

CAV SOCCER TO HOST REGION CHAMPIONSHIP

THURSDAY; SECTIONAL BERTH CLINCHED



Above: The Cavs' Max Utle (5) battles for the ball with a Wildcat defender. Utle ultimately gained control and fired a crossing pass which Luke Carter headed in for a goal, giving Utle his first assist of the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Just past the midway point of the first half of Tuesday night's Region 7-AA Tournament semifinal between Crockett County and Bolton, the referee awarded the Cavaliers' Chris Cerda a penalty kick because a shot he took was blocked by a defender's arm, which is illegal.

It would be Cerda one-on-one against the Bolton goalkeeper. This is roughly the equivalent of handing a man a slab of raw meat just yards away from a hungry lion and telling him to run.

That metaphor was also an apt description of the lopsidedness of the match itself, as Coach Stan Jamscek's Cavs – on ultra-efficient cruise control all night – sailed to a 9-0 "mercy rule" victory over the overmatched Wildcats from Arlington.

The win pushes Crockett into the championship game Thursday night at 6:00 in a rematch with Dyersburg, which knocked off District 8-AA champion Haywood 3-1 Tuesday night in Brownsville. Since there are no District 8 teams remaining, the host role reverts to the District 7-AA title holder, which is Crockett.

Another reward for the triumph is an automatic berth in one of Saturday's West Sectionals. If the Cavs defeat Dyersburg again, they will host Saturday's sectional. If the Trojans win Thursday night, Crockett will have to travel to either Millington or Munford Saturday.

Tuesday's rout of Bolton was inevitable from the start. Crockett kept the ball on the Wildcats' side of the field the entire first half, scoring six times in a 23-minute span after a brief "feeling out" period after the opening whistle.

Crockett netted its first goal with 27:48 left before halftime when Luke Carter headed in a beautiful centering pass from Max Utle on the right wing. Barely three minutes later, Braulio Marquez blasted in a short-range shot from the right box to make it 2-0 and initiate one of his top performances of the season.

Before the game was over, Marquez would distribute four assists on teammates' goals and even add another score himself as Crockett reached the nine-goal margin which triggers the TSSAA's "mercy rule," thereby ending the contest with more than 20 minutes still remaining on the scoreboard clock.

"Braulio is a really talented player," Jamscek said of Marquez, who now leads the club in assists for the season with 18. "He has an instinct to know just where to pass the ball, and the talent to put it there. It's a natural talent; it's not something that's coached. He just knows what to do with the ball, and he isn't alone on this team. There are several other players I could describe in that way."

Following the Carter and Marquez goals that put the Cavs up 2-0, Cerda and Edgar Juarez both scored on penalty kicks; Juarez drilled another shot so hard it grazed a Bolton defender and still entered the net; and Leo Arreola poked one in from directly in front to give Crockett a 6-0 edge at the intermission.

In the second half, after practicing their passing for several minutes without directly attacking the Bolton goal, the Cavs needed less than 10 minutes to score their final three tallies. Carter took a right side pass from Marquez to nail his 27th goal of the season; Marquez then scored on an assist from Angel Garcia; and Marquez returned the favor by setting up a Garcia goal that mercifully ended the romp.

"Tonight our passing was sharp and our focus was good," Jamscek said. "But we know the tougher games are coming. We have to stay sharp mentally. Physically, we're there. As long as we stay focused and continue to play together, supporting each other, we should be in good shape. This is a talented team, but as we keep moving forward, we will see other talented teams as well."

The Cavs will be going for their third straight regional championship Thursday night. A victory in the Saturday sectional will send them to the TSSAA State Tournament.

The Cavs improved their season record to 15-1 record. Through their 16 games this season, here are the statistical totals for Crockett players:

GOALS – Luke Carter 27, Christopher Cerda 22, Edgar Juarez 17, Eddy De La Rosa 10, Braulio Marquez 9, Angel Garcia 4, Leo Arreola 3, Angel Martinez 1, Jathen Young 1, Mason Wood 1;

ASSISTS – Braulio Marquez 18, Edgar Juarez 16, Christopher Cerda 13, Luke Carter 8, Angel Garcia 6, Eddy De La Rosa 4, Ozzi Sanchez 3, Adrian Calderon 1, Santiago Santos 1, Max Utle 1, Leo Arreola 1, Eduardo Galvez 1, Camden Martin 1, Noah Mayfield 1.



Above: Braulio Marquez -- who had two goals and four assists to lead Crockett over Bolton 9-0 -- prepares to boot the shot that gave the Cavaliers an early 2-0 advantage. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett's Angel Martinez (17) fakes out a Bolton defender and moves the ball upfield to trigger a rush at the net that helped produce the Cavs' seventh goal of the game. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: But this night belonged to Braulio Marquez, whose smile says it all as the Cavs head into Thursday night's Region 7-AA championship game against Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Angel Garcia almost beat Bolton's goalkeeper to this centering pass, but he was just a millisecond late. Still, he managed an assist later on and tallied the game's final goal. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The scoreboard tells the story early in the second half as Crockett coach Stan Jamscek watches contentedly from the sidelines. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Eddy De La Rosa (2) lifts a pass to ignite yet another rush at the Wildcat net. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Freshman goalkeeper Noah Mayfield shares a drink bottle with a teammate at halftime after shutting out the Bolton offense for the game's first 40-minute period. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Angel Garcia's ceremonial tousling of the hair following a goal -- here, it's Chris Cerda's turn -- was a frequent sight in Tuesday night's 9-0 rout over Bolton. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Edgar Juarez (9) gets past his defender just prior to launching the shot that produced his second goal of the game, after earlier scoring on a penalty kick. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: While this beautiful sliding goal by Chris Cerda was negated by an official's call, he was awarded a penalty kick on the same play and nailed it for Crockett's third goal. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: As Chris Cerda (10) circles to the left of the goal to get into better position, Luke Carter (1) works to set up a play more toward the middle of the field. Carter scored twice in the contest and now has 27 goals in 16 games. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Leo Arreola (24) got into the scoring column when he threaded this shot between two Bolton defensemen. (Photo by Ron Barry)