

LITTLE THINGS A BIG REASON CAVS WIN AGAIN



Above: Before the game, students unfurled an enormous flag donated to the high school by the Woodmen of the World insurance firm.



Above: Cheerleader Lilly Carter (right) races with the Crockett County flag as the players - including Sam Kalinisan (86), Jordan Rainey (70), Braden Park (27), Joseph Gould (71), and Carson Pruitt (34) - crash through a paper sign similar to the one flashing on the video board.

By Ron Barry

Sometimes when the final score of a game is as lopsided as Crockett County's 35-14 win over Jackson South Side Friday night, it would be easy to assume the contest was never really in doubt.

That would be incorrect in this case, however. The Cavaliers' triumph was a classic example of how the little things can make a big difference in a game's outcome.

The total yards gained in the game weren't that monumental - 364 for Crockett, 294 for South Side. The Cavs ran 63 plays from scrimmage; the Hawks tried 52. Throw in the fact that Crockett actually fumbled the ball six times, and a 35-14 win sounds out of the question.

So how'd it happen? Let's count the contributors:

1. Yes, the Cavs fumbled six times, but miraculously only lost one of them.

2. South Side's excellent kicker Christian Lo had two decent shots at field goals, but the first bonked off the left upright after a bobbled snap and the second was blocked by a hard-charging Antuan Hobson.

3. Hawk quarterback Layton Robertson passed for 164 yards on just eight completions, but the only one caught in the end zone was by Crockett's Demo Pickens for an interception.

4. Of Avery Hurst's six kickoffs for Crockett, only two could be returned by Hawk backs, negating one of their major weapons. Hurst, who's showing improvement every week, blasted four into the end zone and had another one reach the two, and it was well-covered.

5. Punter Joseph Gould - rarely called on in the early season because the Crockett offense has been so effective, bombed a 56-yarder to bail the Cavs out on the game's very first possession and then, with the hosts holding only a 21-7 edge late in the third quarter, rolled another punt out of bounds at the South Side four to pin the Hawks way back and actually help set up Crockett's fourth touchdown.

6. That touchdown came only after Carson Pruitt - usually a blocker - kept the possession going with his only carry of the game on a fourth down, which he converted by one inch.

7. The Cavs have Deuce Greenhill. Oh, wait - that's not a little thing.

Crockett's junior running back, quickly becoming one of the most notable ground gainers in West Tennessee if not the state, added 173 yards on 20 carries and scored three more touchdowns against South Side, giving him 10 in a season which now has Coach Kevin Ward's Cavs sitting at 4-0.

But part of Greenhill's effectiveness is another "sort of" little thing: Ward has the luxury of resting him periodically during a game, because Crockett can insert Gabe Dupree or Dakylan Woods into a possession or series at any time, keeping Greenhill fresh. And when he's fresh - sooner or later (or both), he's going to break a long one.

But none of those three runners would be gaining nearly as many yards if it weren't for another "sort of" little thing. Actually, not really "little," more like "undersized." That's the play of the offensive line, who are often going up against defenders larger than they are, and the Cavs are consistently winning those battles thus far.

"I think the play of our O-Line is one of the biggest reasons we're doing well," said quarterback Grayson Lambert, who obviously knows where his bread is buttered. "They've been outstanding for us, and it's helped both our running and passing games. I think our passing has definitely stepped up from a year ago."



Left: Quarterback Grayson Lambert (1) rolls to his left to search for a receiver as Deuce Greenhill (0), Joseph Gould (71), and Jordan Rainey (70) offer pass protection.

That it has. Though there were a few glitches in the air attack against South Side, Lambert has completed 22 of 45 throws for 423 yards and four touchdowns through four games for a program known for its intention to run the ball as often as possible.

When you have an identical twin brother – as Grayson does – he may want to provide an additional perspective to Crockett's perfect start.

"Our defensive play has really been solid so far," said Preston Lambert, a key linebacker on that unit who also occasionally plays wide receiver or tight end on offense. "Personally, I like making catches, but I like making tackles just as much, and I enjoy the responsibility of making sure our defensive guys know what set we're supposed to be in."

