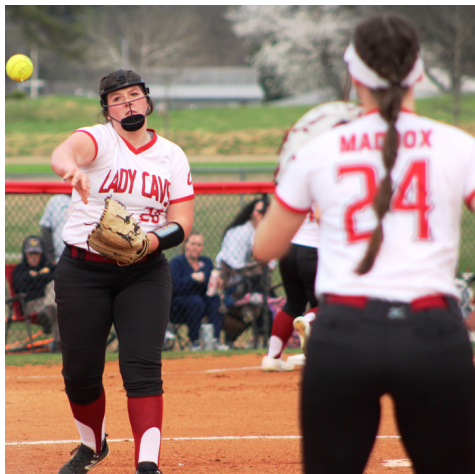


# MISSED OPPORTUNITIES COST LADY CAVS IN 3-1 DEFEAT TO SCOTTS HILL



**Above:** Crockett pitcher Anna Stallings makes a throw to first baseman Jayden Maddox for an out after fielding a Scotts Hill grounder back at the circle.

## By Ron Barry

“Speed Kills” is often a phrase you hear positively used in sports. It usually means, “Whichever team has the speed is likely to kill the other team.”

Tuesday night at Union University’s softball field, Crockett County’s speed killed itself, because the Lady Cavaliers kept running themselves into situations they shouldn’t have been in. As a result, scoring opportunities were wasted in a game that had very few of them, and Crockett fell to a talented Scotts Hill team 3-1.

Coach David Barker admitted the base running wasn’t exactly stellar for his squad, but there were other things that didn’t go as planned that had him just as much concerned.

“It’s very early in the season, so we’ve got time to fix these things and learn from them,” he said. “The good thing about softball is that there’s usually another game the next day, so you can get right back out there and do better. But this was the type of game we need to learn to win, because there are some really good teams in our district this season that we’ll be seeing down the road.”

Barker was speaking specifically that his Lady Cavs need to adapt more reliably to playing “small ball” when necessary: moving runners along, playing for one run if the situation calls for it – that sort of thing. They didn’t do it successfully against Scotts Hill, and the Lady Lions took advantage of the lack of execution to score the win.

“It was a game of missed opportunities,” Barker said. “We had several times when we needed a player to get a bunt down, and we didn’t get it done. We had the obvious base running mistakes. And we couldn’t afford them in this game, because we weren’t getting the barrel on the ball on very many swings offensively.”

Scotts Hill senior pitcher Karley Bedwell limited Crockett to four hits in the game, but she only struck out three and walked four, so the Lady Cavs had their chances. But Bedwell kept the Crockett batters’ timing disrupted throughout the contest, and even when a Cav hitter managed to square one up, the result favored Scotts Hill.

For instance, Crockett’s Anna Stallings hit a scorching line drive in the second, but it was right at the second baseman. In the third – with the bases loaded – Kinleigh Lamb blistered a hard grounder up the middle, but Bedwell snagged it and turned it into a home-to-first double play. After that, Jayden Maddox belted a hard grounder between short and third that was kicked for an error and allowed the lone Crockett run, but another Lady Cav runner went too far past third base on the play and ended up being thrown out after a rundown.

In the bottom of the fifth, Hannah Carter reached on a perfectly-placed one-out bunt past the charging third baseman and Bedwell. Piper White followed with a blast to left field that the outfielder appeared to be ready to catch, so Carter was retreating back to first. The ball actually sailed well over the fielder’s head, and by the time Carter could turn around and start running, White was literally right on her heels – and with White’s speed, a stand-up triple was there for the taking.

The problem was that by taking it, White forced Carter to have to try to score, with much more ground to cover. Despite a valiant effort, she was gunned down at the plate, and another scoring opportunity was gone. It was that kind of day for the Lady Cavs.

“We can’t make those kinds of mistakes against teams that are as good as Scotts Hill,” Barker said. “But we’ve got time to work on it, and we’ll see if we’re able to adapt to a similar game situation as the season goes along.”

White was 2-for-2 with a walk to pace the Crockett offense, but was also thrown out stealing in the first – a very rare occurrence – when the Lady Lion infielder may have blocked the base with her knee, forcing White to have to detour her slide to the right of the base. But Scotts Hill catcher Lacey Maness put her throw right on the money, so an obstruction call would have been hard to decipher.

Two innings later, Scotts Hill’s Jada Bromley hit a bullet down the left field line and tried to stretch it into a triple, but Destiny Foster’s relay throw to White was on target, allowing her to fire a perfect toss to Crockett third sacker Karly Pigue, who gloved it and placed it down – ball inside – right in front of the bag for Bromley to slide into. The umpire called her safe, and Bedwell doubled her home for the game’s first run. It was that kind of day for the Lady Cavs.

