggling," Columbia Head Coach Trudy Andrews said. "In the early innings we were trying to jump on pitches. We weren't being selective, and that's because they were pumped up. They wanted to make something happen. They just had to be more selective, wait for their pitches and stay within themselves and be confident in themselves.

A single in the bottom of the sixth by sophomore Dara Gaylord drove in Hoyle to put the score at 6-5. However, Gainesville quickly answered back with a run of their own after Columbia's pitcher, Beasley, walked in a run.

Down by two during their last at bat, Lewis brought in the tying run and scored the winning run. It was her team's resilience that set her up to make the game-winning hit.

"They believe in their bats," Andrews said. "They believe in each other. They came in, they talked to each other and our seniors pulled them together."

Columbia will host Niceville at 7 p.m. Friday in the regional finals. The winner will go on to the state semifinal on May 19 and face the winner of South Fork vs. Doral Academy.

STUNG

Continued From 1B

himself ready, rested and amped-up for the first couple of innings. Then he settled down and settled into being Tyson. I could have made a move [pitching change] early in the ballgame, but I felt like he felt he had it and you're going to ride your guy. He pitched a great game. He pitched good enough to allow us offensively to sneak back into it and have some opportunities and that's all we can ask. He's done that all year for us."

St. Augustine was able to scratch-up an unearned run in its first at-bat, capitalizing on a hit batter, a walk and a base hit to get the 1-0 lead on the Tigers in the top half of the first inning.

The Tigers managed to tie the game after leadoff hitter Josh Boyette singled to right field and moved to second and third base on a pair of ground ball outs.

With two outs, a Caleb Strickland single up the middle allowed Boyette to score and tie the game at 1-1.

A base hit and an error

in the second inning gave St. Augustine its second run and allowed the Yellow Jackets to take a 2-1 lead.

The Tigers mounted a second inning rally when Sammy Walker drew a base on balls and was sacrificed to second base on a bunt by Damon Dumas. Walker scored when the next batter, Mikah Gustavson, hit a two-out double down the third base line to knot the score at 2-2.

The Yellow Jackets upped the ante and scored three runs in the top of the third inning — aided by three Tiger errors, pushing the score to 5-2.

The Tigers attempt to score in the bottom of the fourth inning was thwarted when a one out safety squeeze bunt allowed the Yellow Jackets third baseman to throwout the batter out and then the first baseman fired to the plate to mow down the potential run.

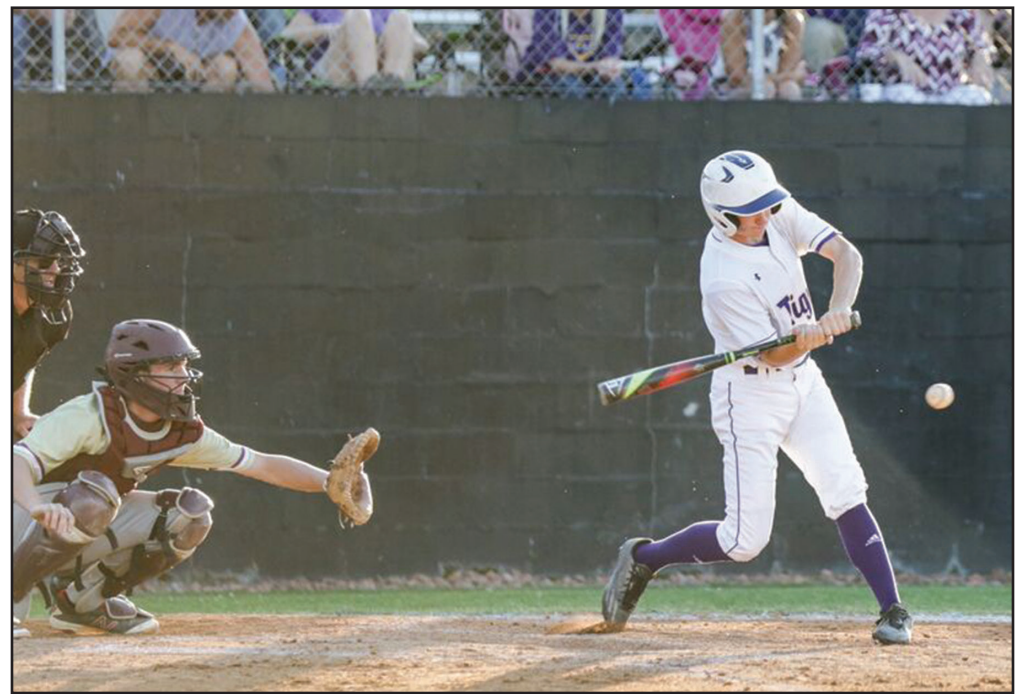
The Tigers chipped away at the lead for the remainder of the game and scored a run in the bottom of the fifth inning when leadoff hitter Boyette reached on a single to center field and scored on a double by Strickland, trimming the

deficit to two runs, with St. Augustine leading 5-3.

