

**Mercer Lady Cardinals finally beat Jefferson, move into Class 1 state playoffs**

**Sports**

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In a moment four years in waiting for the #2 ranked North Mercer girl's basketball team, the Lady Cardinals were finally able to taste victory against nemesis Jefferson, beating the Lady Eagles 59-39 on Saturday night to win a district championship for the fourth year in a row.

Unlike the past three seasons, this year's Mercer-Jefferson showdown came in the district final at Grant City. In 2010, 2011, and 2012, Jefferson had defeated Mercer in the Class 1 state sectionals at Bearcat Arena in Maryville. With Saturday's victory, the Lady Cardinals advance to Maryville, where the 23-4 Mound City Lady Panthers will be their 7:45 Tuesday night opponent. Mound City is the champion of Class 1, District 16.

Sierra Michaelis led Mercer in the district championship clincher with 36 points, with Courtney Owens adding 17. Especially impressive was a Mercer defense that kept all of Jefferson's scorers in single digits, and held Sarah Kemper (who hit five three-pointers in Jefferson's come-from-behind victory last March) to six points on a pair of three-pointers.

Mercer's record is now 27-1 on the season, while Jefferson ends its campaign one win short of the state playoffs at 20-8. Saturday night's game was broadcast on Hot Country Z 101.7 and [www.kgozfm.com](http://www.kgozfm.com).