



The Best Thing I Saw at State: Pineville Parties Like it's 1998!

Pineville Softball Ends a 28-year Championship Drought

By Ethan W. Anderson

The *Best Thing I Saw at State* is a new column that brings to life the moments that make high school sports so meaningful. Through the stories, emotions, and details that often go unseen at the state championships, it captures what the box score can't.



SULPHUR — There are moments at state championships that stay with you long after the final out is recorded. Not just because of who won, but because of how it happened, and what it meant to everyone watching. This year at the LHSAA State Softball Tournament, that moment belonged to Pineville.

It wasn't just that the Lady Rebels won a state championship for the first time since 1998. It was how they did it, with an offense that felt inevitable, overwhelming, and at times completely unstoppable. By the time it was over, Pineville had left no doubt about who the best team in Division I Select really was.



The numbers only tell part of the story. Four playoff games. Four run-rule victories. Fifty-two runs scored in just 21 innings of postseason play. The Rebels outscored their opponents 52–5. Captain Shreve, Tioga, Archbishop Chapelle, and finally John Curtis, each one met the same fate.

Game after game, Pineville took control almost immediately, building early leads that dictated everything that followed. It wasn't just power at the plate, although there was plenty of that. There was confidence throughout the lineup, a belief that if one hitter didn't deliver, the next one would.

That kind of trust is hard to build. Once it's there, it becomes even harder to break.

Along the way, a simple message started to define the group: #PinevilleProud. It showed up in the dugout, in conversations, and in the way this team carried itself throughout the postseason, not as a slogan, but as an identity. A reminder of who they were playing for and what it meant to wear that jersey.



For head coach Allison Frye, that identity carried even deeper meaning.

A former Pineville standout and three-time All-State player, Frye returned home in 2018 with a vision of restoring the program to prominence. She had already experienced championship success at Menard in 2015, but Pineville was different.



“This is bigger than us,” Frye said. “I played for Pineville in the early 2000s and I never got this feeling. There are so many girls that paved the way for them. They don't realize how big of a deal this is to our community, to past players, and to everyone who loves this program.”

From the moment she took over, the goal never changed, bring Pineville softball back to where it once was. A program that had celebrated a three-peat from 1996 to 1998 had gone nearly three decades without another title.

Eight years later, Frye delivered.

“I can't tell you how many times this season I told them, ‘We're right where we need to be,’” Frye said. “And I think today, if not a little before today, they believed me.”

That belief showed up when it mattered most.

Holding a comfortable lead late in the championship game, Pineville still had one more moment left to deliver. With the bases loaded, senior Ava Moore stepped to the plate, a player who had been at the center of the Lady Rebels' offensive surge all postseason.

On a 3-1 count, Moore didn't hesitate. She loaded, turned on the pitch, and sent it deep to right field. The ball carried toward the fence as the right fielder tracked it back, reaching up near the wall in an attempt to bring it back. But the ball clipped off the glove and cleared the fence, turning a near-miss into a walk-off grand slam.

Just like that, it was over.

Moore's swing sealed a 12-1 win over John Curtis and sent her teammates pouring onto the field. It was the kind of finish you imagine when you think about championship softball, a single moment that somehow captures everything a team has been building toward.

“I just can't believe it,” Moore said. “We've worked so hard. I mean from the very beginning of the season we've had many ups and many downs. I think going into it today we all were very confident. We knew that every person on this team, we all have each other's back and we know if we make a mistake then the other 21 are there to back us up.”





But as unforgettable as that swing was, it wasn't the only reason this run stood out. To understand it fully, you had to look to the other side of the fence. Because this wasn't just a team winning a championship. This was a program built on history finally getting its moment again. On the other side of the fence were Pineville fans celebrating the biggest moment for Rebel softball in 28 years.

And in communities like Pineville, that matters more than the scoreboard.

A state championship isn't just a trophy. It's a shared experience. It belongs to former players who helped build the foundation, to families who have followed the program for decades, and to a town that takes pride in seeing its school succeed.

You could feel that throughout the tournament.

Every hit, every run, every inning added to something bigger than a box score. It became a reflection of the community behind them, one that showed up, supported, and believed in what this group could accomplish.

And when it finally happened, it wasn't just a celebration for the players. It was a celebration for the entire community of Pineville.





That's what stands out the most at events like this. In the middle of a busy tournament schedule, with games happening all around you, it's easy for everything around the field to blur together. The noise, the logistics, the outside conversations that surround high school athletics can sometimes overshadow the heart of it all.

But then a moment like this happens, and everything comes back into focus.

For a few hours, none of that matters. The distractions fade. What's left is a group of student-athletes competing for something bigger than themselves, representing their school, playing for each other, and giving everything they have to bring something home to the people who supported them along the way.

That's what high school athletics is at its best.

It's not just about dominance, although Pineville certainly had that. It's about connection. It's about pride. It's about a community rallying around its team and sharing in something meaningful, something you only truly get in high school sports.

That's what makes it special.

Pineville's run to the championship was as impressive as any you'll see. The offense, the confidence, the consistency, it all came together at exactly the right time.

But the best thing I saw at state wasn't how they won. It was what it meant when they did. After 28 years, Pineville is back on top. And this time, an entire community gets to celebrate it together.

It's time to party like it's 1998.

Author's Note:*In my role as the Director of Communications, I have the unique privilege of attending nearly all sanctioned LHSAA State Championship events. Although the schedule is demanding, I have the privilege of seeing student-athletes from all walks of life, united by two things: their participation in Louisiana high school sports and their pursuit of a state championship. In my first year in this role, I've gained a deeper appreciation for high school athletics and for all the dedication that goes into making each season and event possible. Although my current role involves less writing than my previous positions, it has given me the opportunity to return to something I've always loved. While much of my work now focuses on press releases and public statements, I also have the chance to reconnect with my passion for feature writing, this time highlighting what I consider the purest form of sport: high school athletics. The goal is to highlight the best thing I saw at each state championship and share the unknown stories behind these events, capturing memorable moments for student-athletes, coaches, administrators, officials, and fans.*