

## COMMUNITY SOUNDS OFF



Anthony Banks/The Covington News

**Filled to the rafters:** A standing-room-only crowd prepares for the showdown between the Newton High School boys' basketball team and Eastside Friday night at Newton High School. The Rams won 59-57, coming back from 20 points down at halftime.

*Staff Writer Pat Hogan scoured a standing-room-only crowd for opinions and analysis on one of the state's hottest rivalries as the boys' and girls' basketball teams from Newton and Eastside high schools got together for a second time Friday night. Here's what the fans had to say:*

"My wife went to Eastside, so we have a good time with it."

—**Matt Easterday,**  
1997 Newton High School  
graduate and son of current  
NHS Principal Dave Easterday

"Well, it's just a big rivalry, and when you come over, you see everybody in Newton County that you know. It's just a good get together. Good for everybody. Good money, good everything ... I think people forget who won or lost quicker than they forget getting together."

—**Randall Allen,**  
Newton High School fan

"For [the students], it really is a big deal. Eastside has only been around since 1994, but they really get up for it. We had [a pep rally] today, and it'll probably be the last one for the year."

—**Dave Young,**  
Newton High School teacher

"NHS is my alma mater, but I have to pull for Eastside because that's where my child goes. I'm sitting with some of my friends who went to Newton. It's tough, but with Eastside now. That's the way I look at it. Nobody really loses here, I guess. It's good for the county. They shut the doors up there about 30 minutes ago ... Last year was the first year we played. Last year, Newton won both games, and this year, of course, we won the first one."

—**Steve Goff,**  
Eastside High School fan

"It doesn't make any difference to me who wins, but our school feeds both [Newton and Eastside]. So we have kids who like Eastside — mostly Newton, but we have some Eastside kids."

—**Will Azbell**  
Cousins Middle School teacher

"I don't how long they've been playing, but it's been a pretty long time. We know some people from Eastside, so we just came to watch them. This is supposed to be like a really good game."

—**Diana Gaillard**  
Georgia State University student  
(with friend Ashley Teague)

"To be honest, I'm pulling for Newton, but my nephew and my boy went

to Eastside. Newton is my alma mater, but I know more of the kids on Eastside ... [NHS and EHS] just now got in the same classification, in the last couple of years. I think they played basketball and baseball — JV and stuff like that — but they just started playing football in the last couple of years ... I'd probably say Newton is the favorite — they're on their home court. Last game was a one point game. I coached a kid down there on Eastside's team in recreation ball, and I coached against two or three more of the other ones. I know a bunch of their dads on both teams. I'm sure there probably is some [animosity], being a small town rivalry. To tell you the truth, I'm probably pulling more for Eastside, even though I played baseball for Newton. I know several of the Eastside boys personally, so that's probably why I'm pulling for Eastside."

—**Vernon Pilsom**  
Fan