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By Dennis Garcia
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TRINITY - Like most high schools, Wheatmore High School has banners hanging in its gymnasium, one for every sport with the years of conference championships prominently displayed.

It is the girls basketball banner which has frustrated coach Pete Kilcullen for the 13 years he has been a part of the WHS program. While banners for other sports include accolades such as conference championships, the girls basketball banner remained blank. No league championships or no conference tournament championships embroidered on the banner.

Until now.

Although the Warriors' season ended Saturday with a 49-29 loss to Surry Central in the third round of the NCHSAA state 3-A tournament, the banner will no longer be blank as this group of nine players on the WHS roster captured the program's first regular-season conference championship, its first conference tournament title and its first 20-win season in the history of the school.

The Warriors had a 15-game winning streak snapped in dropping its first game since a loss to Eastern Guilford on Dec. 27, 2025. WHS ends the season 21-6.

"I have walked in the gym for the last 13 years and look at that banner and it's been blank," Kilcullen said after a second-round 59-49 win over Lincolnton last Thursday night. "It ticks me off every single day I walk in and look at it. Now I walk in and I laugh at it because there are two numbers going up because of what this team accomplished this season. The first conference championship, the first conference tournament championship, the first 20-win season, now 21, Kaelyn Whitehart gets to 1,000 points and we're in the Sweet 16. This is one of the best defensive teams I have ever coached. There have been a lot of firsts this season."

What makes these accomplishments even more impressive is the Warriors have achieved all those accolades with a nine-player roster. Only six of those players have played extensive minutes.





The Wheatmore Womens Basketball team pose in front of the student section after their home playoff win on Thursday, February 26, 2026.

"The Mighty Nine keep on fighting," Kilcullen said. "I wish I could send 12 out there and rotate, have hockey line changes five at a time."

Whitehart, a senior who leads the team in scoring, reached the 1,000-point plateau Thursday night with her first two free throws of that second-round game, with 7:06 to play in the first quarter. She went on to score 26 points in the win over Lincolnnton.

"It was a really good accomplishment, but it wasn't my first priority," Whitehart said after the game. "I wanted to put the team first."

Whitehart received plenty of help in the second-round win as freshman Kinsley Davis chipped in 20 points. Davis scored 11 points in the third quarter as the Warriors, who led 29-13 at

halftime, carried a 49-37 lead into the final quarter.

"Kinsley is playing more like a junior than a freshman," Kilcullen said. "I am impressed with her development. Kaelyn is Kaelyn and as she goes we go. She had a Robin to Batman tonight with Kinsley doing her thing."

The Wolves did creep within eight points on a couple of occasions in the final quarter, but Whitehart scored eight points in the quarter to help secure the win. WHS didn't help itself at the free throw line as the Warriors were 7 of 22 from the charity stripe in the final two quarters.

"I kept looking at the clock and I swear minutes were added," Madeline Mullinax said of the final quarter. "When we got up by a lot, there were a lot of the same bodies out there and everyone is getting a little tired. Once we realized it wasn't a 20-point game anymore, we had to step it up and we did."

Against Surry Central, Wheatmore found itself down 24-0 at the end of the first quarter. The Warriors outscored Surry Central 29-25 the rest of the game. Mullinax had 12 points and Whitehart had seven.

Still, the loss couldn't deter from what has been an incredible season for the Warriors.

"This can become a tradition instead of a one year stint," Kilcullen said.

Indeed it could.