

HIGH SCHOOL HOOPS TIPS OFF TONIGHT; MIDDLE SCHOOL SPLITS WITH DYERSBURG



Above: Hannah Johnson cruises in for a breakaway layup. Johnson will be counted on for much-needed scoring in her senior season for the Lady Cavs. (Photo by Ashley Owens)



Left: In action from last season, Sarah Cherry lines up a three-pointer while teammates Jayden Maddox (21), Karlee Castellaw, Chloe Adkisson, and Lanyah Cathey already know it's going down. (Photo by Ashley Owens)

By Ron Barry

Following a year in which their seniors carried the load, Crockett County's teams open the high school basketball season tonight in Millington with "new blood" very much a part of the picture.

For girls coach Kayla Irvin, leading scorer Karmen Frost has graduated. So has her best three-point shooter, Alexis Borges. So has her top rebounder, Janiya Jones. That means the Lady Cavaliers are going to need quality leadership from players who haven't been required to supply it that often before.

For the Crockett boys program, the new faces begin at the top as Rick Rudesill takes over as head coach after a storied West Tennessee career that includes taking three Bolivar Central teams to Class AA state championships in 2004, 2005, and 2010. Rudesill, who played high school ball at Jackson North Side and college hoops at Union University, has amassed 869 wins in a 32-year career spanning three schools.

But gone from last year's Cavalier lineup are four guys now playing at Dyersburg State: Isaiah Claybrooks, Haydn Moten, Juwan McLemore, and Cam Mask. So - like the girls team - Crockett's boys will be short on starting experience.

That both teams open with a tough test on the road at Millington doesn't make the task any easier. Millington's girls demolished Tipton-Rosemark 63-4 in their opener Tuesday, and the boys followed with a 63-45 triumph.

Irvin's two most seasoned returnees are seniors Sarah Cherry and Hannah Johnson, who were starters in 2022-23. But while Johnson has had some impressive scoring nights, no one else on the Lady Cav squad has a history of producing significant offense. Irvin says that will be part of the fun this season.

"I have no idea how we'll do record-wise this year," she said prior to the "Meet the Cavs" scrimmage Tuesday. "But I love the girls on this team. They're scrappy, they pull for each other, and it is a delight to be around them. From a basketball standpoint, they tend to be a little too unselfish; I need for some of them to be more willing to shoot the ball more often. But they are coachable; they listen, and they work hard. Above all that, they are great young ladies. They make coming to practice every day enjoyable."

Irvin will look to get production from a variety of last season's reserves, including Karlee Castellaw, seniors Charity Greenhill and Jayden Maddox, Amaria Walker, and Halle Holyfield. Anyone else will be getting extended minutes for the first time as a Lady Cav, but there are several good athletes among the younger prospects.

On the boys side, only Antuan Hobson, Lane Simmons, and Dre Walker saw much previous action among the returnees. Guards Zay Jones and Demo Pickens made occasional appearances, and Rhett Butler is a shooting threat if he can stay on the court after battling leg injuries throughout his career. Other new faces will see playing time as well as Rudesill settles into his first Crockett season.

After the Millington doubleheader tonight, the Crockett teams host Fayette-Ware Saturday afternoon in a twin bill starting at 1:00.

CC Middle School: Crockett's girls, winners of only one of their first seven games, collected their second victory in a row Thursday night when Jentry Maddox scored 21 points to lead the Lady Cavs past visiting Dyersburg 39-32.

Last night's triumph followed a Monday win over Milan as Crockett prevailed 36-13 behind a 16-point effort by Maddox. Skyleigh Qualls added six and Lola Bailey five for the Lady Cavs. Against Dyersburg, Wesley Thornton supplied six points, Ruth Gourley five, Sydney Smith four, and Callie Freeman three to close the scoring. Maddox scored six fourth-quarter points as Crockett broke open a 26-26 deadlock after three periods.

Crockett's boys split their two games this week, holding on to defeat Milan 31-28 before falling last night to Dyersburg 40-25. The Cavs built a 14-point lead against Milan but almost let it slip away. The visiting Bulldogs did not aid their own cause, missing nine of 10 free throws in the close contest. Max Woods topped Cav scorers with 12, backed by six points each from George Randall and Carson Webb.

