

CAVS FALL AS LAST-SECOND SHOT ROLLS OUT; CROCKETT GIRLS STEAMROLL NORTH SIDE



Above: Lane Simmons posted an 18-point game for the Cavaliers in the opening round of the HUB Classic vs. Liberty Tech.



Above: A good time was had by all, as illustrated by this late-game celebratory gathering on the bench: (from left) Amaria Walker, Charity Greenhill, Hannah Johnson, Karlee Castellaw, Jayden Maddox, and Sarah Cherry.

By Ron Barry

The ball landed softly on the right front of the rim and then rolled two-thirds of the way around before softly falling off the left front of the rim.

That's how close Crockett County's Cavaliers came to beating homestanding Liberty Tech in the opening round of the HUB Classic Thursday evening in Jackson.

Trailing 59-58, Coach Rick Rudesill's team inbounded the final possession with 17.7 seconds left in the game. After a little time was killed, Dre Walker came over to the left wing and set a pick for point guard Zay Jones, who drove into the lane and tossed up a contested floater over three defenders. The shot rolled tantalizingly around the rim before sliding off at the buzzer.

The news was much better for Crockett's girls, who absolutely annihilated winless Jackson North Side 73-20 in their opening round. The Lady Cavs scored the first 13 points of the game, gave up a three-pointer, and then scored the next 13 points in building a 26-3 advantage that soon ballooned to 38-9 and finally 51-17 before Coach Kayla Irvin removed her starters for good early in the third period. She had already substituted liberally for them throughout the first half.

For Crockett's boys, it was another heartbreaking defeat for a team that plays hard but continues to shoot itself in the foot at too many inopportune times. Numerous turnovers were again the culprit in this one, offsetting an 18-point performance by Lane Simmons and sending the Cavs to their 11th loss in 13 starts.

Rudesill's squad held five-point leads for considerable stretches in the first half, although Liberty rallied to tie it at 31-all by halftime behind Keenen Robinson's 14 points. The Crusaders outdid the Cavs 18-10 in the third quarter, although Dre Walker's seven-point stanza kept things close.

In the final period, buckets by Simmons pulled Crockett within a single possession on two separate occasions until a three-pointer by Jones from the right wing lifted the Cavs into a 58-57 lead with 1:54 to play. Robinson converted a pair of free throws for Liberty 14 seconds later to re-take the edge.

Over the next 1:13, the teams exchanged missed shots and turnovers until Crockett got the ball back with 17.7 seconds remaining, but Jones' last-second effort rolled off the rim.

Backing the 18-point game by Simmons were Jones with 13, Antuan Hobson with 11, Walker with nine, and Demo Pickens with four. Jeremiah Greer, who drilled a trio of threes, paced Liberty with 19, one more than Robinson.

The girls game was a mismatch right from the start as Sarah Cherry netted a Cherry Bomb from the left corner in the first few seconds and the rout was on. She scored eight in the first quarter, as did Jayden Maddox. Then Hannah Johnson and Gabby Bursey each scored five points in the second period; Alice Luten knocked in seven in the third; and Ellie Henderson contributed six in the fourth as the lead expanded throughout the contest.

Crockett is now 10-3. Johnson led the offense with 13, followed by Maddox with 10; Cherry, Luten, and Jordyn Maddox with eight apiece; Bursey with seven; Henderson with six; and Amaria Walker with five. Twelve different Lady Cavs put points on the board.

HUB Classic tournament play continues Friday with the Lady Cavs facing Liberty Tech at 4:00 and the boys taking on North Side at 7:00. The tournament's championship games are set for Saturday.

Thursday, Dec. 28 at Jackson

CC Girls (73): Chloe Adkisson 0 0-0 0, Karlee Castellaw 0 1-2 1, Sarah Cherry 3 0-0 8, Gabby Bursey 2 3-3 7, Lanyah Cathey 1 0-0 3, Audrey Whitby 0 0-0 0, Charity Greenhill 0 0-0 0, Jordyn Maddox 3 2-3 8, Hannah Johnson 3 6-6 13, Keeton Holyfield 0 0-0 0, Halle Holyfield 0 2-4 2, Jayden Maddox 3 4-4 10, Alice Luten 2 4-8 8, Torey Savage 1 0-0 2, Amaria Walker 2 1-1 5, Ellie Henderson 3 0-0 6, **Team 23 23-31 73. 3-Ptrs:** Cherry 2, Johnson 1, Cathey 1. **Record: 10-3.**

Jackson North Side (20): Simone Trice 0 0-0 0, Keyana Jacobs 1 0-0 3, Jada Vandiver 0 0-0 0, Maliyah Forrest 0 0-0 0, Nikhara Robinson 1 0-0 3, Alandra Kimble 0 0-0 0, Nevaeh Bond 0 0-0 0, Anaiyah Bettany 1 0-0 2, Jamayla Harris 1 1-2 3, Ivyuanna Miller 0 0-0 0, Madyson Persen 1 0-0 2, Kaleigh Hartfield 2 1-2 7, Niley Bond 0 0-0 0, **Team 7 2-4 20. 3-Ptrs:** Hartfield 2, Robinson 1, Jacobs 1. **Record: 0-11.**

CC Boys (58): Grayson Lambert 0 0-0 0, Antuan Hobson 5 0-0 11, Preston Lambert 0 0-0 0, Lane Simmons 9 0-0 18, Amaron Hobson 0 3-4 3, Davian Green 0 0-0 0, Dre Walker 4 1-2 9, Zay Jones 4 2-6 13, Demo Pickens 2 0-0 4, **Team 24 6-12 58. 3-Ptrs:** Jones 3, An. Hobson 1. **Record: 2-11.**

Liberty Tech (59): Rishod Gill 3 1-2 10, Jack Pirtle 0 0-0 0, Greg Morris 1 0-0 2, Jeremiah Greer 6 4-7 19, Corey Shaw 0 0-0 0, Kelcey Taylor 3 0-0 6, Keenen Robinson 7 3-3 18, Taureen King 1 2-2 4, **Team 21 10-14 59. 3-Ptrs:** Greer 3, Gill 3, Robinson 1. **Record: 2-6.**



Left: Hannah Johnson begins a fast break on her way to a team-high 13 points for the afternoon.



Right: Crockett's Gabby Bursey drives for two of her seven points.



Left: This beautiful pass from Sarah Cherry (3) to Amaria Walker (25) led to a layup that kept the Lady Cavs rolling in the opening period.

Below: On the game's final play, Crockett's Dre Walker (23) sets a pick for Zay Jones (25) to drive to the basket...

Right: ... where Jones is able to get off a contested floater in the lane over three Liberty Tech defenders that ended up rolling around and off the rim.

