

CASTELLAW. JOHNSON SPARK LADY CAV COMEBACK; BOYS FALL TO HENRY COUNTY



Above: Karlee Castellaw scored 12 points and hit a key three-pointer with 1:30 on the clock to give Crockett the lead as the Lady Cavaliers edged Graves County (KY) 39-35 in Paris. (Photo by Ashley Owens)

By Ron Barry

A year ago at this time, Karlee Castellaw was a Crockett County sophomore point guard. She'd see only occasional game minutes here and there, because the Lady Cavs had a senior ahead of her: Karmen Frost.

Frost deservedly won several post-season accolades, and earned an athletic scholarship to Bethel University. Consequently, there wasn't much of an opportunity for Castellaw to gain a significant amount of actual game experience.

She could have become discouraged. Instead, she spent the time between the end of the season and the beginning of fall practice working on her game. Her frame was more noticeably toned, her attitude more confident, and her improvement more obvious to all. In pre-season scrimmages, Coach Kayla Irvin said, she was sometimes the best player on the floor.

Fast forward to Tuesday night in Paris. The Lady Cavaliers were playing in the West Tennessee Bone & Joint Henry County Classic, matched up against Graves County from Kentucky, a program with a solid history of success in that basketball-crazy state.

It was late in the fourth quarter, and Graves County was clinging to a two-point lead. The Lady Eagles had used a 16-10 third-period run to pull ahead in a game that had been an extremely physical defensive battle to that point.

"There was about 1:30 on the clock, and we were attempting to run a play," Castellaw said. "Sarah (Cherry) passed the ball to me, and the defensive girl didn't come up quickly. So I shot it and it went in."

Castellaw's three-pointer from the right wing - her third trey of the game - pushed Crockett ahead by one and rewarded a strategy Irvin had employed. "I had four fouls at the time, so Jayden Maddox and I kept subbing for each other on offensive and defensive possessions," Castellaw said. The strategy kept her in the game long enough to push the Lady Cavs ahead - at which point they turned it over to birthday girl Hannah Johnson.

With the advantage now theirs, the Lady Cavs hunkered down on defense even more and when they regained possession, they got the ball into Johnson's hands. The dependable senior - who turned 18 years old earlier in the day - made three key free throws down the stretch to total nine points for the quarter, 14 for the game, and Crockett's girls moved to 8-2 for the season with a 39-35 triumph.

The game was tight - ugly, but tight - throughout. Crockett led 11-9 after one stanza as Amaria Walker tallied four of her eight points and Castellaw and Cherry each hit a three-pointer. Only 10 points total were scored in the second quarter, and Irvin's club held a 17-13 lead.

In the third period, Castellaw and Johnson each made threes, but Graves County received two treys from Morgan Alexander and six additional points from Hannah Glisson to move ahead 29-27 entering the fourth.

That's when Johnson - as she's done several times before - asserted herself, notching six points to put Castellaw in the position of moving Crockett back into the lead. Three more successful free throws later, and Irvin's squad had another hard-fought win.

"Late game free throws, a three off the bench at just the right time, a game-sealing steal, some lockdown half-court D, and some ball handling to close it out," Irvin said. "These girls came to play."

Johnson's 14 and Castellaw's 12 paced the Lady Cav scoring. Cherry, who scored 30 in the previous contest, was held to a single three-pointer in this one offensively. Alexander netted 15 and Glisson 14 for Graves County.

In the nightcap to close out the evening, Crockett's boys suffered their second straight lopsided defeat to host Henry County 59-29 and lost senior guard Rhett Butler to a third-period leg injury. Coach Rick Rudesill thought that a thrilling comeback victory over Gibson County might inject some new life and confidence into his Cavs, but that hasn't materialized in the two games since.

Henry County spurted to an 18-4 lead in the opening quarter, which ballooned to 34-13 by halftime. The offense was so lackluster for Crockett that a single trey by Demo Pickens in the second period made him the Cavs' leading scorer for the half.

The host Patriots rained three-pointers throughout the game - draining 10 overall - and continued to pull steadily away after the intermission. Carson Card, who netted four of the treys, paced their offense with 16 points. Dalton Raymer scored all nine of his in the second quarter, and Daveon Barker had 11 for the game for the winners.

For the second consecutive contest, reserve Davian Green was Crockett's top scorer with seven. Antuan Hobson added six and Pickens and Lane Simmons contributed three apiece.

Both Crockett teams travel to Henderson Thursday night for a 6:00 doubleheader with Chester County.

Tuesday, Dec. 19 at Paris

CC Girls (39): Karlee Castellaw 4 1-2 12, Sarah Cherry 1 0-0 3, Charity Greenhill 0 0-0 0, Jordyn Maddox 0 0-0 0, Hannah Johnson 4 4-5 14, Halle Holyfield 0 0-0 0, Jayden Maddox 1 0-0 2, Amaria Walker 4 0-2 8, **Team 14 5-9 39. 3-Ptrs:** Castellaw 3, Johnson 2, Cherry 1. **Record: 8-2.**

Graves County (35): Morgan Alexander 5 3-4 15, Hannah Glisson 5 4-4 14, Ginger Martin 1 1-3 4, Khloey Scott 0 0-0 0, Kailee Winfrey 1 0-0 2, Kinsey Burgess 0 0-2 0, Sydney Shea 0 0-0 0, Abbie Kate Fowler 0 0-0 0, Adley Veucosovi 0 0-0 0, Kendra Winstead 0 0-0 0, Payton Haydew 0 0-0 0, **Team 12 8-13 35. 3-Ptrs:** Alexander 2, Martin 1.

CC Boys (29): Grayson Lambert 0 0-0 0, Antuan Hobson 1 4-4 6, Jayden Frye 0 0-0 0, Rhett Butler 0 0-0 0, Preston Lambert 1 0-0 2, Lane Simmons 1 1-2 3, Amarion Hobson 0 2-2 2, Cade Freeman 0 0-0 0, Baker Jones 0 2-2 2, Davian Green 3 1-1 7, Karsen Burgess 0 0-0 0, Corey Savage 0 0-0 0, Dre Walker 0 0-0 0, Kevin Pledge 1 0-2 2, Zay Jones 1 0-2 2, Dakylan Woods 0 0-0 0, Ben Burgess 0 0-2 0, Demo Pickens 1 0-0 3, **Team 9 10-17 29. 3-Ptrs:** Pickens 1. **Record: 2-8.**

Henry County (59): Daveon Barker 4 0-0 11, Kayden Kendall 1 0-0 2, Aden Jackson 0 0-0 0, Javion Boyd 2 0-0 5, Caden Marshall 4 0-0 8, Dalton Raymer 3 1-2 9, Carson Card 6 0-0 16, Luke Stephens 3 1-2 7, Drew Pack 0 0-0 0, Nick Abbott 0 1-2 1, Demarcus Patton 0 0-0 0, Kendrick Moore 0 0-0 0, Chase Dixon 0 0-0 0, Zach Wilson 0 0-0 0, **Team 23 3-6 59. 3-Ptrs:** Card 4, Barker 3, Raymer 2, Boyd 1. **Record: 6-4.**



Above: Hannah Johnson turned 18 years old Tuesday, and her best presents were the free throws she sank in the final minute to preserve Crockett's 39-35 win over Graves County. (Photo by Ashley Owens)



Left: Davian Green was Crockett's top scorer for the second straight game with seven points for the Cavaliers, who fell 59-29 to host Henry County. (Photo by Ron Barry)