

HUNTINGDON GROUND GAME EDGES CROCKETT PASSING ATTACK 28-21



Above: Crockett quarterback Ben Burgess (10) came out throwing early and often -- as on this play, in which running back DK Woods absolutely destroyed a Mustang pass rusher -- and finished with 13 completions in 20 throws for 340 yards and three touchdowns. While many of the yards came after the catch of quick hits and slants, it added a new wrinkle to the Cavalier offense entering Region play this coming week. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

In the post-game huddle with his team at the south end of Cavalier Stadium, Crockett County Coach Kevin Ward pointed to the Huntingdon squad on the north end and said, "That is a really good football team over there."

Then, turning back toward his own players, Ward added, "And that means YOU are too."

In a battle of two of West Tennessee's better 2024 clubs, the ground-heavy Mustangs overcame the Cavaliers' quick pass attack by a 28-21 margin, leaving both teams with just one loss after Week 5 of the season -- but not until both units had left it all on the field.

"I know you're disappointed, and you should be," Ward told his players, "because when you work that hard for something, it's tough to come up just short. But if it doesn't bother you, then it doesn't mean enough to you. I'm proud of every one of you tonight for your effort and the fight you showed against a very good team. You practiced that way all week, and it's what we need to be successful going forward."

Huntingdon was a significant favorite coming into Alamo, with a senior-laden lineup featuring the two-headed monster backfield of Gray Eubanks and Brady Warbritton. Eubanks, a quarterback built like a fullback who runs like a halfback, ran the ball 22 times for 153 yards and a touchdown. Warbritton, the more conventional speedster, carried 19 times for 204 yards and two scores.

The Mustangs often line both of them up next to each other, and the center may snap it to either one -- and whichever one gets it, he just takes off and runs. Behind Huntingdon's large offensive line -- which shifts on almost every play, to keep the defense guessing as to which direction they may go -- it's a simple but highly effective strategy. The visitors ran the ball on 44 of their 48 offensive plays, amassing 368 yards on the ground.

But as impressive as Eubanks and Warbritton were, it may be the guy who only touched the ball twice all night who made the difference in the game. Tyreke Hutch is his name, and he ran a kickoff back 98 yards for a tally and intercepted a Crockett pass at the Mustang 18 when the Cavs were driving to regain the lead midway through the first quarter.

The contest began with a bang when, on the very first Crockett play from scrimmage, quarterback Ben Burgess threw a quick out pass to Deuce Greenhill, who made a jab step to his left, applied a swift stiff-arm to Hutch's helmet, and then sped past him as Dre Walker sprinted over to occupy Warbritton at safety. Once Greenhill gets open field, he's gone, and such was the case for the next 68 yards to the end zone. When dependable Avery Hurst booted the extra point through the uprights, the Cavs led 7-0 with only 21 seconds elapsed off the clock.

Crockett's joy was short-lived, however, as Hutch fielded Hurst's ensuing kickoff at the two near the right goal line pylon, cut toward the middle, and somehow zipped through the crowd of tacklers all the way to the opposite end zone to complete a 98-yard jaunt. But when the extra point snap was bobbled, Huntingdon didn't convert, and the Cavs held a 7-6 advantage -- and there were still only 37 seconds that had ticked away since the duel's start.

On Crockett's next possession, Ward's club showed that the opening quick pass to Greenhill was not going to be a novelty, but a strategy. Burgess completed three more quick passes -- two to Walker for 30 yards, and another to Demo Pickens for 12 -- and after two rushes, the Cavs faced a third-and-two at the Mustang 31. That's when Hutch stepped in to swipe the next toss with a leaping interception at the 18.

After that, the teams swapped punts, with Hurst's 48-yarder for Crockett pushing the Mustangs back to their own five. But despite two penalties on the march, Huntingdon managed to drive the ball 95 yards on 14 straight rushes, the biggest a 39-yard burst by Eubanks. The stocky quarterback scored from three yards out and then threw a two-point conversion pass to a wide-open Owen King to make it 14-7 with 3:15 remaining in the half.

In the blink of an eye, it was tied again. Greenhill took a quick slant pass from Burgess and turned on the afterburners as he streaked 82 yards untouched down the middle of the field for his second touchdown. Hurst again kicked the extra point, and it was 14-14.

When Huntingdon got the ball back, Eubanks tried a rare pass attempt and Crockett's Ian Greenberg came down with it for his first interception of the season near midfield. Burgess quickly hit Greenhill down the right sideline for 22 yards -- bringing his astounding first-half receiving production to 191 yards on five catches. A holding penalty on the next play forced the Cavs to throw deeper, and Crockett turned the ball over on downs when one pass was dropped and another was broken up.

