

# HOMECOMING WEEK OVERSHADOWS

## LAST-PLAY NIGHTMARE



**Above:** After a scoreless first half, Dyer went up 7-0 on a Korey Taylor 1-yard run with 8:09 left in the third quarter. But after a punt, the Tide turned in Crockett's favor when Amaron Hobson stopped Taylor on a fourth-down play at the Choctaw 36. Shortly after that - with 3:43 left in the third - Dakylan Woods scored on this 17-yard gallop to tie it up.



**Above:** Freshman running back Dakylan Woods (32) rambled for 19 yards to get inside the red zone for the Cavs, but Crockett fumbled three plays later at the 7-yard line to turn it over.

### By Ron Barry

Before we get into the celebration of Crockett County's annual football homecoming week, we need to address the elephant in the stadium.

There was a game played this past Friday night at Cavalier Stadium. The final score, according to the game officials - and theirs is the only opinion that counts - was Dyer County 19, Crockett 17. To say the ending was controversial is like saying water is wet, the sky is blue, Albert Einstein was smart, and Taylor Swift knows a little bit about music.

The Choctaws scored a touchdown on a "Hail Mary" pass on the final play of the contest - after being awarded an extra second on a clock which had run out on the snap that SHOULD have been the final play, another "Hail Mary" that didn't work to Dyer County's favor. For the final result to stand, game officials had to ignore some fairly obvious obstacles to their decision.

Let's lay the foundation for some common sense, objective analysis:

1. The game clock is kept on the field by a TSSAA official, NOT by people in the press box. The clock can be reset in the press box at the referee's request, but the actual running of the clock is kept by a sideline official. It is his ONLY responsibility for the duration of the game.

2. With Crockett clinging to a 17-13 lead, the Cavs' Joseph Gould boomed a 40-yard punt which Dyer County's Everett Kuykendall returned, but a holding penalty on the Choctaws moved the ball back to their own 10 yard line. There were 36 seconds on the clock, the visitors had NO timeouts remaining, and they had to go 90 yards to score.

3. Dyer quarterback Luke Robertson threw an incomplete pass on first down and then connected on a deep ball down the middle of the field for a 45-yard gain to Devin Hayward to the Crockett 45, then took a few seconds to line everybody up before he spiked the football to stop the clock. Now there were 14 seconds left.

4. Robertson tried another deep pass, but it was broken up by Antuan Hobson. That brought the clock down to seven seconds. Keep in mind that this was NOT a play in which the intended receiver ran all the way to the end zone, and it still took a full seven seconds off the clock.

5. Dyer now lined up for what it figured to be their final chance. They split a receiver wide to the left, but on the line of scrimmage. Tucked between him and the left tackle were three receivers in a line that was well BEHIND the line of scrimmage, meaning they are NOT considered linemen. Therefore, they are counted as backfield players. But on the play, the quarterback had a running back next to him for pass protection. Do the math, and you have five people in the backfield - which is an illegal formation, and SHOULD have been detected prior to the snap by either the line judge or the referee. Neither did.

6. Robertson took the snap, retreated, gave his receivers time to run to the goal line, stepped back up into the pocket to avoid a mild pass rush, and let the ball fly toward the end zone. Hobson and Gabe Dupree leaped high to deflect the throw at the goal line and knocked the ball to the ground. By the time the back judge blew his whistle and signaled an incomplete pass, the clock was at zero and Crockett seemingly had a Region 7-4A victory. Except...

7. The sideline official keeping the clock didn't start it when the ball was snapped. Despite the fact that it was still at zero when the back judge signaled the official end of the play, he convinced the referee there should still be one second left, and Dyer County should be awarded one more play.

Let's take a brief timeout here to inject some independent sleuthing on this reporter's part. This game was being live-streamed and recorded, which means video replays are readily available. Looking at this play individually - and (again) ignoring the obvious illegal formation - I put a stopwatch on it. Just to be as fair as possible, I did this 10 TIMES, to account for human error or differences in reflexes in starting the watch at the snap and stopping it when the ball hits the ground at the end. The AVERAGE of the 10 trials was 7.76 seconds (the single fastest one was 7.56 - so none of the 10 were timed in less than 7-and-a-half seconds). When you then take into account that a clock isn't supposed to stop until an official blows his whistle and signals the play dead (on an incomplete pass), this particular play took closer to 10 seconds to be waved off as an incomplete pass. Game over, right? No. So let's return to the common sense, objective analysis...

