

CAV FOOTBALLERS TAKE ON MILLINGTON IN PLAYOFF ROUND 1



Above: Coach Tyler Gadlen (seen here talking earlier this season with Carson Pruitt) is currently straddling two sport seasons. He'll be an assistant football coach tonight in Millington after leading his middle school boys' basketball team to a couple of victories this week.



Above: Quarterback Grayson Lambert (1) will lead the Cavaliers into Friday night's Round 1 playoff game at Millington, having thrown for 941 yards this season.

By Ron Barry

For close to a month now, Coach Kevin Ward has been trying to convince his Crockett County football team that it's as good as any 4A squad in West Tennessee.

Tonight in Millington, as the Cavs (6-4) take on the host Trojans (8-2) in the opening round of the TSSAA State Playoffs, we'll see if his players have bought in.

Crockett is Region 7-4A's third seed after posting a 2-2 mark, which could have easily been 4-0 had the Cavs made one more play in each of the two defeats. Millington, 8-4A's number two seed, had been unbeaten in its region slate until Melrose steamrolled the Trojans 45-10 last week on the strength of three first-quarter turnovers.

The game has the potential to be an offensive shootout. Ward's club is averaging 33 points a game, led by junior running back Deuce Greenhill, who leads the team in rushing yards (1,260), receiving yards (215), and touchdowns (22). Quarterback Grayson Lambert has passed for 941 yards and run for 210 more. Running backs Dakylan Woods, Gabe Dupree, and Demo Pickens are all averaging more than six yards a carry when they spell Greenhill.

Millington is no offensive slouch in its own right, however, riding the strength of left-handed senior quarterback McCoy Pugh. In the Trojans' recent 50-42 triumph over Brighton, McCoy passed for 215 yards, ran for 146, and had a direct hand in five touchdowns. That was coming on the heels of a 172-yard rushing performance against Bolton in a 34-14 victory. Millington averages 29 points a game.

Pugh is supported by running back Jonathan Temple Dowdy, who was Millington's top offensive threat in September games and is also one of his favorite passing targets. Wide receiver JyShawn Alexander is another standout for the Trojans, as is running back Rory Rush. Defensively, linebackers J'vion Todd and Cameron Puryear make most of the tackles, while the line is anchored by 290-pound Metron Keaton, 301-pound Chris Galindo, and Garin Swain.

Millington has a dependable kicker in Chase Michael, who is also one of its top pass receivers. Crockett counters in that department with Avery Hurst, who has steadily improved throughout the season and was consistently on target in the regular season-ending 55-6 rout of Fayette Ware.

The playoff contest has tickets available online for \$8 apiece at <https://gofan.co/event/1197119?schoolId=TN8781> or are available at the gate for \$10; no school passes are accepted, and a clear bag policy is in place for the safety of all participants. No purses, backpacks, camera bags, or binocular cases will be allowed inside the gate.

CROCKETT CROSS-COUNTRY: Before the football game even begins today, Crockett's girls' cross-country team will be running in the TSSAA State Championships in Hendersonville at 1:50 p.m. in the Division 1 A-AA race. Coach Julie Nass is allowed seven runners, having qualified second from the regional last week in Martin. Representing the Lady Cavs will be Claire Evans, sisters Avery and Casey Thornton, Harmony Walker, Leyla Silva, Kristin Lewis, and Olivia Mann.

Crockett finished 21st out of 30 total teams competing last season.

CCMS BASKETBALL: Coach Tyler Gadlen's Middle School boys posted their second straight win of the week Thursday night, defeating South Gibson 43-34 as Max Woods tossed in 20 points at Medina. Crockett, now 2-2, received nine points from Carter Wren, six from George Randall, three apiece from Carson Webb and DJ Forrest, and two from Daniel Morgan. The Cavs used an 11-4 edge in the final quarter to put the game away, despite missing 11 of their 17 free throws over the course of the game.

"I'm so proud of the way we played tonight, Gadlen said. "We played hard and put a full game together offensively and defensively. I love this group of boys and love the way each one of them competes for each other every single night."

In the girls' contest, Crockett fell to 0-4 as South Gibson blitzed the Lady Cavs 47-17, holding them scoreless in the opening quarter and rolling to a 22-4 halftime advantage. Crockett's final scoring was led by Wesley Thornton, Jentry Maddox, and Haley Leforgee with five each, and Blakelyn Edwards with two.



Above: Team captain Leyla Silva, a senior, will run her final cross-country race for Crockett in the TSSAA State Championships in Hendersonville Friday afternoon.