

ENERGIZED LADY CAVS JOLT MCNAIRY 74-48; BOBCATS SILENCE CROCKETT BOYS



Above: Crockett's Hannah Johnson (14) backpedals into the corner before launching a backbreaking three-pointer as the Lady Cavaliers pulled away from McNairy Central in the second half.

By Ron Barry

For about seven minutes Friday night, it looked like perhaps the satisfaction of the previous evening's defeat of then 19-0 Gibson County was wearing on Crockett County's Lady Cavaliers.

The shots just weren't falling for Coach Kayla Irvin's squad, and a few turnovers reared their ugly heads as well. With 1:21 remaining in the opening quarter against McNairy Central, the visiting Lady Bobcats had a 16-9 lead and every intention of sustaining it.

But if you've seen this edition of the Lady Cavs, you know that even if the shots aren't falling, this Crockett bunch is going to scrap and claw and hustle until – eventually – it rights the ship. And a second before the first-period buzzer sounded, reserve Halle Holyfield stuck back a rebound basket to trim the margin to 18-15.

That seemed to ignite the Lady Cavs just a little bit more, and when senior Jayden Maddox converted a three-point play the old-fashioned way at 7:43 of Quarter #2, suddenly Crockett was ahead 20-18. After trading buckets for a while, Hannah Johnson nailed a jumper with 1:51 left before the break for a 30-29 Crockett edge. The hosts never looked back after that.

Sarah Cherry nailed a "Cherry Bomb" three from the top of the key just before the halftime horn and Crockett carried a 35-29 advantage into the dressing room, not to mention virtually all of the game's momentum. The energy just blossomed from that point on.

And in the final two quarters, Irvin's club blitzed McNairy 39-19 to capture a 74-48 victory, the Lady Cavs' 13th in 17 starts this season.

Johnson, a hurricane of activity in this one, led all scorers with 20 points and repeatedly drew "oohs" and "aahs" from the large crowd with speedy steals, acquisition of loose balls, pass interceptions, and deft assists to her teammates. She had plenty of offensive help, as Charity Greenhill nailed a career-high 15 points and Cherry added 14 as Crockett turned the contest into a rout.

Most of the damage was done in a 23-10 third stanza in which Johnson poured in 11 points, Greenhill drilled her third trey of the night, and Crockett's pressing defense seemed to be everywhere as the Lady Bobcats simply couldn't adjust.

Amaria Walker and Jordyn Maddox each contributed six points to the Crockett cause as the team now prepares to begin district play Tuesday night, hosting South Gibson in a 6:00 doubleheader.

Friday's nightcap featured another lopsided loss for the Cavalier boys, falling to McNairy 43-26 in a game which featured one of the slowest starts in basketball history. With more than four and a half minutes played in the opening quarter, the Bobcats led 2-0. Crockett finally got on the board at the 2:53 mark on a Dre Walker bucket and then actually took the lead when Antuan Hobson made it 4-2 some 31 seconds later.

But that's all the points Crockett would score in the initial stanza, and the second period didn't see much improvement as the hosts went into the locker room trailing 16-9. That's not a typo – that was the actual halftime score.

McNairy won the third quarter 13-11, but the Cavs' offense was so anemic it didn't really feel like the game was still within reach. And when McNairy won the final period 14-6, Crockett's boys fell to 2-15 on the season.

Walker finished with five points and was Crockett's leading scorer, which summarizes the inefficiency. Kevin Pledge and Hobson were next in line with four apiece. McNairy's Darrien Clark led everybody with 16.

Friday, Jan. 5 at Alamo

CC Girls (74): Karlee Castellaw 0 2-2 2, Sarah Cherry 5 3-3 14, Gabby Bursey 0 0-0 0, Lanyah Cathey 0 0-0 0, Charity Greenhill 4 4-4 15, Jordyn Maddox 2 2-4 6, Hannah Johnson 9 1-1 20, Keeton Holyfield 0 0-0 0, Halle Holyfield 2 0-0 4, Jayden Maddox 1 2-4 4, Alice Luten 1 1-1 3, Amaria Walker 2 2-3 6, Ellie Henderson 0 0-0 0, **Team 21 17-22 74. 3-Ptrs:** Greenhill 3, Johnson 1, Cherry 1. **Record: 13-4.**

McNairy Central (48): Linlee Davidson 0 0-0 0, Haylee Whitmore 3 0-0 6, Gracie Renfro 0 0-0 0, Carissa Moore 0 0-0 0, Cailin Gray 1 0-0 2, Nerrajah Wade 7 2-3 18, Elaine Harris 0 0-0 0, Lena Taylor 5 1-1 12, Anna Clayton 1 3-4 5, Macee Gilbert 0 0-0 0, Brooklyn Ricks 2 1-2 5, Kenli Bingham 0 0-0 0, **Team 19 7-10 48. 3-Ptrs:** Wade 2, Taylor 1. **Record: 6-8.**

CC Boys (26): Grayson Lambert 0 0-0 0, Antuan Hobson 1 2-2 4, Jayden Frye 0 0-0 0, Preston Lambert 0 2-2 2, Lane Simmons 1 0-0 2, Amaron Hobson 1 0-0 3, Cade Freeman 0 0-0 0, Baker Jones 0 0-0 0, Davian Green 0 0-2 0, Karsen Burgess 1 0-0 3, Corey Savage 0 0-0 0, Dre Walker 2 1-5 5, Kevin Pledge 2 0-2 4, Zay Jones 1 0-0 3, **Team 9 5-13 26. 3-Ptrs:** Am. Hobson 1, Burgess 1, Jones 1. **Record: 2-15.**

McNairy Central (43): Ryder Plunk 0 0-0 0, Darrien Clark 6 1-2 16, Kylyn Allen 1 1-2 3, Ethan Johnston 5 0-0 13, Case Stone 1 0-0 3, Josh Sain 0 0-0 0, Jabari Melton 2 0-0 4, Jackson Price 2 0-0 4, Tyler Mangrum 0 0-0 0, Spencer Mare 0 0-0 0, Wyatt Manley 0 0-0 0, **Team 17 2-4 43. 3-Ptrs:** Clark 3, Johnston 3, Stone 1. **Record: 7-7.**



Above: During a free throw, Crockett's Karlee Castellaw communicates with teammates as to whom she's guarding when the ball goes back in play.



Above: Senior Charity Greenhill (12) is off and running with a steal created by a double-team with Sarah Cherry (3) on the Lady Bobcats' Lena Taylor (31). Greenhill scored a career-high 15 points.



Right: Sarah Cherry nailed this three-point "Cherry Bomb" to beat the halftime buzzer and give the Lady Cavs a 35-29 lead at the intermission.



Above: Keeton Holyfield (15) splits the defense with her dribble as Lanyah Cathey (5) moves into position and Alice Luten (23) prepares to set a pick.



Above: Jayden Maddox (22) knocks the ball loose from McNairy to ignite a fast break that included sister Jordyn (13); the sisters combined for 10 points in the contest.



Left: Halle Holyfield (20) joins Sarah Cherry to put double pressure on McNairy's Nerrajah Wade (23). Holyfield contributed several good defensive minutes for Crockett.



Above: Coach Kayla Irvin sets her press after a Crockett timeout.



Above: Karsen Burgess (21) nails a three-pointer over a McNairy defender in the Cavaliers' 43-26 defeat.



Above: Crockett's Kevin Pledge (24) gets whacked on the back of the head by McNairy's Jabari Melton to earn a couple of free throws in first-half action Friday night.



Above: Davian Green (15) prepares to go up for a shot while teammate Corey Savage (left) is there for a pass in case the shot can't be taken.