With less than a minute left on the clock, the Mustangs ran a routine play into the line for three yards, but called timeout. Perhaps relaxing a bit mentally with halftime so near, the Cav defense was stunned by the next development. Warbritton took a direct snap from the Wildcat formation, swept to his right, and slithered his way through the entire Crockett defense to race 63 yards to a tally with only 16 seconds still to go before intermission. Greyson Anderson's extra made it 21-14 for the visitors at the half.

With both teams making defensive adjustments at halftime, the third period began with an exchange of punts. Hurst had his downed at the Huntingdon 10 with 2:59 remaining in the quarter, but the Mustangs – again despite two major penalties – drove it 90 yards without a pass attempt. Warbritton galloped the final 67 for his second score of the night as the visitors jumped back in front 28-14 with 10:41 left in the game.

It looked to be over for Crockett when Huntingdon forced another put on the ensuing possession, but then the Cavs did the same, getting the ball back at their own 11 with less than five minutes to go. One play later, Burgess found Walker zooming down the middle of the field and hit him in stride, launching an 84-yard scoring strike. Hurst's extra cut the margin to 28-21 with 4:11 still remaining.

But Huntingdon successfully recovered Hurst's onside kick attempt, and seven straight rushes by Eubanks ran out the clock from there.

"We showed tremendous improvement in our passing game," Ward said, "and that's something we'll continue to work on. I think our guys saw that we can hang with just about anyone tonight. That's a very good football team, but we had our chances. Now it's time to do it in Region play."

The statistics for the game were extreme. Huntingdon outrushed Crockett 368 yards to 11. Crockett outgained the Mustangs 340 yards to nine through the air. Burgess finished 13 of 20 for the 340 yards, mostly on the strength of the quick hitters to his speedy receivers.

The Cavaliers now jump into Region competition with a pair of road games, facing Dyer County this week and Obion County the next. Dyer County was undefeated until this past Friday, when it fell victim to Westview's potent passing attack.

Final Statistics

Rushes-Yards: CC – DK Woods 6-15, Gabe Dupree 2-4, Demo Pickens 1-3, Deuce Greenhill 2-(-2), Ben Burgess 3-(-9), **Team 14-11. HUNT** – Brady Warbritton 19-204, Gray Eubanks 22-153, Aiden Hilliard 3-11, **Team 44-368.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC – Burgess 13-20-340-1. **HUNT** – Eubanks 2-4-9-1.

Receptions-Yards: CC – Greenhill 5-191, Dre Walker 3-114, Demo Pickens 3-33, Amaron Hobson 1-2, Woods 1-0. **HUNT** – Broox Bennett 1-10, Warbritton 1-(-1).

Interceptions: CC – Ian Greenberg 1-0. **HUNT** – Tyreke Hutch 1-0.

Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC – Demo Pickens 3-43, Squirt Pickens 1-17, Team 4-60. **HUNT** – Hutch 1-98-1 TD, Eubanks 2-42, **Team 3-140.** Punt Returns-Yards: CC – Demo Pickens 2-24. **HUNT** – Warbritton 1-0.

Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC 34-351, **HUNT** –48-377.

First Downs: CC 6, HUNT 15.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 0-0, HUNT 1-0.

Penalties-Yards: CC 4-30, HUNT 6-55.

Punts-Yards: CC – Avery Hurst 3-121-40.3. **HUNT** – Eubanks 3-124-41.3.

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Greenhill 2-0-0-0-12, Walker 1-0-0-0-6, Hurst 0-0-3-0-3, **Team 3-0-3-0-21. HUNT** – 4-1-2



Above: On the game's first play from scrimmage, Deuce Greenhill (7) took a quick pass from Ben Burgess, put this one move on Huntingdon's Tyreke Hutch, and ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Season Statistics (Record: 4-1)

Rushes-Yards: CC – DK Woods 78-444, Deuce Greenhill 34-351, Demo Pickens 10-53, Gabe Dupree 14-38, Amaron Hobson 7-13, Ben Burgess 37-(-58), **Team 180-841. Opponents 180-919.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC – Burgess 34-54-684-4. **Opponents 36-62-447-7.**

Receptions-Yards: CC – Greenhill 13-312-3 TD, Dre Walker 10-273-1 TD, Demo Pickens 6-68-1 TD, DK Woods 2-14, Karsen Burgess 1-8, Brody Parlow 1-7, Amaron Hobson 1-2, **Team 34-684. Opponents 36-447.**

Interceptions: CC – Demo Pickens 2-49, Woods 1-12, Walker 1-10, Randle Perry 1-8, Greenhill 1-0, Ian Greenberg 1-0, **Team 7-79. Opponents 4-103-1 TD.**

Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC – Demo Pickens 8-187, Squirt Pickens 6-114, Luke Beaird 1-8, **Team 15-309. Opponents 11-300-1 TD.**

Punt Returns-Yards: CC – Demo Pickens 7-103, **Team 7-103. Opponents 4-26.**

Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC 232-1,525. Opponents 243-1,366.

