

# PUTTING IN THE OVERTIME: LADY CAVS OUTLAST OBION COUNTY



**Above:** These two seniors - Crockett's Sarah Cherry and Obion's Alayna Fussell - battled mightily against each other Friday night in the Lady Cavs' overtime win.

## By Ron Barry

The most important basket of the game was scored by freshman Jordyn Maddox. The most important rebound of the game was grabbed by senior Hannah Johnson.

And the biggest assist of the game was dished out by Michele Holyfield.

Wait... WHAT?!!!

It was the quick thinking, accuracy, and persuasiveness of Holyfield - Crockett County's scorekeeper - who helped secure the Lady Cavaliers' 54-53 overtime victory over host Obion County Friday night when she managed to keep primary ballhandler Sarah Cherry in the game when the officials were about to disqualify her on her fifth foul late in the fourth quarter.

The problem was that Cherry had only actually committed four fouls, and as the puzzled senior began to head toward the bench to take a seat, Holyfield leaped out of hers and quickly compared notes with the official home book and the scoreboard operator, who was also keeping a tally of the foul count. After a brief discussion, the Obion scorekeeper agreed that she had mistakenly credited someone else's foul to Cherry at some point.

The prospect of heading toward an overtime without your main point guard is not a pleasant one, especially when a team like Crockett has the ball in Cherry's hands so much of the time. But there would not have even been an overtime in this crazy back-and-forth contest had not Johnson turned on the afterburners in the final half of regulation.

As has happened all too often this season, the Lady Cavaliers immediately dug themselves an immense hole in the opening minutes, trailing 11-2 with only four minutes played. A Jayden Maddox basket managed to pull Crockett within 14-11 by the end of the quarter, but things did not improve much on the offensive end before the intermission as Coach Kayla Irvin's club only added eight more tallies - six by Maddox - and the visitors trailed 24-19 at the break.

Johnson, who had only two points in the first half, took matters into her own hands in the third period, netting 11 of Crockett's 18 points and knocking down a three-pointer with 1:06 remaining to push the Lady Cavs ahead 34-33, their first lead since it was 2-0 at the game's start. The senior added three free throws - the final one on an Obion bench technical foul - to make it 37-34 Crockett heading into the final stanza.

In the fourth, the lead exchanged hands no less than six times. Sara Beth Key put Obion back in front 41-40 on a basket with 6:08 to play. Karlee Castellaw - who got popped in her left eye early in the first quarter and needed some time on the bench to readjust her depth perception - drilled a pair of free throws 28 seconds later to move the Lady Cavs back on top 42-41.

A Reagan Armour bucket gave the edge back to Obion, but Johnson swished two free throws and Amaria Walker stuck back a rebound shot to make it 46-43 Crockett with 2:20 remaining. The final two minutes were insane, as errant passes and loose balls had several players diving on the floor to gain possession. The quick-thinking Johnson saved two of them for the Lady Cavs by calling timeout as quickly as she could get two hands on the ball.

Key hit two free throws for the Lady Rebels to cut it to 46-45 with 1:24 to go, and Obion quickly got the ball back on a turnover. Top scorer Alayna Fussell drove into the lane for a basket and was fouled by Cherry (the alleged fifth infraction) and prepared to go to the line for the "and one" while officials signaled Cherry toward the bench at the 1:17 mark.

Holyfield quickly reacted and engineered the correction, so Cherry stayed in the game but Fussell hit her charity shot to push Obion ahead 48-46.

With Lady Rebel defenders concentrating on pressuring Cherry and trying to keep the ball out of Johnson's hands, Jordyn Maddox suddenly found herself open at the right wing of the three-point arc and calmly nailed a shot with just 49.1 seconds on the clock to regain the advantage for Crockett, 49-48.

The hosts worked the ball to Fussell, who drew another foul with 24.9 ticks remaining. She missed the first free throw but hit the second to tie things up at 49-all as the Lady Cavs prepared for one last try at the bucket. Johnson took a contested 12-footer from right of the lane just before the buzzer sounded, and the teams were headed to overtime.

Crockett struck first at the 2:53 mark when Walker hit one of two free throws. Key did the same for Obion 17 seconds later, and with 2:07 to go, Johnson matched it for the Lady Cavs, making it 51-50. It stayed that way through some frantic play until Johnson was fouled again with 45.1 seconds remaining. This time she swished them both, upping the margin to 53-50.

Thirty seconds later, Johnson grabbed the game's biggest rebound off an Obion miss and was fouled again with 10.5 seconds left. She hit the first free throw for the apparent game-clincher, but missed the second.

Obion managed a three-pointer by Armour with only 1.5 seconds to go, immediately calling timeout and now trailing by a single point. But all Crockett needed to do was successfully inbound the ball, and the contest would be over.

On the ensuing play, however, Obion's Lexi Theilecker smartly drew a charging call on Cherry as she tried to break for the ball, and now the Lady Rebels would get one more chance with the same amount of time left.

The hosts tried a lob pass near the right side of the lane to Fussell, but Johnson stood her ground to force the right-handed Obion senior to go left. As she tried to force up a left-handed layup, Johnson kept her right arm straight up to avoid a foul and joined her teammates in a celebratory high-five when Fussell's shot rolled off the left side of the rim.

When it was finished, Johnson had scored 20 of her game-high 22 points after the halftime break. Both Maddox sisters added eight points apiece, and Cherry and Walker contributed six each as the winners evened their district record at 3-3 and move to 16-7 overall.

Fussell had 16 to pace Obion, now 1-3 in the district and 14-10 overall. Theilacker and Key scored 12 apiece.