In the bottom of the sixth inning, Walker hit a single over third base and moved to second base on a Dumas sacrifice bunt. Gustavson followed with an RBI-single to right field, leaving Columbia within striking distance in a 5-4 contest in favor of St. Augustine with one out. After Boyette reached on a walk, the Yellow Jackets changed pitchers and immediately got out of trouble when Boyette got doubled-off first base on a flyball to right field.

The Tigers overcame two errors in the top of the seventh inning to hold St. Augustine scoreless and went to the dish looking to get one or more runs to tie the game or win outright.

The first hitter, Jamie Minchin reached on an infield single up the middle and the Tigers hoped to pressure the Yellow Jackets. However, St. Augustine's relief pitcher was able to get three consecutive fly ball outs — the final out with his left fielder so close to the fence, that his shadow didn't have space to fit behind him.



BRENT KUYKENDAL/Special to the Reporter

Columbia's Cole Frier swings at a pitch thrown by St. Augustine on Tuesday night.

"Our kids fought hard," Thomas said. "We had an opportunity in that last inning if we get a couple of those balls to fall down. I told Clayton Steinruck that the ball he hit for the third out, the guy couldn't get any deeper or he'd be standing in the [school] pond. He hit that ball right on the screws and the kid caught it right up against the fence

and that was the ballgame."

Thomas said the players had a few mistakes early in the game, but he doesn't believe it costs them the game because they weren't manufacturing runs in the fashion that had become their trademark throughout the season.

"I feel awful for our seniors," Thomas said. "They worked their tails off

from early in August until tonight to put us here. The cool thing about it is the tradition of winning is continued because of those guys."

Thomas said he told the team in his post game address to let the loss make them hungry and to come back trying to avoid this feeling, but to get to a second or third round game next season.

LCCCYBA presents top teams with trophies at spring awards night



COURTESY PHOTOS

Tile Transitions won first place in the LCCCYBA 12U division. Pictured are Dylan Williams (front row, from left), Dylon Hendry, Robert Davis, Brad Hendon, Christopher Hayes. Middle row, from left: Austin Smith, Demetrius Mayo, Caleb Brooks, Jared Hopkins, Dean Moffit. Back row, from left: Coaches Christopher Hayes, Gary Bailey. (Not pictured: Anthony Cortese, Brayden Johnson, Travis Matthews, Kalen Mcmenomey and Alfred Matthews.)



Potash won second place in the LCCCYBA 12U division. Pictured are Anthony Cortese (front row, from left), Brayden Johnson, Travis Matthews, Kalen McMenomey. Back row, from left: Danny Rowland, Joshua Ledezma, Coach Concepcion Ledezma, Jacob Rippitoe, Sam Watkins. (Not pictured- Carson Bratkovich, Ashton Heitzman, Jacob Priest, Cooper Mote, Evan Williams, Dillon Welch, Tommy Priest, Harry Mote, Nate Watkins.)



EAG won first place in the LCCCYBA 10U division. Pictured are Aulden Jenkins (front row, from left), Collin Tuell, Josiah Hopkins, Trayce McKenzie. Middle row, from left: Jordan Johnson, Kamden Bocanegra, Ashton Magstadt, Travis Hoyle, Kayden Ellis. Back row, from left: Coaches Derrick Tuell, Rick Raulerson, Todd Hoyle. (Not pictured: Mason Hauge and Butch Hauge.)



Crosspoint Church won second place in the LCCCYBA 10U division. Pictured are Kason Leffler (front row, from left), Cadan Hall, Carson Capallia, Tyler Hudson, Kolby Gootee, Michael Simmons. Back row, from left: Coaches Chase Capallia, John Gootee. (Not pictured: Carter Downing, Cole Westland, Jarren Cannon, Tanner Westover, Brice Hudson.)