



Above, Bullard Thunder third baseman makes the pick up on a grounder in game three at the TSA state tournament last week held in Mineola. The team of locals took fifth-place among 24 teams at the tourney.



Above, the Thunder's first baseman squeezes the throw over from third base, for an out against West in the third game loss. The Thunder then lost 2-0 in the fourth-place game to the Athens SpitFire.



Above, Coach Clayton comes out to have a word with his daughter and starting pitcher, Kyndel, at the state tournament last week.

(Banner Staff Photos by Doc Smith)

## Bullard Thunder take fifth place at TSA State tourney

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MINEOLA. Two weeks ago, it took the Athens WildThangs beating the local Bullard Thunder twice in two days, to take the district crown at Bullard's 'The Outfield'.

After two close losses in district to Athens, the Thunder would eventually get another shot at the Athens crew, but it would come late in the TSA state tourney last Wednesday night.

Unlike Bullard Baseball Association (BBA) baseball, only one district representative goes to state. In Texas Softball Association (TSA) softball, the top two qualify.

Regardless, after going in as the second-place team, two big wins had the other 19 teams at the state tourney wondering where The Thunder was coming from.

It was nobody but themselves, as several players stepped up for Bullard to lead to a 6-5 win over the Rusk X-Plosion, to open the tournament.

The next night, it was a nail-biter for a 3-2 win over the Brownwood Flames, in a pitchers duel, in which Kyndel Clayton came out on top.

Wednesday was not as nice. Top seeded West-EC Electric won a 10-0 affair, as the Thunder was handcuffed to three hits and seven strikeouts in the game, by the West left-hander.

After a break to await an elimination game, the Thunder watched on, as those same ol' Athens WildThangs made a comeback win over Mexia, to set up the district rematch for fourth place.

### Game One

Bullard Thunder 6, Rusk X-Plosion 5  
The Thunder jumped to a 4-0 lead after two at-bats over Rusk, before X-Plosion erupted for three, in the top of the third inning.

Zoe Hancock scored twice, while Emma French and Kyndel Clayton added the other early runs.

The Rusk three run rally in the third was answered with one run in each of the final two innings, to account for the six runs for Bullard.

Destinee Dixon accounted for both of the runs, which turned out to be the game winner.

Rusk rattled off three hits, and a Bullard error aided Rusk to two runs and a 5-5 tie, before Dixon ripped a single and scored on Chloe Hartman's walk-off triple ended the game.

Pitcher, Clayton led the way, striking out 12 batters and picking up two hits for the win.

### Game Two

Thunder 3, Brownwood Flames 2  
It was a well-played game, and a great pitchers duel in round two of the tournament for Bullard, as they beat Brownwood. Once again, with fans on the edge of their seats late in the close encounter, Kyndel Clayton ended up winning the war on the mound and at the plate.

It took 13 strikeouts and two scores from Brooke Hunter, and the game-winner in the last inning from A.D. Keuchle. Brownwood's pitcher, Zoey Matthews had a few fastballs up her sleeve as well, striking out 13 Thunder batters.

Hunter singled, and came around to score on an RBI single up the middle by

Clayton.

With a 1-0 lead, two more runs for Bullard came across as Hunter scored on a Hancock RBI single, and Keuchle scored the eventual game-winner off a RBI by Hunter.

Not going down without a fight, Brownwood came back to score two runs in the bottom of the final inning, to put the fear of Jesus in the Thunder.

### Game Three

West EC Electric 10, Thunder 0

The heat took its toll on everybody except the West, as pitcher, Kyndel Clayton finally turned things over to Kassady Robertson, to save what fire she had left for the next game, down 9-0.

West EC Electric came out looking to hit, as they put up five runs in the first inning and added another four in the second, for the quick, 9-0 lead.

The Thunder defense and pitching finally came around to hold West at bay, 9-0 in the third inning.

After another four batter inning for Bullard at-the-plate, West put the game away via the ten-run rule, as they scored after a single, a passed ball, and scored from second base.

West pitchers threw a no-hitter, and struck out seven Thunder batters. The game ended in four innings due to the mercy rule.

### Game Four

Athen WildThangs 2, Thunder 0

After waiting for Athens to finish out a close win over the Mexia crew, the rematch was set for the fourth spot in the state. The Thunder defense had a couple of crucial errors at the wrong time, and the Athens WildThangs scored only two runs,

but it was all they would need. Bullard had just lost the thunder out of their bats (four hits), and only gave in to four hits and the two runs, taking the 2-0 elimination loss.

Athens got one hit and scored in the second inning, and added the other hit for a run in the fourth inning, and the 2-0 score. Bullard could manage only two hits themselves, as Hancock and Clayton had rips in the third inning, but were left stranded. Keuchle and Kassady Robertson put together hits in the sixth and final inning, only to be left at third and second, as Athens' pitching struck out the final two batters for Bullard.

"We are so proud of these girls," said head coach, Kevin Robertson after the finale. "We were the second place team from our district, and I don't think the first two teams had much respect for that, but our girls showed them what they are made of in two close games."

"On Wednesday, we just ran into a great hitting team in West, who put up some runs quick on us, and we never really recovered from that, the rest of the night," Coach Robertson added.

Robertson did have some special praise for his pitcher Kyndel Clayton.

"That girl pitched her heart out, and came up with really big hits when we needed them," added Robertson. "I don't know how many strikeouts she had in the tournament, but she was unbelievable in those low scoring games."

"She had a few times she bent a little bit, but she just would not break and she had a great year for us, as did all the girls," the coach added.



Above, the Bullard Thunder made a great run to place fifth in the TSA State Tournament held in Mineola last week. The Thunder went 2-2 in the tourney, beating Rusk and Brownwood before back-to-back losses to West and Athens, to end their successful season.



Above, after the loss, the Thunder and the West team met at the pitchers circle for an end-of-the-game ritual. The Thunder represented Bullard well, taking home fifth place.

(Banner Staff Photos by Doc Smith)

### Chillin' inside for cool birthday boy



(Banner Staff Photo by Doc Smith)

Teaselville's, Thomas "Turtle" Dean celebrates a birthday indoors, out of the heat, in a game of bowling with his sister, Katy, and friends in Tyler.

### Yankee debut for W'House's Tomlin joining Todd and Cleveland Indians

CLEVELAND - Whitehouse High School graduate, Josh Tomlin made his Major League Baseball debut Tuesday night, for the Cleveland Indians against the New York Yankees, the Cleveland Plain-Dealer reported on its website, just before BBN press deadline.

"Tomlin deserves to be up here to get a shot," Indians manager, Manny Acta said to the Plain-Dealer. "He's earned it." Tomlin, who was drafted by the Indians in the 19th round of the 2006 draft, is

8-4 this season, for AAA

Columbus with a 2.68 ERA, 80 strikeouts and 33 walks in 107 1/3 innings.

The right-hander will take the mound against the 2007 Cy Young Award-winner C.C. Sabathia, who is 13-3 with a 3.18 ERA for the Yankees, who own the best record in baseball. Tomlin played two seasons at Angelina College, after high school and his junior year at Texas Tech. He was drafted by the San Diego Padres in the 11th round after his sophomore year at

Angelina. He appeared in 13 games at Texas Tech, spending most of the season sidelined because of an arm surgery.

Two East Texans are now on the Cleveland Indians active roster, after former Whitehouse star, Tomlin joins another East Texan on the Cleveland lineup.

Kilgore's Jess Todd has been on the Indians roster for the past few weeks and has appeared in three games this season, after pitching in 20-games for the Indians in 2009.