

# Lady Rocket softball highlights '22

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Every season, there are plenty of top highlights from the county that make the headlines.

In 2022, there were plenty of highs and lows from across Marshall County. Here are the top local sports stories from 2022.

## No. 4 Tigerette softball catches fire at season's end

Part of finding postseason success is catching lightning in a bottle and riding the momentum as far as it can take you.

That's exactly what the Marshall County Tigerette softball team did this past spring.

Relying on a steady roster of pitching, the Tigerettes upset Lawrence County in the District 8-AAA tournament and made a strong push to the region semifinals before seeing their season come to a close at White County.

The Tigerettes entered the district tournament as the No. 3 seed, riding a wave of momentum by winning 12 of their previous 13 games.

In an elimination rematch against the Lady Wildcats, the Tigerettes got a steady game from starting pitcher Taylor Pickle and upset Lawrence County in a second-straight meeting to not only advance to the 8-AAA title game, but also to qualify for the Region 4-AAA tournament as well.

Pickle did give up seven runs on 11 hits, but pitched a scoreless final two innings.

At the plate, Ellie Luce, Jessa Lancaster, Demiyah Blackman and Kaniyah Taylor all clubbed out two hits to help secure the Tigerettes' place in the district tournament.

After upsetting No. 2 seeded Lawrence County, Marshall County fell in the district title game, but still continued its season in the region tournament.

In the semifinal round against the Warriorettes, it was Haylee Hobby being the steady arm from the pitcher's circle for the Tigerettes. Marshall County eventually ran into some tough pitching the explosive offense just couldn't solve in the Region 4-AAA semifinals at White County.

Hobby, along with Warriorette ace Addison Abell, both pitched a dandy of a pitcher's duel, with White County able to string together just a few more hits with runners in scoring position to advance in the 2022 postseason.

Marshall County hammered out just four hits, singles by Mallory Woodward, Taylor and Blackman, while Lancaster clubbed a double.

"We have definitely made strides in the right direction. We will continue to build around the positive leadership we have from our returning players and work hard to show that Marshall County softball will continue to be a force to be reckoned with," Tigerette coach Amy Bonner said.

Marshall County finished with an 18-8 overall record in 2022.

*\*Original reporting by Chris Siers*

## No. 3 No-quit Forrest Rockets reach state tourney

If one thing can sum up the 2022 Forrest Rocket baseball team, it's the fact they were never out of any game until the final out was recorded.

The Rockets had plenty of familiar opponents, facing the Community Vikings six times, sweeping the Purple and Gold in all six meetings, including wins in the District 7-AA and Region 4-AA tournament championship games.

After defeating the Vikings 12-4 in the Region 4-AA championship, Forrest welcomed



Tribune Photos by Chris Siers

The Marshall County Tigerettes upset No. 2 seed Lawrence County to finish second in the District 8-AAA tournament.



Haylee Hobby delivers a first-inning pitch against White County in the Region 4-AAA semifinals.



Senior Cam Vaughn (5) lets out a roar of emotion after scoring the game-tying, ninth run in the bottom of the seventh inning in the Class AA State Sectional matchup against York Institute.



The Rockets dogpile on Preston Gentry, who singled home the game-winning run in the bottom of the eighth inning.

York Institute and Missouri commit Nicolas Smith on the mound.

Facing Forrest's Riley Durbin, the game immediately fell into a classic pitcher's duel.

Smith homered in the top of the first inning on a softly hit ball that carried over the left field fence with a strong gust of wind.

From there, fans were delighted to four-straight innings of scoreless, high-quality pitching from both squads.

But the game spun heavily in favor of York in the sixth and seventh innings.

With their backs against

the wall and trailing 9-1 entering the bottom of the seventh inning, Forrest found itself in a nearly impossible situation.

The thing about that squad, they were never out of a game until the final out.

Senior catcher Cam Vaughn doubled to lead off the inning and ignited an improbable eight-run rally, which tied the game at nine apiece at the end of the seventh.

Kain Moses, feeling the momentum of the offense, turned in a perfect, 1-2-3 eighth inning and Brennan Mealer appeared to have walked off the game with a solo home run

to center field, but saw the hit changed to a ground-rule double.

York eventually loaded the bases and Preston Gentry stepped to the plate and clubbed a walk-off RBI single to not just complete the biggest comeback in program history, but also send the Rockets to the Class 2A state baseball tournament.

"I just told them that there are good teams in this world. There are great teams in this world. There are tough teams in this world. There are gritty teams in this world. And then there's the 2022 Forrest Rockets. They are never out

of any ballgame, whatsoever," Rocket coach Andy Burkett said after the win Against York.

The ride didn't end there, as simply making it to the state tournament in Murfreesboro wasn't enough for Forrest.

The Rockets followed up with a tournament opening win against Decatur County Riverside in a rain-shortened, 1-0 thriller.

Although the final two games the Rockets played in the tournament ended in losses, the Rockets battled through the end and saw

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