8. Deciding that Dyer County should be given another chance with one second added back to the clock, the officials SHOULD have noticed that this time the Choctaws lined up with a receiver split wide to the left again, but with another receiver who was ON the line of scrimmage about halfway between the split receiver and the left tackle. Guess what? That makes him an INELIGIBLE receiver, so if a pass is then thrown and he's downfield, it's a penalty.

9. That guy took off for the end zone just like the split receiver did. It should nullify any possible positive result of the play for Dyer County.

10. As you know by now, somehow Robertson heaved a pass that slipped through the hands of a Crockett defender and into the mitts of Hayward in the end zone, and the Choctaws had their 19-17 triumph.

I said all that to say this: All of you who have been saying the game should have been over and in favor of the Cavaliers are RIGHT. There's video evidence aplenty. So you have that to find your peace with the outcome.

But... HERE's the message Coach Kevin Ward has expressed to his team and that he'd also like the Crockett fan base to honor: Let's MOVE ON.

"We had multiple opportunities to be in a position that it wouldn't have come down to that play," Ward said Sunday. "Yes, there was a clock issue by the official on the sideline, and yes, the last two plays had an illegal formation and an ineligible receiver downfield. Those are all human errors. We could have taken it out of the referee's hands by playing better. We must learn from this and MOVE ON. We have another good team (Obion County Central) coming in Friday. Our focus is now on THEM, not on what should have been."

That game is set for Cavalier Stadium at 7 p.m. following pre-game homecoming festivities. Some details of the Crockett vs. Dyer County contest are in the captions accompanying this piece.

**Below:** Antuan Hobson (2) breaks a 22-yard pass play on Crockett's first possession as Ethan Allen (55), Joseph Gould (71), Demo Pickens (3), and Carson Pruitt (34) lend blocking support.



#### Final Statistics

**Rushes-Yards: CC** - Deuce Greenhill 19-131, Dakylan Woods 8-55, Grayson Lambert 5-27, Gabe Dupree 3-5, Demo Pickens 2-(-6), **Team 37-212. DYER** - Korey Taylor 12-78, Pierre Isom 10-50, Ja'bari Livingston 8-14, Tevin Reed 3-6, Luke Robertson 1-1, Darius Hayward 1-0, **Team 35-149.**

**Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC** - G. Lambert 4-8-45-0. **DYER** - Robertson 20-32-227-1, Malachi McPhearson 1-1-27-0, **Team 21-33-254-1.**

**Receptions-Yards: CC** - Antuan Hobson 3-39, Demo Pickens 1-6. **DYER** - Devin Hayward 2-90, Jamin Gauldin 6-47, McPhearson 5-38, John Smith 4-31, Everett Kuykendall 2-31, Taylor 1-11, Darius Hayward 1-6.

**Interceptions: CC** - Gabe Dupree 1-13. **DYER** - None.

**Total Yards: CC 257, DYER 403.**

**First Downs: CC 10, DYER 20.**

**Fumbles-Lost: CC 2-1, DYER 3-1.**

**Penalties-Yards: CC 5-34, DYER 4-30.**

**Punts-Yards: CC** Joseph Gould **3-127, DYER 1-43.**

#### Season Statistics (6 Games; Record 4-2)

**Rushes-Yards: CC** - Deuce Greenhill 112-845, Dakylan Woods 30-240, Gabe Dupree 28-181, Grayson Lambert 38-63, Carson Pruitt 5-31, Demo Pickens 8-8, Ben Burgess 4-(-1), **Team 225-1,367. Opponents 229-1,012.**

**Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC** - G. Lambert 33-68-540-1, Ben Burgess 1-2-0-0, **Team 34-70-540-1. Opponents 44-85-700-6.**

