

SOFTBALLERS EARN TOURNAMENT TOP SEED; TRACK GIRLS DEBUT SECOND AT UNION CITY



Above: The scoreboard tells the story after Lynden Cole exits the field following her third hit in three at-bats, driving in four runs, as Crockett toppled Milan 6-0 in the Lady Cavs' first game Friday night.

By Ron Barry

Playing through a misty drizzle and rapidly declining temperatures, Crockett County's Lady Cavs decided Friday night that the best way to stay warm was to spend a lot of time running around the bases.

As a result, Crockett swept its last two pool games and earned the number one seed for bracket play in the annual Sarah Beth Whitehead Memorial Tournament at the Jackson Sportsplex.

The Lady Cavs blanked Milan 6-0 and then downed Jackson South Side 8-2 to end up as the only team in the tournament with a 3-0 record in pool games. Therefore, Coach David Barker's squad will be the top seed when quarterfinal play begins at 1:00 Saturday in Jackson. Crockett will play the winner of the 11:30 a.m. game between the #8 and #9 seeds.

Senior catcher Lynden Cole powered the win over Milan by going 3-for-3 and driving home four of the six runs, which was more than enough as sophomore pitcher Anna Stallings threw another gem for the winners. Stallings yielded just one hit over five innings and struck out four without a walk before Syesha Torres relieved her for a scoreless sixth inning.

Crockett ripped three doubles in the opener - by Jayden Maddox, Madison Solis, and Piper White - and Cole delivered run-scoring singles in the first, third, and fourth. White and Kinleigh Lamb each had two hits for Crockett, with White entertaining the Cav crowd early by leading off with an infield slap hit and then, while sliding into second on a steal, basically stuck in the mud as she hit the ground. She made it to the base in time to be safe, everybody had a laugh, and the Lady Cavs stayed pretty loose after that.

In the nightcap win over South Side, Lamb went 3-for-3 and drove in a run, Maddox added another run-scoring double, and White - leading off the second inning with her team already up 4-0 - hammered a long line drive over the left-center field fence for her first career out-of-the-park home run.

Most of the remaining runs in the game scored on South Side miscues including walks and passed balls, while Stallings again put up a strong pitching outing for Crockett with three shutout frames. Gracelyn Miller finished up the fourth as the Lady Cavs improved to 4-1 on the season.

The tournament is now a single-elimination event due to rain adjustments. Crockett will play on Field D-14 at 1:00 and will stay there as long as it keeps winning. Semifinals are at 3:00 and the championship game is at 5:15.

TRACK AND FIELD - Crockett opened its track season Thursday and the Lady Cavs of Coach Julie Nass took second place out of 17 schools in a meet held at Union City. The Crockett boys placed twelfth, with a storm situation cancelling some of the boys races before completion.

Highlighting the girls performances were Claire Evans with a third place finish in the 1600-meter run (timed in 6:33); Avery Thornton fourth in the 1600 (6:42); Olivia Mann third in the 3200-meter run (16:29); Leyla Silva fourth in the 3200 (16:30); Harmony Walker fifth in the 3200 (16:38); Casey Thornton third in the triple jump (27'-1); Addie Davidson fourth in the triple jump (26'2.5); Leah Moore fourth in the high jump (4'6); Joy Evans fifth in the high jump (4'4); Kristin Lewis eighth in the high jump (4'2);

Claire Evans fourth in the 800-meter run (2:49); Avery Thornton fifth in the 800 (2:52); Joy Evans sixth in the 800 (2:53); Casey Thornton seventh in the 800 (2:54); Joy Evans fifth in the long jump (14'2); and Lewis seventh in the 400-meter run (1:13) - all of those finishes earned points for Crockett.

Additionally, Moore placed twentieth out of 39 in the 100-meter run (14:39) and fourteenth of 39 in the 200-meter (30.36); and Lewis was sixteenth (30.63) and Davidson eighteenth (31.13) in the 200.

Scoring team points in boys events were Laithon Bonds, third in the triple jump (34'1); Noah Mayfield, eighth in the 800 (2:25); and Aidan Klonowski, eighth in the 3200 (12:44). Lane Foster was ninth in that same race (13:02); Jacob Wede was fifteenth (5:38) and Mayfield seventeenth (5:40) in the 1600; Wede was twelfth (2:30) and Foster fourteenth (2:34) in the 800; Logan Muschat was sixteenth (1:01) in the 400; and Bonds was fourteenth (12.02) and Dre Walker eighteenth (12.42) in the 100.



Above: But the offensive highlight of the night came when Piper White, shown here churning out dirt while sprinting to third on a teammate's hit, drilled a line drive well over the left-center field fence for her first career out-of-the-park home run.



Above: Anna Stallings delivered another strong pitching outing with five one-hit shutout innings.



Left: Brooklyn Haynes knocked in a run with a bullet down the left-field line in the win over Milan.

Below: Jayden Maddox is all smiles after crushing a long double off the left-field fence, just missing a home run.



Above: Piper White gave everyone a laugh in the first inning when she singled and then went to steal second. When she went into her usual slide, she just stuck in the muddy dirt, although she managed to get to the base before the tag.



Left: With rain drizzling and temperatures dropping, courtesy runner Gabby Bursey - hands rolled up inside her sleeves - looks like she just wants to stay warm although already caked with mud...

Below: ... but seconds later had to dive right back into it again, beating this throw to third base and eventually scoring a run.



Above: In Game 2 of the night, second baseman Kinleigh Lamb - also wrapped up well to stay warm - went 3-for-3 at the plate, scored three times, and drove in a run as Crockett topped Jackson South Side 8-2.

Right: Anna Stallings threw three more shutout frames, totaling eight for the night, leading the Lady Cavs to the top seed in Saturday's bracket play.



Left: Olivia Mann (pictured) placed third in the 3200-meter run at Union City Thursday to pick up six points and help the Lady Cav track and field team to a second-place finish in its first meet of the season. Claire Evans scored 11 points for Crockett in the meet and Joy Evans contributed eight as each of the sisters placed well in two different events.