

HOOVER SPARKS LADY CAVS PAST DEFENDING STATE CHAMPS; BASEBALL TEAM GETS DISTRICT WIN



Above: Carter Winders was Crockett's winning pitcher against Dyersburg, allowing just three runs in six innings. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

It was entirely fitting that the final out of the game nestled into the glove of Crockett County right fielder Sadie Hoover.

After all, it was Hoover who delivered the contest's deciding hit when her fourth-inning single drove in the run that gave the Lady Cavaliers a 2-1 victory over the defending state 3-A softball champion McNairy Central Monday at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson.

And it was Hoover who scored Crockett's other run earlier, when she led off the third inning with a line-drive single to right, took second on Hannah Carter's sacrifice bunt, moved to third on a Piper White groundout, and then raced home on a single to center by Lynden Cole.

All of it is even more impressive when one considers the fact that Hoover is largely the Lady Cavs' defensive specialist. She's the team's steady right fielder, making all the plays and possessing a strong arm that keeps opposing baserunners honest. But she's also the one who frequently doesn't appear in the batting lineup, having been replaced by whoever is that game's designated hitter.

But Hoover was in the lineup Monday as Coach David Barker elected to use Destiny Foster in the DH slot for pitcher Anna Stallings, who could then concentrate on getting McNairy hitters out. All of Barker's moves worked out as Hoover went 2-for-3, Foster 2-for-2, and Stallings limited the talented Lady Bobcats to a single run.

Crockett was the home team in the game played at FHU, and McNairy jumped in front right away when Bailee Shelton led off with a double and eventually stole home while the Lady Cavs were successfully executing a pickoff move at first base on another runner. But that was the only run Stallings would allow, shutting out McNairy the rest of the way.

The Lady Cavs tied it in the third and came to beat in the fourth with the game still deadlocked at 1-1. Foster led off with an infield single, and pinch-runner Tink Willis was sacrificed to second by pinch-hitter Gabby Bursey. Willis moved to third when Jayden Maddox reached on an error by the first baseman on her ground ball. Chloe Adkisson ran for Maddox and stole second.

Hoover battled to a 3-2 count, fouling off three pitches before ripping a hard grounder into left field, chasing Willis home with the go-ahead run.

With McNairy batting in the top of the seventh for its last chance to overcome the 2-1 deficit, now-third baseman Bursey turned a line drive into a double play before Kenli Bingham flied out to Hoover in right to end it.

Hoover's mindset at the plate in the fourth was indicative of why Barker's squad – playing one of the toughest schedules in West Tennessee – improved to 14-5-1 for the season.

"My approach was to stay calm and try to make the most out of an opportunity," Hoover said. "I started this season off slowly (offensively), so I have to take every chance I get to contribute in the hitting game."

Crockett now returns to district play Tuesday night at 7:00, traveling to Obion County Central and then hosting district foe Dyersburg Thursday night at 7:00.

BASEBALL: While the softball team was holding off McNairy Central, Coach Brent Fronabarger's Cavaliers were coming off the deck from a 3-1 deficit to rally for a 7-4 district win on the road at Dyersburg.

Crockett had been shut out through four frames until Blaine Nichols and Reed Ingram started the Cav fifth with consecutive singles. After a fielder's choice, Nichols scored when a hard ground ball by Carter Winders was booted by the Trojan second baseman. But Dyersburg answered that tally with a run of its own in the bottom of the inning, so it held a 3-1 advantage going into the sixth.

Cav outfielder Callan Willis led off with a line-drive double to right and immediately scored on Grayson Lambert's single. Landon Wicker followed with a ground ball that was kicked for an error by the shortstop. Cade Freeman's grounder was misplayed by the Trojan second baseman, and suddenly Crockett had the bases loaded with nobody out.

Nichols was then hit by a pitch, forcing in the run that made it 3-3. Ingram slammed a liner to center that went for a two-run double, followed by Brady Fronabarger's two-run single. The Cavs eventually loaded the bases again, but couldn't add to the uprising.

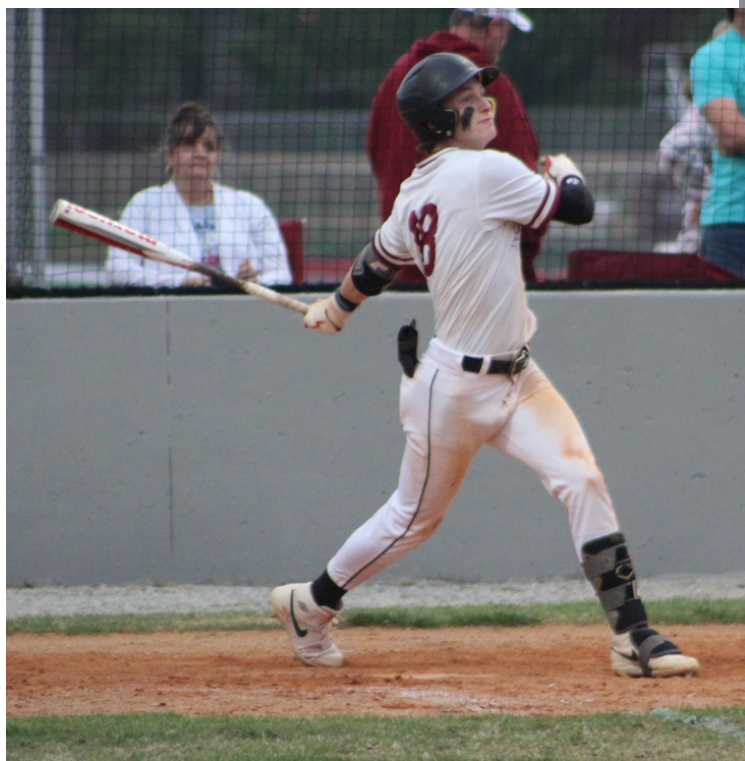
Dyersburg mounted a brief rally in the bottom of the seventh, but reliever Fronabarger worked out of trouble to preserve the win for starter Winders, who went six innings for Crockett and allowed just six hits a walk while striking out four.

Fronabarger and Ingram each had two hits and two RBIs for the Cavs, who improved to 9-6 for the season. Nichols scored two of the Crockett runs, and Joseph Gould drew a pair of walks for the winners. The Cavs boosted their district record to 3-2 and will host Dyersburg in a rematch Tuesday at 4:30 in Alamo.



Above: Sadie Hoover ripped a clutch run-scoring single in the fourth inning to break a 1-1 tie and give Crockett a 2-1 triumph over defending state champion McNairy Central Monday. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett freshman Gabby Bursey turned a key defensive double play in the seventh and also executed the sacrifice bunt that put the runner in scoring position for Sadie Hoover in the fourth. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Reed Ingram delivered the two-run double that broke a 3-3 tie and led Crockett's baseball team to a 7-4 district victory over Dyersburg Monday. (Photo by Ron Barry)

