

FROM ANOTHER DEEP HOLE TO A CHAMPIONSHIP BERTH: LADY CAVS WIN 20TH



Above: Lady Cav Coach Kayla Irvin has led her team to a 20-7 mark and into the championship game of the District 13-AAA Tournament. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Maybe the Lady Cavaliers should just change their name to the Lady Groundhogs, because they don't seem to function effectively until they can dig out of a hole. And after all, it IS February.

More than six minutes into Friday night's District 13-AAA Tournament semifinal against South Gibson, the Lady Groundhogs – er, Cavaliers – still had not scored. They'd given up 11 points to the Lady Hornets, and – given that South Gibson is often content to play low-scoring games – prospects for a Crockett comeback weren't that rosy.

But Coach Kayla Irvin's Crockett County team had done it before this season – several times, actually – and once Sarah Cherry connected on a short jumper with 1:28 left in the opening period, the momentum started swinging.

Freshman Jordyn Maddox knocked down a three-pointer from the right corner with 36.4 seconds remaining, and when the quarter ended, the score was 11-5.

Chipping away gradually with three Hannah Johnson baskets and one each from Maddox and her sister Jayden, Crockett trailed only by a 16-15 count. Then, following a Lady Hornet bucket, Johnson brought the crowd to its feet with a driving layup that drew an “and-one” opportunity, and the old-fashioned three-point play knotted things up a 18-all with 3:06 to play in the first half.

Just 49 seconds later, Cherry lobbed in a “Cherry Bomb” from the top of the key for a 21-18 Lady Cav edge, and Crockett never trailed again on its way to a 42-37 win, the team's 20th of the season. It moves them into the championship game Monday night in Alamo against top-seeded Dyersburg, which outlasted Obion County when the Lady Rebels – after building an electrifying 23-4 lead by the opening minute of the second stanza – proceeded to fold like an accordion under the Lady Trojans' suddenly stifling press. Dyersburg outscored Obion 50-25 the rest of the way to win the contest 54-48.

While Crockett never trailed again after Cherry's three-pointer, the Lady Cavs never could quite shake South Gibson, which stayed within eight points throughout the second half. A triple by Charity Greenhill and another layup by Cherry helped build Crockett's biggest lead at 33-25 with 1:14 remaining in the third quarter, but a three-pointer by Mary Teague cut the edge to 35-31 at the 3:48 mark of the fourth.

Jordyn Maddox then supplied the eventual dagger by nailing a trey from the top of the key 22 seconds later, and subsequent free throws by Cherry, Johnson, and Jayden Maddox made sure any further SGC comeback was thwarted.

The Maddox sisters were key contributors in the game after Crockett starters Amaria Walker and Karlee Castellaw both picked up two early fouls. With Cherry handling the bulk of the ball control – while also scoring 11 points – and Johnson providing most of the offense with a 14-point performance, the Maddox girls were hitting the boards, diving on the floor for loose balls, and consistently finding open cutters with sharp passes.

“These girls guarded tonight,” Irvin said after the contest, pleased with the overall defensive effort. “They sat down and defended. And I love their hearts and their grit. Each girl did whatever was needed of her to help the team win.”

Crockett will now face Dyersburg, which is playing with star junior guard Joya Crawford due to a leg injury. The Lady Trojans looked as dead as possible in the nine minutes of their game with Obion, which hit seven of its first eight three-point attempts. But the top-seeded squad then jumped into a full-court press which completely unraveled the Lady Rebels, who live and die off the three-point shot. But when you can't even get the ball past mid-court before it was headed the other way, there are no three-point shots to be found.

Even with Crawford sidelined, Dyersburg still has Chelby Jordan and Kalli Maclin, who combined for 34 points. Kelveia Campbell netted 11 and Alayna Fussell 10 for Obion, which will play South Gibson Monday night at 6:00 in the third-place contest. All four teams playing Monday night will advance to next week's Region 7-AAA Tournament.

The district event continues tonight in Alamo with boys semifinal play.

