

MILLER, COLE, & PIGUE SHINE IN LADY CAVS' 4-2 DEFEAT OF HOLLOW ROCK-BRUCETON



Above: The game belonged to Miller, who gave usual starter Anna Stallings a needed rest by throwing more than two-thirds of her pitches for strikes and wiggling out of potential rallies by HR-B.

By Ron Barry

Lynden Cole had taken two mighty swings and hit nothing but air.

Crockett County's star senior catcher – getting a rare night off from behind the plate and serving as the Lady Cavaliers' designated hitter – was up to bat in the top of the fifth inning of a 1-1 tie game against Hollow Rock-Bruceton at the Jackson Sportsplex. Teammates were on second and third base, and Cole stepped out of the batter's box to have a quick talk with herself.

"I just said, 'Lou – (everybody calls her "Lou") – you're trying too hard. Just smooth it out – just smooth it out,'" she related after the contest, which was Crockett's opener in the annual Sarah Beth Whitehead Memorial Tournament.

She stepped back into the box, awaiting the next delivery from HR-B's Addison Hampton. And this time she scorched a liner into right field that plated both Hannah Carter and Piper White and then was kicked around long enough for Cole to reach third base.

That hit – and an ensuing sacrifice fly by Brooklyn Haynes that scored Cole – enabled Coach David Barker's Lady Cavs to move ahead 4-1, and they held on for a 4-2 triumph as senior Gracelyn Miller recorded a win in her first pitching start of the season.

"Lynden's such a smart player," Barker said afterward. "She knows that she hits best when she keeps her hands quiet and lets the bat work. She's strong enough that she doesn't have to try to add anything to a smooth swing. And that was an example of a senior player showing some leadership."

Cole – getting a rare opportunity as the DH to stay in the game on the base paths – was relishing her chances to display her wheels, scoring two of Crockett's runs, twice sliding into third base, and just generally having fun, which is her trademark as a Cavalier athlete.

"When I catch, I know we always use a courtesy runner when I get on base," she said. "But I'm not slow, you know! I can run. It's fun when I get the chance."

But while Cole had a hand in all four Crockett runs, this was far from a one-girl performance. Notably, Miller was more than impressive in her first start this year, allowing just three hits and one earned run and throwing strikes on more than two-thirds of her pitches.

"I was as proud of Grace's game tonight as anything," Barker said. "She showed a lot of confidence out there, which hasn't always been her strength. She knows she has to hit her spots, and she did that consistently. It was big, because it shows our team we can win games against a good opponent even if Anna (Stallings) isn't pitching."

Stallings had thrown 14 innings on the previous two nights, and Barker wanted to give her a little rest, along with Cole taking a break from behind the plate.

Defensively, Barker had praise for third baseman Karly Pigue, who made a variety of key plays at the hot corner, snaring three hard ground balls and a screaming liner for the next-to-last out when HR-B was threatening.

"Karly had a rough time at third during our Play Day at Fayette, and she may have lost a little confidence," Barker said. "But tonight she played third the way we know she can, and it made a big difference for us." Madison Solis has also started at third for Crockett this season, but was behind the plate for this game to give Cole a rest.

"Madison did a good job handling Grace's pitches," Barker said. "We did a lot of things much better tonight than we did against Scotts Hill the night before. Now we just need to start stringing some hits together. It seems like so far we're only getting one solid knock per inning. If we can start bunching some of them, we'll be all right."

Cole, Pigue, Solis, White, and Kinleigh Lamb had Crockett's five hits. HR-B's Mykenzie Burton had two of its three hits and drove in both runs for the losers.

Weather permitting, Crockett will play Milan at 6:00 and Jackson South Side at 7:30 Friday night at the Sportsplex as tournament pool play concludes. Bracket play is Saturday. The Lady Cavs are now 2-1 on the year, and all three games have been against teams that were in the 2023 TSSAA State Tournament.

BASEBALL – For the second straight night, Crockett's baseball team let a seventh-inning lead slip away in Ripley, this time allowing Brighton a three-run frame to claim an 8-6 triumph.

Before that, the lead had actually exchanged hands five times in the contest. Brighton scored two in the top of the first, but Brady Fronabarger lined a two-run double to center and then came home on another two-bagger by Joseph Gould to put the Cavs up 3-2 after the opening frame.

Brighton tied it in the top of the third and then went ahead in the fourth 4-3, but Carter Winders delivered a two-run single after an intentional walk to Fronabarger to push Crockett up 5-4 through four innings. Brighton deadlocked it again in the top of the fifth, but after Gould and Grayson Lambert singled and Landon Wicker was hit by a pitch, a wild pitch allowed the Cavaliers to go back on top 6-5 in the bottom of the inning.

Neither team scored in the sixth, but in the seventh Brighton tallied three times on an error, a walk, a single, a hit batsman, and another single. Crockett couldn't answer in the bottom of the frame and falls to 1-2 on the season, with Covington the next opponent today at 4:00 in Ripley.

Gould had two of Crockett's seven hits, while Preston Lambert walked twice and also notched a hit. Grayson Lambert took the pitching defeat in relief of Winders.



Above: Gracelyn Miller made her first start of the season for Crockett and tossed a three-hitter, allowing just one earned run and using her defense to record outs.



Left: A key component of that defense was the variety of plays made by third baseman Karly Pigue, who recorded three assists on hard grounders and also speared a final-inning line drive.

Below: Much fun was achieved by Lynden Cole's running of the bases, here scoring the game's first run in the opening inning.



Above: Outfielder Brooklyn Haynes was back in the lineup after missing a day with a stomach virus, and she delivered a big sacrifice fly in the fifth to push Crockett up 4-1.



Left: Hannah Carter scored the run that broke a 1-1 deadlock in the fifth, using her speed to slap her way on base and taking second when the infield throw went awry.

Below: Madison Solis, standing on second after hitting a double, jokes with the dugout about "continuing to eat" during the inning.



Above: Speedy Piper White got into the act in the fifth inning rally, beating out a bunt that set the stage for Lynden Cole.





Above: Lynden Cole delivered the big blow here (as the sunlight was dimming for a long-range photo), scorching a two-run single into right field that then got kicked around and allowed Cole to display her wheels...



Above: ... racing all the way to third base. Cole scored two of Crockett's runs and drove home the other two.

Below: Crockett outfielders Hannah Carter (left), Sadie Hoover (smiling), and Brooklyn Haynes (1) meet in center while Coach David Barker was holding a meeting on the mound for the infielders.



Above: Lady Cav second baseman Kinleigh Lamb dances off third after getting a hit in the third inning, but the senior infielder was eventually stranded there.



Left: Shortstop Piper White (11) retreated behind third base to snare this shallow pop in front of a hard-charging left fielder Brooklyn Haynes to end a mild HR-B threat in the fourth. g the game's first run in the opening inning.