Against South Side, Crockett gained some field position early after Gould boomed his 56-yard punt and then a sack by Jacob Knox forced a Hawk punt that Pickens was able to return to the visitors' 37. It took just four plays – including a 24-yard burst by Greenhill – to get on the board, which the speedy junior did from five yards out. Crockett went up 8-0 when the Lambert brothers perfectly pulled off a fake extra point pass play and earned two points instead.

When Jordan Rainey stuffed Hawk back Chuck Stokes for a third-down loss on the next series, another punt gave Crockett possession near midfield. Greenhill gained five, Grayson Lambert ran for 11, and on the third play lofted a 35-yard bomb down the right sideline which Hobson caught and flew into the end zone with 3:37 remaining in the first period. It looked like a rout was in the making.

But South Side's offense came to life when, according to Ward later, "We missed some responsibilities. When we fulfilled our responsibilities, they didn't do much against us. When we didn't, that's when they gained their yards." The Hawks reached the Crockett 14, but that's when Lo's first field goal attempt clanked off the upright.

The visitors quickly got it back and moved it down to the Cav 31, but consecutive tackles for losses by Hobson and Preston Lambert forced an ill-fated third-down pass attempt, which Pickens intercepted on a diving play in the end zone.

That led to an 80-yard scoring drive, highlighted by a 39-yard pass connection by the Lamberts. Greenhill eventually pounded it down to the one and then tallied from there, and Hurst's extra made it 21-0 with 3:52 left in the half.

Right: Deuce Greenhill (0) is about to score the game's first touchdown from five yards out, but not without help from his O-Line blockers: Willie Walker (6), Carson Pruitt (34), Jordan Rainey (70), Preston Vernon (50), Kevin Garduno (74), Ethan Allen (55), and Joseph Gould (71).

South Side scored early in the third quarter after a 40-yard run by Stokes and a 30-yard pass from Robertson to Dacoda Nolan set up a four-yard touchdown by Rakarius Lacy. Crockett fumbled the ensuing kickoff right back to the Hawks on the return, but Hobson's field goal block averted disaster again. The hosts then scored two more times in the final period on a short run by Woods and a 53-yarder by Greenhill to offset a late one-yard tally by Lacy.

"I'm proud of the way our guys played against a team that has backs that are tough to tackle," Ward said. "For some reason, our passing wasn't always clicking tonight, but we're going to have to be able to throw the ball to continue to be successful. That's certainly the case this week against Huntingdon, because they're going to play very physical football. They like to play a smash-mouth, double-teaming style, and we're going to have to match it to get another win. It should be our toughest game so far." That encounter will be on the road Friday night at 7:00. Huntingdon has averaged over 50 points a game in winning their last two contests.



Above: Antuan Hobson (2) was next to join the Crockett scoring parade, carrying this 35-yard pass from Grayson Lambert into the end zone to push the Cavs ahead 14-0.



Final Statistics

Rushes-Yards: CC – Deuce Greenhill 20-173, Dakylan Woods 9-48, Grayson Lambert 10-27, Gabe Dupree 4-16, Carson Pruitt 1-3, Demo Pickens 1-0, Ben Burgess 1-0, **Team 46-267. JSS** – Ross McDaniel 14-81, Nick Lee 12-34, Jakob Davis 9-27, Ashton Hart 4-7, Adonnis Smith 1-3, **Team 40-152.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC – G. Lambert 4-14-97-0. **JSS** – Davis 0-2-0-2.

Receptions-Yards: CC – Preston Lambert 1-39, Antuan Hobson 1-35, Greenhill 2-23. **LEX** – None.

Interceptions: Pickens 1-0 (in end zone).

Total Yards: CC 364, JSS 294.

First Downs: CC 14, JSS 8.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 6-1, JSS 1-0.

Penalties-Yards: CC 1-5, JSS 5-54.

Punts-Yards: CC Joseph Gould **3-136, JSS 5-165.**

Season Statistics (4 Games; Record 4-0)

Rushes-Yards: CC – Deuce Greenhill 79-633, Gabe Dupree 22-168, Dakylan Woods 18-153, Grayson Lambert 27-60, Carson Pruitt 4-31, Demo Pickens 6-14, Ben Burgess 2-0, **Team 158-1,059. Opponents 147-613.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC – G. Lambert 22-45-423-0. **Opponents 20-48-391-5.**

Receptions-Yards: CC – Willie Walker 6-99, Preston Lambert 3-79, Amarion Hobson 3-76, Antuan Hobson 3-74, Demo Pickens 3-36, Carson Pruitt 2-36 Deuce Greenhill 2-23, **Team 22-423. Opponents 20-391.**

Interceptions: Demo Pickens 3-34, Antuan Hobson 2-31 (1 TD return).