The remaining District 13-AAA tournament schedule:

Saturday, Feb. 17 (Boys)

6:00 - Dyersburg (18-7) vs. Obion County (18-10)
 7:30 - Dyer County (24-2) vs. South Gibson (12-15)

Monday, Feb. 19 (Girls)

6:00 - 3rd Place Game - South Gibson (17-13) vs. Obion County (17-13)
 7:30 - Championship Game - Dyersburg (22-4) vs. Crockett County (20-7)

Tuesday, Feb. 20 (Boys)

6:00 - 3rd Place Game - Losers of Saturday night games
 7:30 - Championship Game - Winners of Saturday night games

Friday, Feb. 16 at Alamo

CC Girls (42): Karlee Castellaw 0 0-0 0, Sarah Cherry 3 4-7 11, Gabby Bursey 0 0-0 0, Charity Greenhill 1 0-0 3, Jordyn Maddox 3 1-2 9, Hannah Johnson 3 8-11 14, Jayden Maddox 2 1-2 5, Amaria Walker 0 0-0 0, Team 12 14-22 42. **3-Ptrs:** Jo. Maddox 2, Greenhill 1, Cherry 1. **Record: 20-7 (5-3 district).**

South Gibson (37): Mary Teague 2 0-0 6, Natalie Lewis 2 0-0 4, Jade Reed 4 1-3 9, Hallie Allen 4 2-4 11, Karson Dunn 1 2-2 5, Anna Teague 0 2-2 2, **Team 13 7-11 37. 3-Ptrs:** M. Teague 2, Allen 1, Dunn 1. **Record: 17-13 (5-3 district).**

Dyersburg (54): Kayleigh Strayhorn 0 0-0 0, Kathleen Harrell 1 0-0 2, Chelby Jordan 5 7-8 20, Meredith Zamzow 0 0-0 0, Netala Dixon 4 1-1 9, Aeria Quinn 4 0-0 9, Kalli Maclin 6 2-4 14, Elizabeth Lemons 0 0-0 0, **Team 20 10-13 54. 3-Ptrs:** Jordan 3, Quinn 1. **Record: 22-4 (7-1 district).**

Obion County (48): Lexi Theilacker 1 0-0 3, Emeri Lee 3 0-0 9, AB Correa 2 0-0 5, Sara Beth Key 2 1-3 5, Alayna Fussell 2 4-4 10, Kelvia Campbell 4 0-0 11, Reagan Armour 1 2-2 5, Hannah Taylor 0 0-0 0, **Team 15 7-9 48. 3-Ptrs:** Lee 3, Campbell 3, Fussell 2, Theilacker 1, Correa 1, Armour 1. **Record: 17-13 (2-5 district).**



Left: South Gibson's Hallie Allen (with ball) makes a lot of interesting faces during games - like this one, when she tries to negotiate the tough defense of Crockett's Sarah Cherry. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Sarah Cherry and Hallie Allen had quite the battle all night, with Cherry forcing Allen to use her off-hand for this shot attempt while Karlee Castellaw (2) enforces the back side. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: And the roles reversed when Crockett had the ball, with Hallie Allen trying to guard Sarah Cherry. Both players scored 11 points in the contest. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Lady Cav senior Jayden Maddox (22) puts this shot up over South Gibson's Hallie Allen (24) for two of her five points in Crockett's 42-37 win. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: A defender is usually in trouble if Crockett's Hannah Johnson gets a smile on her face when she has the basketball. South Gibson's Natalie Lewis is about to be the victim here of a Johnson drive to the hoop. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett freshman Jordyn Maddox wrestles this ball away from a diving Hallie Allen (left) while another Lady Hornet moves in from the right to try to get it back. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Jayden Maddox gave Crockett huge, important minutes off the bench, playing tough inside defense, grabbing several rebounds, and finding open cutters. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's Karlee Castellaw (left) strips the ball away from South Gibson's Jade Reed and eventually grabs it to ignite a Lady Cav fast break. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: South Gibson's Karson Dunn (33) and Crockett's Charity Greenhill (12) both put the skids on simultaneously after sprinting upcourt on a Lady Hornet possession. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: When the Lady Cavs needed offense in this one, they got it mostly from Hannah Johnson, who matched her jersey number with 14 points. (Ron Barry)



Right: Hannah Johnson goes to the floor to keep this ball in play and away from South Gibson's Jade Reed. Johnson scored a game-high 14 points for Crockett. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Jordyn Maddox (13) may be momentarily confused because teammate Sarah Cherry (3) appears to be guarding her more intensely than South Gibson's Mary Teague. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: There's not a prettier jump shot in West Tennessee than Hannah Johnson's pull-up, as she does here while sisters Jayden and Jordyn Maddox position for a potential rebound that never came. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Sarah Cherry, guarded here by South Gibson's Mary Teague, ignited Crockett's comeback from an 11-0 deficit by scoring the first Lady Cav basket and then contributing solid leadership the rest of the way. (Photo by Ron Barry)