Dyersburg built a 35-14 advantage after three quarters to win last night. Carter Wren was the only Cavalier to manage at least five points in the defeat. DJ Forrest had four and Christian Buchanan three for the hosts, who fell to 5-4 for the year.

Monday, Nov. 13 at Alamo

CC Girls (36): Jentry Maddox 16, Skyleigh Qualls 6, Lola Bailey 5, Sydney Smith 3, Wesley Thornton 2, Callie Freeman 2, Jaydan Frye 2, Gourley 0, Hoover 0, Edwards 0, Leforgee 0, Bray 0, Wells 0, Chandler 0, Lewis 0, Scruggs 0, McCoy 0, **13 FG, 2 3-P, 4-8 FT. 3-Ptrs:** Bailey 1, Qualls 1. **Record: 2-6.**

Milan (13): Moore 7, Stephens 3, Carter 2, Wilson 1, **3 FG, 0 3-P, 7-14 FT. 3-Ptrs:** None.

CC Boys (31): Max Woods 12, George Randall 6, Carson Webb 6, DJ Forrest 4, Carter Webb 3, Morgan 0, Reynolds 0, C. Johnson 0, O'Quin 0, Willis 0, **8 FG, 4 3-P, 3-8 FT. 3-Ptrs:** Randall 2, Wren 1, Woods 1. **Record: 5-3.**

Milan (28): Conley 11, Hollingsworth 6, Phinnessee 4, N. Morton 4, White 3, Vinson 0, **9 FG, 3 3-P, 1-10 FT. 3-Ptrs:** Conley 3.

Thursday, Nov. 16 at Alamo

CC Girls (39): Maddox 21, Thornton 6, Gourley 5, Smith 4, Freeman 3, Hoover 0, Qualls 0, Edwards 0, Bailey 0, Leforgee 0, **10 FG, 4 3-P, 7-10 FT. 3-Ptrs:** Maddox 1, Freeman 1, Gourley 1, Smith 1. **Record: 3-6.**

Dyersburg (32): Briana Parr 19, Brooklyn Parr 9, Jones 2, Madden 1, Fleming 1, **5 FG, 3 3-P, 13-23 FT. 3-Ptrs:** Brooklyn Parr 3.

CC Boys (25): Wren 5, Forrest 4, Christian Buchanan 3, Webb 2, Chance Johnson 2, Cole Summar 2, Taby Lewis 2, Jameson Bushart 2, Ittai Fry 2, Woods 1, Morgan 0, Randall 0, Willis 0, O'Quin 0, Reynolds 0, Young 0, Haley 0, **8 FG, 2 3-P, 3-7 FT. 3-Ptrs:** Wren 1, Buchanan 1. **Record: 5-4.**

Dyersburg (40): Thompson 9, Morgan 7, Jelks 7, Barbee 6, Robinson 4, Barringer 3, Stanley 2, Dillard 2, **14 FG, 13-P, 9-15 FT. 3-Ptrs:** Jelks 1.



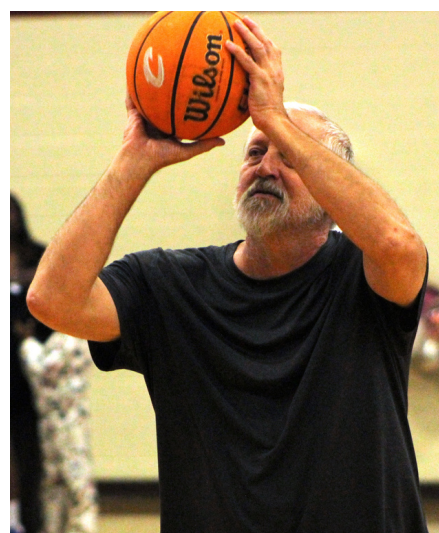
Left: Lola Bailey knocked down her first three-pointer and scored five points overall as CCMS defeated Milan this week. (Photo by Ashley Owens)



Right: Skyleigh Qualls tallied six points in Crockett Middle's win over Milan, and the Lady Cavs made it two victories in a row last night by downing Dyersburg. (Photo by Ashley Owens)



Above: Antuan Hobson, now a senior, is the most experienced of the returning Crockett boys team. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Rick Rudesill, with three state championships and 869 wins on his 32-year coaching resume, takes over as head man on the Crockett boys bench. (Photo by Ron Barry)