

Sports

— Cook's threes spark title game win

RJHS relentless in pursuit of 3-3A crown

By DAVID PIERCE
Times Sports Team

The Rivercrest Junior Lady Colts demonstrated their own version of "Shock and Awe" last week as they laid claim to the 3-3A District Tournament crown.

Defeating their three opponents by an average score of 44-15, Rivercrest (16-4) capped the week-long tourney with a 42-14 win over Corning, the tourney's top seed.

The team's defense was relentless, blitzing the Lady Bobkittens from the get-go. RJHS forced eight turnovers, picked up 13 steals and harassed Corning into a 4-for-23 shooting performance. And CJHS missed 15-of-21 free throw attempts.

With its defense clicking, seventh grader Emily Cook kick-started the Jr. Lady Colts offense with five three-pointers — four in the second quarter alone.

"I told them from the beginning not to stress over our offense," said head coach Joe Robertson of his advice for the squad. "We create offense off our defense and I knew the points would come."

"Corning's a pretty good team," he added, "but even they looked a little shell-shocked when



our defense stepped up the pressure. You know, I'm glad I didn't have to face our defense, because I don't what the answer is when you play these girls."

Leading just 8-5 early in the second period, third-seeded RJHS capitalized off a rebound on a missed Corning lay up.

3-3A Junior High District Champs

Cook set up just outside the arc and canned a 3-pointer from the wing to start a two-and-a-half minute stretch where her four three-point attempts drew nothing but net.

Sandwiched in between were a Savannah Graham basket compliments of a

Chantea Hurt steal, plus a hoop from Cook on a fast break.

When Corning's Whitney Woodard mis-fired on the front end of a 1-and-1 attempt, Cook was at it again with her second trey.

Then Cook picked off an errant inbounds pass and stepped beyond the three-point line for number three.

And following a Lady Bobkitten turnover she drilled another attempt and the Junior Lady Colts had ballooned the lead to 20 points in a matter of minutes.

"That was a knockout punch right there," described Robertson of Cook's sharpshooting. "There's not many teams that can overcome that."

Corning certainly didn't, trailing 32-9 at the break as Rivercrest coasted to its first girls' title since the 2004-05 campaign.

"Yeah, there are some similarities between the two teams," agreed Robertson drawing comparisons between the school's last district champion and this one. "Both started off kind of slow and turned it on at



Chantea Hurt leaps for joy as her teammates rush the floor



Emily Cook (40) sparked the win with five 3-pointers



The grand prize — Rivercrest Jr. Lady Colt teammates hoist the championship trophy.



To the victor — RJHS principal Mike Smith (right) presents the game ball to Joe Robertson, head coach of the Junior Lady Colts.

the end."

The Junior Lady Colts last loss came to Corning in double overtime Dec. 18 and since returning from Christmas break the team has outscored their opponents by 20 or more points.

"Two weeks without basketball helped this team," explained Robertson of the positive effects of the Christmas lay off, "and when we came back everyone became accustomed to their role and things just clicked."

Cook outscored Corning on her own, tallying 17 points, while Hurt added nine and Graham seven. Damonique Brown, Tianna Smith, Hanna Kirk, Chelsea Cooper and Demarya Barner all scored two points for RJHS.

"This is pretty sweet," said an exuberant Robertson following the game.

RJHS 44, Brookland 20

Semifinals

The Jr. Lady Colts advanced to the championship game with a 24-point win over the Lady Bearcats.

Hurt led the way with 14 and Graham joined her in double figures with 11. Smith chipped in nine and Cook four as RJHS led 10-3 after one quarter of play, 25-10 at the break and 39-16 through three quarters.

Barner and Amber Manley added two points each for Rivercrest.

Lady Colts lose regular season finale

TUCKERMAN — Regular season conference champion Tuckerman upended the Rivercrest Lady Colts, 67-48, to close the regular season.

Rivercrest (16-16) finished sixth in the conference and played seventh-seeded Harrisburg Tuesday in the 3-3A District Tournament at Tuckerman.

The Lady Colts fell behind early to Tuckerman, trailing by 11 points (22-11) at the end of the first quarter. The Lady Bulldogs stretched their lead to 18 by halftime and upped the margin to 22 (49-27) through three quarters.

Carlisha Miner led Rivercrest with 15, while Jaressa Banks had 13, and Aleta Cannon tallied 10. The sophomore recorded the double-double when as she pulled down 12 rebounds.

Chyna Smith recorded three points; Tysha Byrd, Erica Manley and Druella Talley each scored two and Courtney Weathers added one.

Rivercrest gained a measure of revenge in the 'B' game as the Lady Colts scored a 32-20 win.

Byrd led the way with 10, Tammera Chew had eight, and Talley and Iesha Williams had six apiece.