In the boys game that followed, seven different Rebels made at least one three-pointer and the hosts used the long ball to down the Cavaliers 60-53. Crockett was tied at 12-all late in the opening period, but Obion eventually won the quarter 20-14 and maintained about a 10-to-15-point cushion through much of the second half, until a late Crockett run cut it down to the final margin.

It was Obion's first district win in four tries and improved its season mark to 15-8. The Cavs fell to 0-6 in the district and 2-21 for the year. Rhett Butler, who nailed three treys, was the lone Crockett player in double figures with 10 points, although Lane Simmons, Dre Walker, Antuan Hobson, and Jayden Frye added eight apiece.

Malachi Island notched 13 to spark Obion, with Aden Lee netting 10.

Both Crockett teams hit the road again today (Saturday) to face Milan in non-district action. The boys will play first at 4:30, followed by the girls game.

#### Friday, Feb. 2 at Troy

**CC Girls (54):** Karlee Castellaw 0 2-2 2, Sarah Cherry 2 2-2 6, Gabby Bursey 0 0-0 0, Charity Greenhill 1 0-0 2, Jordyn Maddox 3 0-0 8, Hannah Johnson 5 10-14 22, Jayden Maddox 3 2-2 8, Amaria Walker 2 2-6 6, **Team 16 18-26 54. 3-Ptrs:** Johnson 2, Jor. Maddox 2. **Record: 16-7 (3-3 district).**

**Obion County (53):** Lexi Theilacker 4 1-2 12, Kelvina Campbell 2 0-0 6, AB Correa 0 0-0 0, Sara Beth Key 5 1-3 12, Alayna Fussell 6 4-5 16, Reagan Armour 1 0-0 3, Emeri Lee 0 4-6 4, Hannah Taylor 0 0-0 0, Emma Waites 0 0-0 0, **Team 18 10-16 53. 3-Ptrs:** Theilacker 3, Campbell 2, Key 1, Armour 1. **Record: 14-10 (1-3 district).**

**CC Boys (52):** Grayson Lambert 0 0-0 0, Antuan Hobson 3 2-2 8, Jayden Frye 2 3-4 8, Rhett Butler 3 1-3 10, Preston Lambert 0 0-0 0, Lane Simmons 3 2-2 8, Amarion Hobson 2 1-1 6, Dre Walker 4 0-1 8, Kevin Pledge 0 0-0 0, Zay Jones 1 2-4 4, Demo Pickens 0 0-0 0, Team 18 11-17 52. 3-Ptrs: Butler 3, Frye 1, Am. Hobson 1. **Record: 2-21 (0-6 district).**

**Obion County (60):** Malachi Island 6 0-0 13, Aden Lee 3 3-4 10, Aiden McBride 3 0-0 7, Brady Wilkins 2 0-0 6, Levi Hendrix 3 0-0 7, Jatlynn Mosley 3 3-6 10, Tanner Richmond 1 0-2 3, Parker Clark 0 2-2 2, Austin Cook 0 0-0 0, Carsen Jones 0 0-0 0, Grant Rickert 1 0-0 2, **Team 22 8-14 60. 3-Ptrs:** Wilkins 2, Island 1, Lee 1, McBride 1, Hendrix 1, Mosley 1, Richmond 1. **Record: 15-8 (1-3 district).**



**Above:** Crockett senior Hannah Johnson survived this smack on the arm to score 20 second-half points to lead the Lady Cavs to their comeback overtime victory.

**Below:** Lady Cav senior Jayden Maddox boxes out Obion's Alayna Fussell on a free throw attempt. Maddox scored eight first-half points to keep Crockett in the game early on.



**Left:** Freshman Jordyn Maddox, who hit the biggest shot of the game for the Lady Cavs, makes a pass into the post area. Ironically, in this photo, the ball is passing over the heads of her parents (directly below the ball) and her sister Jayden (leaning forward on the bench). Each Maddox sister scored eight points for the winners.



**Right:** Amaria Walker hit a couple of big free throws for Crockett in the fourth quarter and scored six points overall.



**Above:** Crockett Coach Kayla Irvin - who said after the game she needed blood pressure meds and an IV - watches some of the final-period frenzy from the sidelines.

**Below:** Junior guard Karlee Castellaw cuts off Obion's Sara Beth Key on this drive toward the basket...



**Left:** ... resulting in this wrestling match which earned Crockett a new possession. Castellaw hit two bring free throws in the fourth quarter to account for one of the six lead changes in that period.

**Below:** Hannah Johnson (14) heads for the basket with a small smile on her face as the Obion bench in the background wonders how in the world she got the ball away from a fallen Sara Beth Key.



**Above:** While Hannah Johnson is shooting one of her free throws on her way to 22 points (left), Jayden Maddox (22) and Karlee Castellaw (2) are doing "Mean Girls" flexes to try to intimidate the Lady Rebels.



**Above:** Crockett's Charity Greenhill hounded Obion's Lexi Theilacker into a couple of late turnovers to help the Lady Cavalier cause in the 54-53 win over the Lady Rebels



**Below:** Lane Simmons puts up a shot high over the outstretched hand of Obion defender Levi Hendrix (23). Simmons netted eight points in the 60-52 defeat.

**Right:** Obion's Grant Rickert (right) measures Crockett's Dre Walker (23) for a new jersey top as he fires this shot in Friday night's game at Troy.



**Below:** Jayden Frye looks for an opening in the Obion defense, but Rebels Aiden McBride (3) and Grant Rickert (20) have the lane area sealed off.



**Right:** Crockett senior Rhett Butler (3) prepares to make a baseline drive for the basket after his three-point shooting drew the Obion defense out to the arc.

