

HOMECOMING QUEEN PULLS DOUBLE DUTY; CAVS EDGED DESPITE BUTLER'S 27



Above: Freshman Jordyn Maddox, in front of the Crockett Crazies' Neon Night student section, drills her second three-pointer of the night to help spur a 12-0 run early in the final period.

By Ron Barry

Most high school homecoming queens generally get handed a load of flowers, get crowned, and then spend the rest of the evening sitting on some makeshift throne while the town folks take a slew of pictures.

Sarah Cherry didn't have time for all that. She DID get the flowers and the crown before Monday night's basketball game with Obion County, but then – after a quick change into her #3 Crockett County uniform – rushed back out onto the court and scored 15 points to lead the Lady Cavs to a huge district win over the Lady Rebels.

It gives Crockett a chance to still gain second place in the final district standings, if the Lady Cavs can defeat visiting Dyer County Friday night in the regular season finale and somebody else can knock off South Gibson in at least one of its two remaining games this week.

Cherry's 15-point performance was a welcome sight, especially when the team's top scorer, senior forward Hannah Johnson, was saddled with two early fouls and spent considerable time on the bench in the first half. That forced Cherry – who is one of the team's best shooters but is often reluctant to take many – into more of an offensive mindset, and she again demonstrated that she is more than capable when searching for shots.

Another good Crockett shooter was on display in Monday evening's second game, when senior Rhett Butler – he of the multiple leg injuries that have dogged his career – blazed his way to a 27-point effort against Obion, but it wasn't quite enough as Coach Ralph Turner's Rebels held on for a 68-62 triumph. The Rebels – who would shoot a three-pointer from the parking lot if they had a sight line on the basket in Turner's shoot-from-anywhere attack – netted 14 triples in the contest to offset Butler's hot hand.

But it was the night's first battle that drew most of the pre-game hype, as both girls teams were just two days removed from an overtime encounter won by a single point (54-53) by the Lady Cavs.

Prone to digging itself into early holes this season, Crockett this time came out ready to rip, and after Amaria Walker opened the duel with a layup basket and Karlee Castellaw drilled a three-pointer from the right corner, the hosts had jumped to a 5-0 edge. It soon was 9-3 after a Cherry jumper and two free throws by Walker, but Obion chipped back to pull to within 9-8 before freshman Jordyn Maddox nailed another trey for a 12-8 Lady Cav advantage.

After that it was nip-and-tuck throughout the second and third quarters until an Alayna Fussell basket gave Obion its first lead of the night at 32-31 with 1:45 remaining in the third stanza. A Johnson bucket and a free throw by Jayden Maddox pushed Crockett back into the lead, and the hosts gained momentum heading into the final quarter when Castellaw grabbed an offensive rebound right before the buzzer and drew a shooting foul. With no time showing on the clock, she calmly drained both free throws to send Crockett into the fourth up 36-33.

The junior guard's free throws actually ignited a 12-0 run for the Lady Cavs as Coach Kayla Irvin began to utilize a version of the North Carolina "Four Corners" offense, in which the point guard (Cherry) controls the ball toward the top of the key until her defender forces her one way or the other. As Cherry dribbles toward that corner, the offensive player cuts to the basket if her defender helps out.

The strategy – with the Maddox sisters running the cuts to perfection – produced 11 points between them, and Crockett pulled away throughout the period to gain the triumph.

"We have been trying to work on that offense for a while," Irvin laughed after the game. "I'm glad it clicked tonight. Our girls played really well down the stretch." The younger Maddox (Jordyn) backed Cherry's 15-point performance with 12 of her own, nine of them coming in the final quarter. Walker had six free throws to finish with eight points, and Johnson and Castellaw closed with six and five, respectively. Jayden Maddox made several of the passes that led to her sister's buckets in the "Four Corners."

Fussell paced Obion with 21 points, but was the only consistent scoring threat for the Lady Rebels in this one.

In the nightcap game, Butler came out on fire and at one point scored 14 consecutive points for the Cavaliers as they held a 23-19 edge over Obion. But the relentless Rebel offense – keyed on this night by Aden Lee, who matched Butler's 27-point effort – shot right back to a 39-29 halftime lead and stretched it to 15 (58-43) heading into the final stanza.

But Coach Rick Rudesill's Cavs showed some extra tenacity – "I've been seeing it more in practice lately," Rudesill said – and Crockett clawed back to just a nine-point deficit with 2:56 remaining. Rudesill began employing a three-person substitution switch between each ball possession, using Butler, Jayden Frye, and Lane Simmons offensively, and Demo Pickens, Amarion Hobson, and Dre Walker defensively, and that strategy helped reduce the margin to 63-57 when Antuan Hobson swished a pair of free throws with 21.3 seconds to play.

It got down to five points (65-60) until Obion's Grady Wilkins finally put the issue to rest from the free throw line for the victorious Rebels.