Points (TDs-2PC-XP-FG-P): Greenhill 10-0-0-0-60, Antuan Hobson 3-1-0-0-20, Woods 3-0-0-0-18, Avery Hurst 0-0-14-1-17, Dupree 2-0-0-0-12, Preston Lambert 1-1-0-0-8, Grayson Lambert 1-0-0-0-6, Walker 1-0-0-0-6, Pruitt 1-0-0-0-6.

Total Yards: CC 1,482, Opponents 1,004.

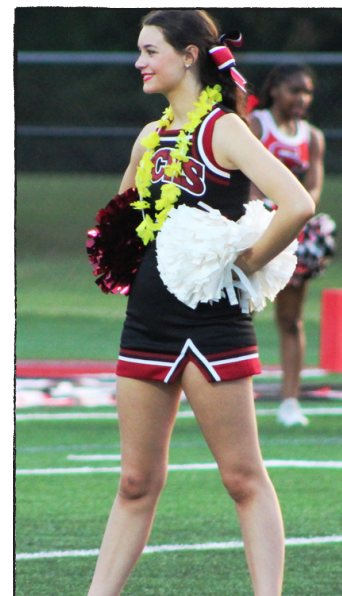
First Downs: CC 50, Opponents 40.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 8-2, Opponents 12-5.

Penalties-Yards: CC 14-96, Opponents 21-161.

Punts-Yards: CC – Joseph Gould **9-360, Opponents 14-333.**

Points Scored: CC 153, Opponents 60.



Above: Ella Cate Haynes had a full weekend: helping her family open a new coffee shop (Stir Crockett), cheering on the Cavs, and winning a scholarship pageant.



Above: Crockett's Marching Cavaliers Band put on some razzle-dazzle at halftime.

Right: Demo Pickens (3) made this diving interception in the end zone as teammates Willie Walker (6) and Preston Lambert (13) had South Side's Austin Hardin (9) locked up on the left side.



Above: Preston Lambert (13) was wide open in the end zone to catch this two-point conversion pass for an 8-0 Cavalier lead.



Above: One of the keys to negating South Side's offense was the effectiveness of Avery Hurst's kickoffs. Hurst (85), here blasting one past the Hawks' Khanyrahn Caldwell (7) as Amaron Hobson (4) provides coverage, nailed most of his boots into the end zone for touchbacks.

Right: Zerafin Guardian (76) and Jacob Knox (42) combine to hit South Side's Rakarius Lacey (34) near the goal line as Jordan Rainey (70), Gabe Dupree (29), Amaron Hobson (4), Preston Vernon (50), and Antuan Hobson (2) look to help.



Above: Preston Lambert (13) prevents a big gainer by the Hawks' Layton Robertson (2) with this solid open-field tackle.

Right: Grayson Lambert (1) ran for 27 yards and passed for 97 more. Here he tries to cut inside a block by Carson Pruitt (34) to evade South Side's Kevon Hoyle (64).



Below: A key third-quarter play came when Antuan Hobson (2) blocked this 26-yard field goal attempt by the Hawks' Christian Lo (10) that would have cut the lead to 21-10.

Above: Freshman running back Dakylan Woods (32) took over in the third period; he had some open field, but decided to run over South Side's Kysean Thomas (5) and Jamarrion Grimes (14) instead.



Below: Deuce Greenhill (0) scored again in the final quarter thanks to big blocks from Jordan Rainey (70), Kevin Garduno (74), and Preston Vernon (50), to finish the night with 173 yards rushing..

Above: Crockett linebacker Jacob Knox (42) breaks up an option play in the Hawk backfield before quarterback Layton Robertson (2) can even make his pitch.



Left: More tough defense for the Cavs as Jordan Rainey (70) and Carson Pruitt (34) bottle up South Side's Rakarius Lacy (34).