

PAINT POINTS BOOST LADY CAVS; BOYS FALL IN OVERTIME



Above: Senior Lane Simmons drilled four three-pointers and netted 22 points, but the Cavs fell just short in overtime against Millington. (Photo by Ashley Owens)



Above: Coach Kayla Irvin gathers her troops for strategy during a timeout in last night's win over Millington. (Photo by Katherine Yancy)

By Ron Barry

If you were preparing to play Crockett County's girls in basketball and looked at last year's stat sheet for scouting ideas, the last thing you would have expected was to get pounded by points from the paint.

That's hoop talk for scoring from your post players, and Coach Kayla Irvin got a heaping helping of it last night in Millington from Amaria Walker and Jayden Maddox as the Lady Cavaliers opened their season with a surprisingly easy 64-44 triumph over the host Lady Trojans.

And in the evening's nightcap, Crockett's Dre Walker drilled a three-pointer with less than two seconds remaining to force an overtime period, but the Cavs fell to Millington 66-61 in the debut for Coach Rick Rudesill – but the effort his inexperienced crew displayed gave much hope for the rest of the season.

In the girls game, Walker – making her first start on the varsity level – hammered home 20 points from inside while her frontcourt teammate Maddox added 10 more in a reserve role as Crockett bested a team that had won its opening game by 59 points just three nights earlier.

“Our 5s (Amaria and Jayden) combined for 30 points in the paint tonight,” an ecstatic Irvin said after the game, “and I was so proud of our offensive rebound effort and energy. Watching these girls compete and celebrate each other's successes is the absolute best part. We need to clean up some turnovers, but we scrapped and secured almost every loose ball in the game. I thought we got positive contributions from every girl, even the intangibles that don't always make the stat sheet.”

The “tangibles” that did make the stat sheet show that Crockett leaped to a 21-12 first-quarter advantage as a whopping seven players tallied points, paced by five each from Sarah Cherry and Karlee Castellaw. Walker took over the second and third periods, netting eight points in each one as the Lady Cavs held a 33-22 edge at halftime and a 47-40 advantage through three quarters.

When crunch time hit, Irvin's squad outpointed their hosts 17-4 in the final period, with Castellaw and Hannah Johnson connecting on critical three-pointers and Maddox adding a couple of key buckets. No Lady Cav player committed more than two fouls in the contest, an extreme rarity in a road game and another major reason for their success.

Johnson closed with 13 points to back the post players, and Cherry and Castellaw contributed eight apiece. Senior guard Charity Greenhill had four in her first start, and Gabby Burse netted a free throw for the remaining Crockett tally.

In the boys encounter, Millington held a 55-52 edge when it committed a foul to force the Cavs to inbound the ball with just 6.2 seconds remaining. Crockett worked it to Walker near the top of the key, and he dribbled to his right to fire up a three-pointer as the clock ticked below two seconds. The shot swished through the net with too little time for Millington to respond, sending the contest into overtime.

But the Trojans limited Crockett's scoring to another Walker trey and three free throws – two by Rhett Butler – while netting 11 points of their own, including two baskets by Tayshaun Dye and four free throws by Brandon Payne to ice their second win in as many starts.

The narrow defeat spoiled an outstanding effort from an inexperienced Cavalier team that contains players with barely a handful of starts in their past. Senior Lane Simmons stepped up to pace the offense with a 22-point performance that included four three-pointers.

Backing him was Walker's 16-point effort, which included three treys. Antuan Hobson drained eight points, Xavier Jones six, Corey Savage five, and Butler and Amarion Hobson two apiece. Payne had 22 and Dye 19 for Millington, which also received nine from Aiden Maclin. The Trojans shot 26 free throws in the game to Crockett's nine.

Both Crockett team open their home seasons this afternoon against Fayette-Ware, with the girls tipping off at 1:00 and the boys game to follow.

Friday, Nov. 17 at Millington

CC Girls (64): Karlee Castellaw 2 2-2 8, Sarah Cherry 3 1-2 8, Gabby Bursey 0 1-2 1, Charity Greenhill 2 0-0 4, Jordyn Maddox 0 0-0 0, Hannah Johnson 6 0-0 13, Halle Holyfield 0 0-0 0, Jayden Maddox 5 0-0 10, Amaria Walker 10 0-0 20, **Team 28 4-6 64. 3-Ptrs:** Castellaw 2, Cherry 1, Johnson 1. **Record: 1-0.**

Millington (44): Arianna Whitten 2 1-1 6, Boone 3 1-1 7, Alana Whitten 4 1-2 10, Taylor 3 2-2 8, Carpenter 0 0-0 0, Ransom 3 1-2 8, Ware 1 0-0 2, Young 0 0-0 0, Miller 1 1-2 3, **Team 17 7-10 44. 3-Ptrs:** Ar. Whitten 1, Al. Whitten 1, Ransom 1. **Record: 1-1.**

CC Boys (61): Grayson Lambert 0 0-0 0, Antuan Hobson 4 0-2 8, Jayden Frye 0 0-0 0, Rhett Butler 0 2-2 2, Preston Lambert 0 0-0 0, Lane Simmons 9 0-0 22, Amarion Hobson 1 0-0 2, Davian Green 0 0-0 0, Corey Savage 2 0-0 5, Dre Walker 6 1-2 16, Xavier Jones 2 2-3 6, **Team 24 5-9 61. 3-Ptrs:** Simmons 4, Walker 3, Savage 1. **Record: 0-1.**

Millington (66): McGhee 0 2-4 2, Payne 6 9-10 22, Maclin 4 0-0 9, C. Anderson 1 0-2 2, Dye 8 2-4 19, Tyler 1 2-6 4, Puryear 2 0-0 4, J. Anderson 0 0-0 0, Temple 2 0-0 4, **Team 24 15-26 66. 3-Ptrs:** Payne 1, Maclin 1, Dye 1. **Record: 2-0. [Note: Game went to overtime tied 55-55.]**



Above: Dre Walker scored 16 points and forced overtime by draining a trey with less than two seconds to play. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Junior post player Amaria Walker netted a career-high 20 points in her first varsity start. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Senior Jayden Maddox added 10 paint points in a reserve role to help boost the Lady Cavs. (Photo by Ron Barry)