Antuan Hobson scored 10 points and Simmons nine to back the offense of Butler, who drilled seven three-pointers in the contest. Lee did the same for Obion on his way to 27 points, and Jatlynn Mosley contributed 10 and Aiden McBride and Wilkins nine apiece.

The regular season closes Friday night as Crockett entertains Dyer County. Crockett will host the district tournament next week, beginning Tuesday night.

Monday, Feb. 5 at Alamo

CC Girls (51): Karlee Castellaw 1 2-2 5, Sarah Cherry 5 4-6 15, Charity Greenhill 1 0-0 2, Jordyn Maddox 5 0-0 12, Hannah Johnson 2 2-2 6, Halle Holyfield 0 0-0 0, Jayden Maddox 1 1-2 3, Amaria Walker 1 6-8 8, **Team 16 15-20 51. 3-Ptrs:** Jo. Maddox 2, Castellaw 1, Cherry 1. **Record: 18-7 (4-3 district).**

Obion County (42): Lexi Theilacker 2 0-0 5, Emery Lee 1 0-0 2, AB Correa 2 0-0 5, Sara Beth Key 3 1-3 7, Alayna Fussell 9 0-0 21, Reagan Armour 0 1-4 1, Hannah Taylor 0 1-2 1, **Team 17 3-9 42. 3-Ptrs:** Fussell 3, Theilacker 1, Correa 1. **Record: 14-11 (1-4 district).**

CC Boys (62): Antuan Hobson 4 2-2 10, Jayden Frye 1 0-0 3, Rhett Butler 8 4-5 27, Lane Simmons 4 1-2 9, Amaron Hobson 0 0-0 0, Dre Walker 2 0-0 5, Zay Jones 3 0-0 6, Demo Pickens 0 2-2 2, **Team 20 14-18 68. 3-Ptrs:** Lee 7, Butler 7, Frye 1, Walker 1. **Record: 3-22 (0-7 district).**

Obion County (68): Malachi Island 1 2-3 5, Aden Lee 8 4-5 27, Aiden McBride 4 0-0 9, Grady Wilkins 2 3-4 9, Levi Hendrix 2 0-0 5, Jatlynn Mosley 3 2-2 10, Parker Clark 0 0-0 0, Austin Cook 0 1-2 1, Grant Rickert 0 2-2 2, **Team 20 14-18 68. 3-Ptrs:** Lee 7, Wilkins 2, Mosley 2, Island 1, McBride 1, Hendrix 1. **Record: 16-8 (2-3 district).**



Above: The basketball homecoming court was comprised of (from left): Hannah Carter, Lauren Robbins, Bailey Ann Whitby, Queen Sarah Cherry, Jasmine Anderson, and Gabby Bursley.

Right: After the homecoming festivities, it was a quick change for Sarah Cherry into her uniform to score a team-high 15 points in the Lady Cavs' 51-42 victory.

Below: Amaria Walker grabbed several key rebounds and hit six free throws, scoring eight points in the Crockett triumph.



Above: Crockett senior Jayden Maddox (22) cuts off this drive by Obion's AB Correa. Maddox made several assists to her sister Jordyn in the final period as the Lady Cavs pulled away.



Right: Hannah Johnson was hampered by early foul trouble but turned up the defense - here guarding Obion's Sara Beth Key - as Crockett took control in the second half.

Left: Junior Karlee Castellaw nails Crockett's first three-pointer of the game here and later hit two big free throws to end the third period and ignite the Lady Cavs' final run.





Above: Charity Greenhill tries to hide a smile after she banked in a shot late in the second period for the Lady Cavs.



Left: Jordyn Maddox (left) forces Obion's Reagan Armour to use her off-hand on this drive, allowing Karlee Castellaw (right) to stick a hand in and deflect the ball.

Below: But it was Queen Sarah Cherry's night, escorted by her ever-supportive sisters. (Photo by Ashley Owens)



Above: In the guys game, Rhett Butler (3) knew he was in the zone when he tossed this shot up to beat the buzzer in the opening quarter, drilling it for his eighth point.

Below: Crockett senior Lane Simmons (11) drives around this pick set by Amaron Hobson (12) to head for the basket for two of his nine points.



Above: Demo Pickens also netted a pair of free throws to help draw Crockett close in the closing minute.

Right: Antuan Hobson concentrates before swishing a couple of free throws that pulled the Cavs within six points with 21.3 seconds remaining.



Left: Dre Walker corrals this loose ball ahead of Obion's Malachi Island near the sideline.



Above: Softball stars (from left) Brooklyn Haynes, Kinleigh Lamb, and Lynden Cole were among the Crockett crazies going all-Neon.



Above: They weren't to be outdone by George Goldsby, who added a Woodstock/Valentine vibe to his mix.



Above: But it was Rhett Butler's 27-point performance that stood out for the Cavaliers in this one, as the senior nailed seven threes.

Below: By the end of the third quarter, Butler knew he was hitting virtually everything he shot.