First Downs: CC 44, Opponents 56.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 8-3, Opponents 12-5.

Penalties-Yards: CC 28-207, Opponents 40-300.

Punts-Yards: CC – Avery Hurst 11-408-37.1. **Opponents 14-506-36.1.**

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Woods 7-0-0-0-42, Greenhill 7-0-0-0-42, Hurst 0-0-14-1-17, Burgess 2-0-0-0-12, Walker 1-1-0-0-8, Demo Pickens 1-0-0-0-6, **Team 18-1-14-1-127. Opponents 13-3-5-2-**



Right: ... was long gone for a 68-yard touchdown before anyone got close to him again. Greenhill caught five passes for 191 yards, all in the first half. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Amarion Hobson (4) makes the initial hit on star Huntingdon running back Brady Warbritton (21), slowing up him until Austin Carroll (56) and DK Woods (32) can swoop in to help him finish the job. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The physical nature of this game was intense, as illustrated by lineman Carson Bridger (79) preparing to do battle just before another snap. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Demo Pickens (3) runs an end-around sweep as Austin Carroll (56) and Colton Mayo (52) provide blocking up front. Pickens caught three passes for 33 yards and returned kickoffs and punts for 67 more. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Sophomore Mason Dennis (12) provided this big hit during a kickoff return by Huntingdon's Gray Eubanks, one of the few direct tackles Eubanks suffered in the game. Eubanks ran for 153 yards on 22 carries, scored a touchdown, and threw a two-point conversion pass. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Avery Hurst (85) kicked his first of three successful extra points, and it looked like it might be a factor for a while after the Mustangs didn't convert following their first score. Kris Phillips (16) is the holder; visible blockers on this play are Amarion Hobson (4), Carson Bridger (79), Austin Carroll (56), Colton Mayo (52), Laithon Bonds (24), and DK Woods (32). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's cheer team had the "Blackout" Crockett crowd fired up with their "Nifty Night" sign for Huntingdon; Garett Rawson (fake mustache and all) is ready to lead the players through the sign. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett's DK Woods (32) finally met his match with tacklers big and strong enough to meet him head-on, even if it still took a while to get him down. Huntingdon held Woods to 15 yards on just six carries. Blocking on this play are Randle Perry (50), Carson Bridger (79), and Travis Cork (72). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett cheerleader Melanie Meza was flying high (or low) with help from her teammates prior to the Friday night kickoff at Cavalier Stadium. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Ian Greenberg (19) gave Crockett a chance to take the lead late in the opening half after intercepting this Mustang pass, but the Cavaliers could not take advantage. Congratulating Greenberg on the pick are Squirt Pickens (23) and Amarion Hobson (4). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: After the Mustangs had gone ahead 14-7, Deuce Greenhill (7) cut toward the middle on a quick slant route, took a short throw from Ben Burgess, and then turned on the afterburners for an 82-yard touchdown gallop to tie the game again. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Rushing yards were hard to find against Huntingdon, so Crockett got creative on this play, in which running back Gabe Dupree (29) is being pushed forward by center Austin Carroll (56), who's being pushed forward by Dre Walker (6). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett could have thrown in the towel after Huntingdon's Brady Warbritton (21) -- who had 204 yards on 19 carries -- broke this 63-yarder to score with only 16 seconds remaining in the first half. But the Cavs kept battling throughout the second half, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: ... drawing within a touchdown again with 4:11 to play in the game when Dre Walker (6) snared a perfectly thrown bomb down the middle from Ben Burgess and finished off an 84-yard touchdown as the scoreboard states the situation. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Demo Pickens was fighting for every yard he could get after snaring quick passes, but Huntingdon made the Cavs earn everything they gained. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's Rachel Crossnoe will be trading her cheer uniform in for golfing attire Monday when she represents the Lady Cavaliers in the District golf tournament. Jack Shaver will be leading the Cavalier boys squad into the 18-hole event. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Laithon Bonds (24) drags down the Mustangs' Gray Eubanks on this kick return right before Austin Carroll (56) is about to pop him. Randle Perry (50) and Dre Walker (6) are helping to break up the Huntingdon wedge. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Deuce Greenhill can play a little defense too, here stopping Huntingdon's Aiden Hilliard as Crockett's Austin Carroll (56) closes in to help out. (Photo by Ron Barry)