Stallings pitched her second straight solid game in as many nights for Crockett, striking out eight and yielding just two earned runs. But the Lady Cav offense didn’t deliver, and she (and the team) are now 1-1. But – as Barker said – there’s another game the next day, in this case the opener of the annual Sarah Beth Whitehead Memorial Tournament at the Jackson Sportsplex Wednesday night at 6:00 against Hollow Rock-Bruceton. The Lady Cavs will play two games in the event Friday night at 6:00 and 7:30 versus Milan and Jackson South Side, respectively, before entering bracket play Saturday.



**Above:** Destiny Foster makes a tough catch of a long fly ball to left field as Piper White lines her up for a relay throw in case the ball went for a hit.

**BASEBALL** – Crockett's baseball team also fell to 1-1 on the season Tuesday evening in Ripley, dropping a 4-3 decision to Munford on a walk-off single by Jase Greenland after the Cavaliers had rallied to go ahead in the top of the seventh.

The Cavaliers scored in the top of the first on four straight two-out walks, with the final one to Grayson Lambert forcing in the run. But Crockett also walked four Munford batters in the bottom of the first, and the home team took a 2-1 lead. Joseph Gould, pitching in relief, kept the Munford hitters off-balance from there until Crockett came to bat in the top of the seventh.

Blaine Nichols was hit by a pitch and went all the way to third when Preston Lambert singled on a bunt, which was then mishandled by the catcher. Nichols scored when a pickoff throw went awry and enabled Lambert to come all the way to third, and he came home on a sac fly by Brady Fronabarger to push Crockett ahead 3-2.

But in the bottom of the frame, Munford quickly loaded the bases on a walk, a hit batsman, and an infield single. Gould struck out the next man, but Owen Boswell and Greenland then delivered successive run-scoring singles to win the game for Munford. Crockett managed just four hits – by Preston Lambert, Grayson Lambert, Gould, and Landon Wicker – and left nine runners on base in the loss.

The Cavs are scheduled to face Brighton Wednesday night at 7:00 at Ripley.



**Below:** Crockett senior catcher Lynden Cole frames a pitch as the plate umpire calls it a strike behind her.



**Below:** ... but Bromley was called safe despite Pigue's perfect placement of the glove with the ball inside it. Coach David Barker, while not happy with these calls, did not place any blame for Crockett's defeat on the officials, saying his team has to learn to make the necessary adjustments that are specific to each game it plays.



**Left:** The game began controversially for the Lady Cavs when leadoff speedster Piper White was called out on this first-inning steal attempt, although she was forced to slide right of the base path when Lady Lion shortstop Haylee Moody blocked the base with her knee...

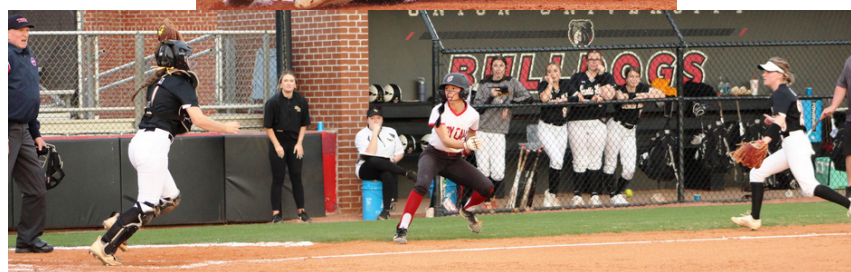
**Below:** ... No obstruction was called after a strong throw by catcher Lacey Maness made it a close play, but White clearly couldn't slide directly into the base.



**Below:** Contrast that previously play with this one, in which Crockett third baseman Carly Pigue has taken Piper White's relay throw from left fielder Destiny Foster and has her glove right in front of the bag for Scotts Hill's Jada Bromley to slide into...



**Below:** Jayden Maddox accounted for Crockett's lone tally when this swing resulted in a hard smash to the left side which was kicked for an error, allowing one run to score...



**Above:** ... but then resulted in this rundown after Piper White initially thought about trying to score also, but then realized she wasn't going to make it...

Right: ... and Scotts Hill executed the rundown perfectly, eventually obtaining the putout near third base.



**Above:** Second baseman Kinleigh Lamb hit one of the hardest balls of the night for Crockett, a smash right up the middle with the bases loaded, but the Lady Lions even turned that one into a double play as everything went right for Scotts Hill.