**Receptions-Yards: CC** - Antuan Hobson 10-172, Willie Walker 8-106, Preston Lambert 3-79, Amaron Hobson 3-76, Demo Pickens 5-48, Carson Pruitt 3-36 Deuce Greenhill 2-23, **Team 34-540. Opponents 44-700.**

**Interceptions: CC-** Demo Pickens 3-34, Antuan Hobson 2-31 (1 TD return), Gabe Dupree 1-13, **Team 6-78. Opponents 1-30.**

**Points (TDs-2PC-XP-FG-P):** Greenhill 12-0-0-0-72, Woods 4-0-0-0-24, Avery Hurst 0-0-17-2-23, Antuan Hobson 3-1-0-0-20, 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 1,907, Opponents 1,712.**

**First Downs: CC 69, Opponents 73.**

**Fumbles-Lost: CC 14-4, Opponents 16-7.**

**Penalties-Yards: CC 19-130, Opponents 29-226.**

**Punts-Yards-Avg: CC** - Joseph Gould **16-654-40.9, Opponents 19-541-28.5.**

**Points Scored: CC 177, Opponents 114.**



**Above:** Lane Simmons has the Cavalier flag duties as the cheer squad prepares their "Blackout Night" sign to be burst by the team.



**Above:** Deuce Greenhill (0) fades into the distant end zone (54 yards away) as assistant coach Tyler Gadlen (left, in black) leaps for joy on the Crockett sideline. The TD gave the hosts a 17-7 lead with just 4:15 remaining in the game.

**Below:** Cav quarterback Grayson Lambert (1) made his longest run of the season, a 31-yarder behind this Jordan Rainey (70) block, to push into Dyer territory, but Crockett lost 10 yards on a later fumble to stall the drive.



**Above:** Linebacker Preston Lambert (13) hammered Dyer's Tevin Reed (6) for a 2-yard loss on this play, and then...

**Below:** Recovered a fumble when teammates Demo Pickens (3), Antuan Hobson (2), Gabe Dupree (29), and Amarion Hobson (4) knocked the ball loose from the Choctaws' Pierre Isom on this tackle.



**Left:** On Dyer's next series, Cav safety Gabe Dupree (29) made this dazzling interception when the Choctaws' Luke Robertson overthrew receiver Malachi McPhearson (3). Assisting Dupree in coverage were Preston Lambert (13), Amarion Hobson (4), and Jacob Knox (42). Dupree returned the pick 13 yards to the Dyer 32.



**Above:** After breaking up a long fourth-down pass at his own goal line to help Crockett gain possession again, Deuce Greenhill (0) took this handoff from Grayson Lambert (1), cut behind blocks by Preston Vernon (50), Ethan Allen (55), Carson Pruitt (34), and Kevin Garduno (74), zoomed around the left corner, and...scored.

**Left:** Jessie Hooks is ready to cheer the Cavaliers on.

**Below:** The resilient Choctaws came right back with an 83-yard scoring drive, capped by a double-pass play in which Malachi McPhearson, after catching a backward throw near the sideline from Luke Robertson, then delivered a perfect throw in the end zone to Everett Kuykendall from 27 yards out. They missed the extra point, however, which led to this onside kick attempt, but when Crockett's Karsen Burgess (15) made an acrobatic recovery of the bounding ball with under two minutes to go, it looked like the Cavs would prevail.



**Above:** Crockett drove it to the 12, but faced a fourth down. Enter Avery Hurst (85), who blasted this 29-yard field goal through the uprights out of Landon Wicker's hold to give the Cavs a 10-7 advantage early in the final period.



**Left:** Dyer forced a punt and got the ball back (after a penalty) at its own 10 with 36 seconds left and no timeouts. One long pass completion then set up this "Hail Mary" attempt with 7 seconds left, but it was broken up by Gabe Dupree (29) and Antuan Hobson (2).

**Below:** When officials gave Dyer a second chance by adding a second to the clock, this play resulted, and somehow the Choctaws' Devin Hayward (9) pulled the "Hail Mary" throw out of the pack.

